

The Lordship
of the
SPIRIT

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THE LORDSHIP OF THE SPIRIT

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Article I

Delivered from compliance by the Holy Spirit

Andrew Hay

The problem of carnality

A carnal Christian is someone who has been born of God but chooses to set their mind on the flesh, rather than being led by the Holy Spirit. This means that they preference their perspective of 'good' and a self-righteous application to the Christian life. Because of the way they were raised in Christian homes, many do not realise that it is sin that motivates them, through the other law in their heart, to presume that this culture of religious compliance is righteousness.

So it is that a carnal person will not necessarily be opposed to the word of present truth or at odds with Christ's messengers. For example, Paul described a carnal person who was strongly motivated to obey the word of the gospel but found themselves entirely incapable of doing so. 'For to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do

not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practise.' Rom 7:18b-19.

In this, we recognise that a carnal Christian is unable to mature, or bear fruit, as a son of God. They remain spiritually immature regardless of age, church history, or religious sophistication. This is because they are not properly connected to the life and fellowship of God and, more specifically, the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings through which they are enabled to grow up from glory to glory into the fullness of Christ.

This hopeless situation leads to distress and frustration. Paul explained that the carnal person does not understand what is going on. They cannot see that they are captive to their other law, nor do they understand that their emotive responses to life demonstrate that they are carnal. 'For I do not understand my own actions [I am baffled and bewildered by them]. I do not practise what I want to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate [and yielding to my human nature, my worldliness—my sinful capacity].' Rom 7:15 Amp.

These frustrations are, in fact, an indicator that the Holy Spirit is at work. This is a great help to us. God hates carnal compliance and is proactive in delivering us from this debilitating mindset. A person who has been born of God, baptised into Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit, will experience distress when they choose to walk after the flesh. Their grief is caused by the Holy Spirit who is at enmity with our flesh to frustrate our carnal endeavours. 'For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.' Gal 5:17. A son of God will recognise this wrestle in their spirit. Agitation and distress become their markers to choose to repent, humble themselves, pray to the Holy Spirit and quiet their self-justifying mind chatter.

Of course, the Holy Spirit will not strive with a person forever. For example, King David recognised that the Holy Spirit could be taken from a person, making their spiritual recovery impossible. Psa 51:11. A key indicator that the Holy Spirit has departed from a person is that they are relieved of the distress associated with His resistance to their carnal ways. A person in this condition is no longer simply a carnal believer. They have now returned to the condition of the natural man who is unable to receive the things of the Spirit. They believe that their relief is the evidence of their justification and do not realise that they are now reserved for destruction.

Further to this point, we note that Paul explained that it is the Holy Spirit who delivers a person from the blindness of their carnality. He wrote that 'when one turns to the Lord, the veil [of fleshly self-righteousness] is taken away'. 2Co 3:16. In the next verse, he clarified that the Lord who does this work is the Holy Spirit. 'Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' 2Co 3:17.

Finally, he identified the wonderful outcome of being delivered from our carnal practices. He said that we would see the glory of the Lord in a mirror; it is the glory of our own sonship being attained, from one degree of glory to another, as we are joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering through which He was glorified as the Son of Man. 'But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.' 2Co 3:18. Let us consider further, how the veil of carnality is removed.

Turning to the lordship of the Spirit

Paul wrote in the book of Hebrews that, 'Having been perfected He [Jesus Christ] became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him'.

Heb 5:9. In the book of Romans, Paul helpfully explained that *obeying Him* means obeying the word that is proclaimed by His messengers. 'But thank God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient with all your heart to the standard [or example] of teaching in which you were instructed and to which you were committed. And having been set free from sin, you have become the slaves of righteousness.'

Rom 6:17-18 Amp.

In this season, we have recognised that our obedience will simply be fruitless religious compliance unless the Holy Spirit teaches, and enables, us to live by the obedience of Christ. This is a vital element of His sanctifying work. Peter highlighted this point in his first epistle by addressing 'the elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience'. 1Pe 1:2.

The Holy Spirit teaches us that submission to lordship, rather than being motivated by a compatible will, is the basis for true obedience. Jesus noted this point to the multitude, saying, 'But why do you call Me "Lord, Lord", and not do the things which I say?' Luk 6:46. The Holy Spirit is the One who delivers us from the carnality of compliance and teaches us the obedience of lordship. 'Therefore, I make known to you that no one

speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and *no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.*' 1Co 12:3.

When the Holy Spirit is Lord of our life, He confronts us by asking us to humble ourselves and obey Him in relation to some specific matter. It may be in relation to obeying a specific word that will have major ramifications on the life of our family; it may be a choice of career or the place He wants us to live and serve in the body of Christ; it may be to forsake a lifestyle ambition or to make a particular offering. He may call us to bring an apology or resolve an issue that has been in darkness. The point is that what He asks us to do will conflict with the self-righteous view that we have of ourselves and our circumstance. We may also be concerned about how we will be perceived by others if we obey what the Holy Spirit is requesting of us. Even when we find ourselves resistant to the Holy Spirit, He disempowers our reactions through prevenient grace, making us aware of the eternal consequences of our actions if we continue to pursue our self-righteous responses. At this point, we are left with only one consideration, which is whether or not we will accept His lordship in our life.

To this end, the book of Acts recounted the story of Ananias and Sapphira, who lied about an offering they presented to the leaders of the Jerusalem church. By revelation, Peter understood that the couple had conspired to reject the Holy Spirit's lordship. As he confronted Sapphira he said, 'How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?' The point is, that while the sin itself may have seemed relatively minor, when compared to other dramatic acts of disobedience that are recorded in Scripture, their choice to reject the lordship of the Spirit had an immediate and devastating consequence.

Soberly, we recognise that Ananias and Sapphira were a Christian couple who were members of the Jerusalem church congregation. They had been born of God, baptised into Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit and were eager to be seen to be committed to the offering culture of the body of Christ. This reminds us that our actions apart from submission to the lordship of the Spirit will be driven by compliance. Importantly, we must all register that, unless our mindset shifts to genuine obedience, this compliance will simply become part of our self-image and self-righteousness as a Christian.

Having chosen the Holy Spirit's lordship and having obtained a will for obedience, the next lesson we must learn is that we are unable to obey through compliance. This confronting realisation is the crucible where

carnal religious compliance dies as we recognise that we are completely bankrupt in spirit and unable to obey simply because we see that we must. In this, we recognise our desperate need for help and ask the Holy Spirit to help us. He leads us in a way that we do not want to go, which involves the chastening of the Lord. Through chastening, we are established in a peace that passes understanding, which then guards our heart and mind.

The undeniable fruit of knowing the Holy Spirit as Lord is that a person will live and die in obedience to the word and fellowship of the gospel. The message is not simply information to inform their compliant perspectives – it is their life. In this, we recall the example of Stephen. The Scriptures recorded that he was a man who was ‘full of the Holy Spirit’. As he boldly proclaimed the gospel to the angry Jewish mob, he was unafraid for his personal safety, knowing that he was being taught, in that very hour, what to say, by the Holy Spirit. Luk 12:12. Instead of being fearful for his life, Stephen ‘knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin".’ Act 7:60. In kneeling and praying, Stephen demonstrated his complete submission to the will and purpose of God in his life. Moreover, he was able to pray for the ones who were stoning him because the love of God was being poured into his heart by the Holy Spirit.

Of course, there will be any number of people who will choose to draw back at the point of this lordship crisis. Most do not experience the imminent judgement of Ananias and Sapphira; however, Paul does identify a very significant impact. He wrote, ‘Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgement to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this reason, many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.’ 1Co 11:27-30.

A person fails to discern the Lord’s body when they reject the lordship of the Holy Spirit and make themselves the measure of obedience to Christ in relation to the word of present truth. In this, they leave themselves vulnerable to sickness and oppression, having forsaken the blessing and protection of the Lord’s house to trust in their own carnal endeavours.

Finally, we register that learning to submit to the lordship of the Holy Spirit is not a one-off event. The Scriptures speak of walking in the Spirit, bearing the fruits of the Spirit, and sowing to the Spirit, as the ongoing

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practice of a son of God being glorified in Christ as a son of man. We know that a spiritual person still has another law within their heart and will continue to encounter carnal responses and reactions. Importantly, we also understand that a spiritual person is not in bondage to the law of sin, because they are joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. They accept that the other law within them is a weakness, and they submit themselves to the help of the Holy Spirit who, through prayer, enables them and leads them in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings every day. In this fellowship, they are progressively obtaining deliverance from carnality and obtaining healing from the effects of sin upon them. Moreover, they are obtaining and multiplying the life of God as they grow up in their sonship.

Paul explained that as we are led in this way by the Spirit, we are being enabled to 'put to death the deeds of the flesh'. We will know His conviction and His enabling to turn in repentance and cry out for His help. In this, we can put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man who is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.

Article 2

Chastened for our healing

Andrew Hay

The Holy Spirit and chastening

After His resurrection, Jesus spoke to Peter on the shore of Galilee, about the lordship of the Holy Spirit over his life. He said, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another [the Holy Spirit] will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.' Joh 21:18. The apostle Paul made a similar observation in relation to the Holy Spirit. He recorded, 'For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish'. Gal 5:17. The Holy Spirit leads us in the way that is contrary to our fleshly preference. This path involves the chastening of the Lord, which while painful in the moment, is for our good so that we are not condemned with the world. 1Co 11:32.

Chastening is a vital aspect of our sonship journey. Through chastening, we are delivered from our carnal practices so that we can mature in Christ. As our sin and iniquity is brought to our attention by the Holy Spirit, we recognise that this is not to exclude us from the love and fellowship of God. Rather, by God's grace we can acknowledge that these attitudes and behaviours have no place in the fellowship of Yahweh.

In this regard, Paul explained that we are each to stand before the judgement seat of Christ. This is to be our daily devotional practice. At His judgement seat, we see that Jesus has tasted the sufferings of death that belong to our judgement. Because of God's great love, we recognise that our judgement is being commuted to a chastening to bring us to maturity. Furthermore, as we embrace our sufferings and turn at His rebuke, we are able to see the heights of our sonship and be regenerated to learn the works of obedience, that are our part in revealing Christ and His body. His judgement seat becomes our mercy seat as we meet Him and embrace His chastening. The psalmist described a person who embraces the chastening and instruction of the Lord in this way, as 'blessed'. Psa 94:12.

The chastening effect of scourging

In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul drew attention to the chastening effect of scourging. This chastening initiative belongs to the fatherhood of God. Paul said, 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.' Heb 12:5-6. Significantly, we also recall that Jesus was scourged in the Praetorium for the sake of our healing. Isaiah said that 'He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.' Isa 53:5.

Commonly referred to as the 'cat-o'-nine-tails', the whip that was used to scourge Jesus comprised nine strands of leather, each set with four or five pieces of sharp bone or metal. A full beating of thirty-nine stripes would bring an individual to the brink of death, having caused approximately 1600 wounds to their back. We can liken these wounds to the myriad of suffering experiences that a person encounters throughout the course of their life. This includes the disobedient and emotive responses that are the result of our personal fractures and frailties. In this regard, Samuel wrote that 'I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the stripes of the sons of men'. 2Sa 7:14. Sons of God also experience stripes simply because they live in a sin-sick world. Joshua described this form of chastening as 'scourges in your sides and thorns in your eyes' and noted that poor responses in such circumstances would trap or ensnare a person. Jos 23:13. Finally, a son of God will suffer scourging that is a result of injustice and persecution. Jesus said, 'But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.' Mat 10:17. As we, by faith, embrace our fellowship

with Christ in scourging, we obtain and express the fruit that Jesus produced when He was scourged. Highlighting this point, Paul wrote, 'Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it'. Heb 12:11.

It is only as we are 'trained' by our experiences of scourging that we are healed and, thereby, obtain the fruit of His righteousness. Simply experiencing sufferings is of no merit. If we draw back from faith when we experience the judgement and chastening that belong to this wound, we have no connection with Him, nor with the consolation of the Spirit that would otherwise sustain us. 2Co 1:3-5. As Paul reminded the Hebrews, 'Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him'. Heb 10:38. Christ's soul has no pleasure in a person who draws back from their fellowship in this aspect of chastening, because nothing of His suffering work is effective for them or in them.

Our spiritual practice as we are chastened

Finally, Paul identified three characteristic behaviours of a spiritual person who is being trained by the Lord's chastening. He wrote, 'Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed'. Heb 12:12-13.

Strengthen the hands which hang down

We recognise that a person grows weak and sick when they are not eating and drinking at the *agape* meal in a worthy manner. Paul noted that we 'walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God' when, through obedience, we are joined to the fellowship of the messenger word proceeding from Christ's right hand. Col 1:3,10. To strengthen or 'make straight' the hands that hang down, a son of God must return to the simplicity of Christ, which is obedience. As they turn their heart to the word of Christ, they can pray to be made strong in faith. They are enabled to 'lift up holy hands without wrath or doubting'. 1Ti 2:8. Through faith and obedience, they are joined to the fellowship of His overcoming administration; that is the presbytery which is in Christ's right hand.

Strengthen the feeble knees

Interestingly, the word translated 'feeble' is *paraluo* from which we derive the English word 'paralysed'. We have noted recently, that our

knees remain paralysed and unable to kneel until we have learned to submit to the lordship of the Holy Spirit. In this regard, Luke noted that Stephen, who was 'full of the Holy Spirit', knelt and prayed for those who were murdering him. 'Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.' Act 7:60. In the same way, Luke also recorded that 'Jesus knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done."' Luk 22:41-42. Jesus was strengthened by the Spirit in Gethsemane to continue His journey of offering and suffering through which every sin and every person's 'other law' was destroyed. As we submit to the lordship of the Spirit, we can pray 'not my will but Yours be done' and be strengthened to journey in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

Make straight paths for your feet

'Making straight paths for your feet', literally means making one's recovery from an issue of lameness, into a planned and deliberate project, or course of action. To this end, Solomon wrote, 'Ponder [lit. clear the way, prepare] the path of your feet and let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil'. Pro 4:26-27. This is not a self-righteous action driven by our other law. Rather, the outcome of a person's application to making straight paths for their feet is that what has been lame is healed. Heb 12:13. As we have noted, a person can only be healed through a participation in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, particularly the chastening He received when He was scourged in the Praetorium. Isa 53:5.

We note that issues of spiritual leprosy are described in the Bible as 'a stroke or stripe (judgement) from God'. The Scriptures identify four major areas of uncleanness that can become spiritual leprosy - anxiety, immorality (including addiction to pornography), anger, and dissent. All the various manifestations of uncleanness that are nominated in the New Testament can be categorised under these four broad headings. Unless God's judgement in these matters is commuted to a chastening, there can be no recovery. Recently, we have considered the example of Naaman the Syrian, who was recovered through an obedient application of the prophet Elisha's word. His project was to wash seven times in the Jordan River. In repenting and receiving faith from the messenger word, Naaman was able to diligently apply himself to his healing.

Article 3

The Holy Spirit is Lord of the church age

Lachlan Perrin

The New Covenant of the Spirit

In the final hours before Jesus' arrest, He comforted His disciples by saying, 'I tell you the truth, *it is to your advantage that I go away*, for if I do not go away, the Helper [the Holy Spirit] shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.' Joh 16:7. Jesus then explained the ministry of the Holy Spirit, saying, 'He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.' Joh 16:14-15.

Jesus was indicating that the coming of the Holy Spirit would initiate another step in the covenant purpose of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to make man in Their image and likeness. The only way for this purpose to be accomplished after Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension would be through a person's submission to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In this article we are considering this remarkable point: that the Father and Son have given the dispensation of the church age to *the lordship of the*

Holy Spirit. This is why the new covenant that Christ established through His offering and death is called 'the New Covenant of the Spirit'. Luk 22:20. Heb 9:15. 2Co 3:6.

In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul compared the New Covenant of the Spirit with the Law Covenant that God gave to Moses and the nation of Israel in the wilderness. The Law Covenant (or Old Covenant) involved an extensive list of practical requirements, accompanied by a system of offerings and animal sacrifices for the remission of sins. All that the people needed to do in order to walk blamelessly before the Lord was to keep the statutes of this covenant. Lev 18:5.

Despite *wanting* to keep the Law Covenant, the people realised that it wasn't saving them at all; it was killing them! Rom 7:10. Paul even pointed out that the sacrifices which they offered, time and time again, did not take away their *propensity* to sin. Instead, they were a recurring reminder that they were sinners. Heb 10:3-4. What was the problem? Their desire to fulfil the Law Covenant was motivated by compliance. And their compliance was motivated by a selfish desire to *use the Law* for the sake of appeasing their fear of death. In this way, their flesh caused them to *covet* a law that commanded them not to covet! Rom 7:7.

Paul recognised the same motivation at work in his own efforts to fulfil the commandment of God, writing, 'We know that *the Law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh*, sold into bondage to sin'. Rom 7:14. The Old Covenant revealed that mankind's fallen default is to lay hold of the *spiritual* Law of God and then try to fulfil it *in the flesh*. This is carnality. Paul concluded that the place and purpose of the Old Covenant was to lead God's people to Christ, to the coming of the Holy Spirit, and to the lampstand church era, so that they might be justified as sons of God *through faith* in Christ Jesus. Gal 3:24-26.

Paul gave thanks to God for Christ's offering and death because it delivered him from the default of his carnal 'body of death'. Rom 7:24. Rom 8:3-4. Christ's death brought an end to the Old Covenant because, having fulfilled the Law in His offering, He nailed the Law to the cross in Himself. Col 2:14. The New Covenant of the Spirit was then manifest on the Day of Pentecost, when about 120 disciples were baptised with the Holy Spirit. Act 2:1-4. When the disciples were baptised in the Holy Spirit, there appeared cloven tongues of fire resting upon them. Act 2:3. This fire signified that the heavenly Jerusalem, the bride of Christ, was now 'ignited' and able to minister as the first lampstand church on earth.

Concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.' Act 1:8. The Greek word for 'power' is *dunamis*, which means 'miraculous power or ability'. The miraculous ability that the Holy Spirit gives us is the capacity to behold Christ portrayed as crucified when the gospel of the cross is proclaimed to us. Gal 3:1. We can see Christ's finished offering journey as the complete provision for our life because we are joined in one Spirit with Him by the Holy Spirit. That is, we can understand the daily outworking of God's will for our life because we are spiritual. This is a most wonderful power indeed!

Remarkably, many believers and church denominations have spurned the ministry of the Holy Spirit. They choose to walk according to the principles of the flesh, believing that they can be acceptable to God through the carnal exercise of establishing and observing sacramental commandments. Paul addressed this very issue in the church in Galatia. He asked them, 'Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?' Gal 3:1-3.

Sadly, by the turn of the first century, the lampstand churches established by the apostle Paul had fallen away from *agape* fellowship and had re-established an Old Covenant approach to following Christ. They had chosen carnality, and had replaced the lordship of the Holy Spirit with sacraments and religious rites. It was about this time that the apostle John received the revelation of Jesus Christ. The seven letters that the glorified Son of Man instructed John to write to the seven lampstand churches comprise a single roadmap of restoration for the body of Christ during the church age. As Jesus concluded each letter, He took the opportunity to remind every church that the Holy Spirit is Lord. He said, referring to the whole lampstand church era, 'Let he who has an ear to hear, hear *what the [Holy] Spirit* says to the churches.' Rev 2:7,11,17,29. Rev 3:6,13,22. Similarly, Paul summarised the lordship of the Holy Spirit throughout the church age when he reminded the Corinthians that no-one can know or confess Jesus Christ as their Lord except by the Holy Spirit. 1Co 2:3.

Lying to the Holy Spirit

A son of God resists the Holy Spirit when, having received the Person of the Holy Spirit and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they once again give heed to Satan's lie and choose to walk according to their flesh. The apostle Paul described this as the rebuilding of what should have been destroyed through a person's fellowship in Christ's death. He wrote,

'For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the Law died to the Law that I might live to God [through obedience to the lordship and ministry of the Holy Spirit].'
Gal 2:18-19. Earlier in this publication, we considered the account of Ananias and Sapphira. This is a sombre demonstration of choosing to walk after the flesh and, in so doing, lying to the Holy Spirit. Act 5:1-11.

Not long after the Day of Pentecost, Ananias and Sapphira sold a parcel of land and brought a portion of the proceeds to the apostles' feet. However, as we read the account, it is clear that the Holy Spirit commanded them to offer the *full* proceeds of the land sale. Confirming that Ananias and Sapphira were filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter asked Ananias, 'Why has Satan filled your heart *to lie to the Holy Spirit*, and to keep back some of the price of the land?' Act 5:3. It is important to note that the issue was not about how much of the proceeds they offered; rather, it was about their obedience to the Holy Spirit.

That is why Peter continued, saying, 'While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart?' Act 5:4. We could ask, 'What was in Ananias and Sapphira's control?' It was their *choice*. They could choose to obey the leading of the Holy Spirit or, according to Satan's alternative word, could rationalise a carnal obedience of their own. By giving heed to Satan's lie, Ananias and Sapphira chose to walk according to the flesh. This caused grief to the Holy Spirit, who had proclaimed sanctification and truth to them regarding the matter of the sale of their land. Peter's next statement is the key point. He said to Ananias, 'You have not lied to men but to God.'
Act 5:4.

We see that Peter defined lying to God as lying to the Holy Spirit. In other words, if a person does not submit to the lordship of the Holy Spirit, they cannot fulfil the will of God. Furthermore, if a person disobeys the leading of the Holy Spirit but proceeds to participate in the activity and program of the church, their involvement will be an exercise of self-righteous compliance. We must be clear on this point, because the outcome is serious. Living in this way as a Christian will progressively smother, or 'kill', the seed of God's life within a person. In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, their spiritual and physical death was instant; they both 'fell down dead' while still in the presence of the apostles. As a result, 'Great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things'. Act 5:11. This was the fear of God and the realisation that obedience to the lordship of the Holy Spirit is unnegotiable.

Article 4

The ministry of the Holy Spirit

Lachlan Perrin

In our previous article, we considered the lordship of the Holy Spirit throughout the dispensation of the church age. He becomes our Lord when we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. His ministry enables and sanctifies our participation in the New Covenant of the Spirit. To say this another way, we can only function as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, the bride of Christ, as we obey the leading of the Holy Spirit.

In this article, we will consider some of the distinct aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit. Namely, that He gives life; He joins us to the fellowship of Yahweh; He brings illumination; He joins us to Christ's offering and sufferings; He enables us to bear witness to Christ's death; He enables the fellowship of worship; He resists us when we endeavour to walk by the flesh; and He enables us to empty ourselves for the sake of giving preference to others.

The Holy Spirit gives life

In His definitive discussion with Nicodemus, Jesus told him that unless a person is born again of the life of God, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Joh 3:3. Further to this, Jesus said that a person must be born of

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water and of Spirit to *enter* the kingdom of God. Joh 3:5. On the day of His resurrection, Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples and, breathing on them, said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'. Joh 20:22. As they received the *Person* of the Holy Spirit, He brought with Him the divine nature of God, causing them to be born again of the Father. Jesus explained this point plainly, when He said, 'It is the [Holy] Spirit who gives life'. Joh 6:63. Since Christ's ascension, a person receives the Holy Spirit, as the incorruptible Seed of God the Father, when the Son 'breathes' on them through the proclamation of the gospel. The apostle Peter said it this way, 'You have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *through the living and enduring word of God.*' 1Pe 1:23.

Having been born again to *see* the kingdom, a person is born of water and of the Spirit, and therefore able to *enter* the kingdom when they are baptised into Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit. Shortly, we will consider how the Holy Spirit joins us to the fellowship of Christ's baptism. It is helpful to remember that Christ's baptism - His offering and suffering journey - fulfilled and finished the Father's will for every son. This is why Jesus said, concerning the Helper coming, 'When He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into *all the truth*'. Joh 16:13. The apostle Paul defined 'truth', and his capacity to *know* the truth, when he said that 'my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit'. Rom 9:1. Conscience is a faculty of a person's spirit. It means 'co-perception' and describes our capacity to bear witness to, or know, our identity. The Holy Spirit leads us into all the truth concerning our identity and the pathway of sonship life that Christ has pioneered for us.

Importantly, the work of the Holy Spirit to bring to a person the divine nature, is much more than a one-off transaction that occurs when they are first born from above. As we submit to the lordship of the Holy Spirit, and He sanctifies us to the pathway of sonship that Christ has prepared for us, the virtues of Christ's life are multiplied to us, by the Spirit. As He joins us to our unique fellowship in Christ's offering and sufferings, the life in Christ's sprinkled blood is ministered to us. 1Pe 1:2. In this way, the seed of the divine nature grows and multiplies within us, causing us to mature in our capacity to show forth the life of Christ. The apostle Paul was referring to this multiplication of the virtues of Christ's life, when he wrote to the Galatians instructing them to walk by the Spirit and show forth the fruits *of the Holy Spirit*. Gal 5:22-23. Similarly, he wrote to the Romans about being fruitful through their connection to Christ, the 'root of Jesse', saying, 'And may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope *through the power of the Holy Spirit.*' Rom 15:13.

The Holy Spirit brings the fellowship of Yahweh

When we receive the Person of the Holy Spirit, He makes our whole being – body, soul, and spirit – a temple of God, through Eternal Spirit.

1Co 3:16. The capacity for *agape* fellowship with the Lord and our brethren in one Spirit is an initiative of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul used his final words to the Corinthians to remind them about this sovereign ministry of the Holy Spirit, writing, ‘The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and *the fellowship of the Holy Spirit*, be with you all. Amen.’ 2Co 13:14.

The apostle Paul identified the substance of the life and fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim*, when he declared, ‘And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.’ 1Co 13:13. A person who is walking after the Spirit will possess a testimony of these three elements of the life and fellowship of Yahweh. The evidence that we have received the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is our desire for fellowship with other members of Christ’s body, in one Spirit. This is what the love of God poured into our hearts ‘looks like’.

A person who is walking in obedience to the leading of the Spirit and who is motivated by the love of God, will be easy to identify. That is because the Holy Spirit leads us to participate in *agape* fellowship! A person with this orientation will be motivated to use their body to glorify, or reveal, God and their brethren. Paul laboured this point, saying, ‘Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is *any fellowship of the Spirit*, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.’ Php 2:1-2. What ‘purpose’ was Paul referring to? It is for us to have the same attitude as Jesus Christ, who glorified God in *His* body.

The Holy Spirit brings illumination

Understanding the word of present truth is made possible by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. 1Th 1:5-6. In his first epistle, the apostle Peter declared that ‘those who preached the gospel to you [did so] *by the Holy Spirit*’. 1Pe 1:12. As one of the twelve disciples, Peter was in a unique position to testify this way. We recall that, before His arrest, Jesus rebuked Peter for insisting that He resist His offering death. Jesus said to him, ‘You are an offence to Me, for you do not think *the things of God*, but the things of men’. Mat 16:23. The ‘things of God’ are foolishness to the unspiritual. 1Co 2:14. The apostle Paul highlighted that receiving the

baptism of the Holy Spirit enables a person to know the things (thoughts) of God, and the things freely given to us from Him. 1Co 2:12.

With this in mind, it is stark to consider that the disciples did *not* comprehend the gospel message during Jesus' earthly ministry. Mat 16:21-23. Luk 18:31-34. Instead, they were aspiring to learn, from a fleshly perspective, a way of living that fulfilled the righteousness of God using the strength of their flesh. They wanted to mimic Christ, as a kind of 'life coach', learning His teachings and modelling His practices, as a means to pleasing God and satisfying their own desire for position and verification.

It is noteworthy that Jesus said, 'When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you will testify also, because *you have been with Me from the beginning.*' Joh 15:26-27. Jesus was not saying that, by the Holy Spirit, the disciples would remember His 3½ years of earthly ministry. He was saying that the Spirit would join them to His journey from *the beginning*, when Yahweh Son was begotten as the Son of God at the beginning of the Everlasting Covenant. When the Father said, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You', the seed of every person's name was committed to the Son. Heb 1:5. Jesus has carried the name, glory, and fruitfulness of every son in Himself since the beginning of the Everlasting Covenant to its fulfilment at the cry, 'It is finished'. When the word of the cross is proclaimed, the Holy Spirit illuminates our heart so that we can apprehend and appreciate Christ's complete offering journey for us.

The Holy Spirit joins us to the fellowship of Christ's offering

It is important to recognise that while Jesus remained with His disciples, before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, they could *not* join the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. On the day of His ascension, they asked Jesus, 'Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?' Act 1:6. They were still looking for a triumphant kind of victory that would satisfy their fleshly expectations of a conquering Messiah. Without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, they could not understand the nature of Christ's overcoming, nor their participation in it. It was at this time that Jesus instructed them to wait until they were baptised in the Holy Spirit and endowed with power. Act 1:8.

The 'power' that the Holy Spirit gives to us is the capacity to apprehend our life as a spiritual reality; that is, to appreciate each day as a

fellowship in Christ's offering journey. The Holy Spirit is faithful to lead us into all the truth that Christ has pioneered for us. Referring to the anointing of the Holy Spirit, King David prayed this way, 'Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; *let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground.*' Psa 143:10. The Hebrew word translated 'level' means 'upright' or '*straight*'. Knowing that Christ's offering was a complete provision for his life, David was praying that the Holy Spirit would lead him through the gate that is small, or '*straight*', and upon the way that is narrow, which leads to eternal life. Mat 7:14.

Jesus described His offering journey as His *baptism*. Luk 12:50. The ministry of the Holy Spirit joins us to Christ's baptism. There is an account recorded in the book of Acts, where the apostle Paul encountered some disciples in Ephesus. When he met them, he said, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?'; to which they responded, 'No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.' Act 19:2. Highlighting the work of the Holy Spirit to join us to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, Paul asked the obvious question, 'Into what then were you baptised?' Act 19:3. Paul was pointing out that without the leading of the Holy Spirit, we are unable to participate in Christ's baptism.

The Holy Spirit enables us to bear witness to Christ

Jesus said that when the disciples received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they would receive the capacity to be His witnesses. Act 1:8. Remarkably, the disciples who had walked with Jesus during His earthly ministry, who had been with Him on the day of His crucifixion, who had been with Him on the day of His resurrection, and who had listened to Him teach about the kingdom of God for forty days after His resurrection, could *not* be witnesses of His death, burial and resurrection until they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

If someone's initiative to share or testify about Christ's offering on the cross is not led by the Holy Spirit, then all they can do is propagate a theological lifestyle. That is, without the ministry of the Holy Spirit, they cannot behold Christ as crucified for them, personally. They cannot bear witness to His salvation and restorative work if they have not joined it! Being a Christian, without the gift of the Holy Spirit, will reduce a person's religious journey to an observance to some framework of self-defined sacraments. The evidence that a believer is holding to an alternative gospel such as this, will be their failure to honour and submit to the lordship of the Holy Spirit - without which they cannot be a son of God at all.

The Holy Spirit enables the fellowship of worship

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of sanctification, who guides us into all the truth concerning our name, works and participation in the body of Christ. 1Pe 1:2. He also bears witness to the unique initiative of the Father and of the Son, as They minister to us. And He enables us to meet and bear witness to the name and offering of our brethren. He resists and wars against all fleshly projections.

This sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit enables us to know and appreciate those with whom we are joined in fellowship; that is, the Holy Spirit enables the fellowship of worship. Referring to this dimension of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, 'God is spirit, and those who worship Him must *worship in spirit and truth.*' Joh 4:24.

The Holy Spirit resists us walking after the flesh

As we have already considered in this publication, the Holy Spirit frustrates our endeavours when, having been born of God, baptised into Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit, we choose to walk after the flesh. Our distress, which often manifests as disappointment or bewilderment when our plans do not work out, is caused by the Holy Spirit who is at enmity with our flesh. Explaining this work of the Holy Spirit, Paul wrote, 'For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please'. Gal 5:17.

The Holy Spirit enables us to give preference to one another

As the Holy Spirit joins us to the fellowship of Christ's baptism, we are enabled to empty our new-born identity into Christ. Knowing that our new-born identity is hidden with Christ in God, our preoccupation is to reveal Christ, rather than ourselves. This is the 'power' that we receive to be His witnesses when we are baptised in the Holy Spirit. As mortal members of Christ's body, we are revealing Him to the world. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit motivates us to reveal the life of Christ in other members of His body. Paul said that *agape* love is without hypocrisy when we are 'devoted to one another in brotherly love; giving preference to one another in honour'. Rom 12:10.

Article 5

Dealing with our aspirations

Michael Fox

God desires that every young person comes to maturity as a son of God. Heb 6:1. It is important, then, to understand what hinders us from growing up to maturity. *Carnality* is the thing that keeps us immature. 1Co 3:1. To be carnal means that our thoughts, initiatives, and actions in life are motivated by our other law. Rom 7:23. A carnal person endeavours to craft an expression for themselves based on their knowledge of good and evil. In the Scriptures, this is also called ‘walking according to the flesh’. Rom 8:4.

Being delivered from carnality will involve learning how to deal with our *aspirations*. Every young person has ideals, dreams, and plans for life which they desire to pursue. Jas 1:14. These aspirations are formed out of their imagination and are not from God. 2Co 10:5.

In the end, all our aspirations come to nothing. There is only one truth that will stand, and that is God’s plan and purpose for our life. As the psalmist declared, ‘Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.’ Psa 119:89. His word concerning who we are stands and endures forever. Isa 40:8. As those who are born of God, we then mature in the truth our

sonship as we walk according to the Spirit. Rom 8:4-5. This looks like obeying God's word concerning who we are and embracing the Holy Spirit who gives direction for our life and leads us, personally, each day. Rom 8:14.

A righteousness of our own

We find that our aspirations are varied and run deep within us. They may be about what type of person we want to be; for example, the 'funny guy', or the 'pretty girl', who is noticed by everyone. Or we may aspire to a particular career path or a certain ministry in the church. Further yet, our aspirations could be our imagination about where we want to 'end up' in life. I want an easy and comfortable life; I'll work hard and earn lots of money; I want to be important in the eyes of others; I want to blend in with the crowd and avoid too much accountability; and the list goes on.

In the end, our aspirations simply accord with our own view about ourselves. I define what is good for me and strive to achieve it by the strength of my flesh. This leads us to perhaps the most insidious aspiration of all for a son of God - self-sourced religion. The worst thing of all is that we use God's word to form this self-righteous view of ourselves. Php 3:9. Often, we also find ourselves looking to the behaviour of others, who we deem as being 'successful Christians', as a reference for how we should behave - all the while, hoping desperately that someone will give us some positive feedback about how well we are doing. Pro 4:25. These are some of the elements that comprise our religious compliance.

We pursue this 'standard of good' because we want the life that the word of God promises. We desire deliverance from oppression, good health, peace, and relational success. But if we strive to attain to a righteousness of our own by the strength of our own flesh, we will, inevitably, fail to achieve the righteousness of God, which is our sonship. Instead of giving us life, the word of God becomes a judgement upon us because we are living according to the flesh. The problem with developing our own righteousness is that we completely ignore the Holy Spirit, who is Lord. 2Co 3:17. The Holy Spirit is the One who convicts us regarding true righteousness, which is the obedience of our sonship. Joh 16:8.

Whether we make a conscious decision to do so or not, we all develop a self-righteous view of ourselves. Pursuing a righteousness of our own is the product of another law in our heart, and overcoming this fleshly orientation to life is part of the journey for every son of God. Those who

are spiritual acknowledge this, and then also relax about it. Being delivered from our carnality is the journey we are all on!

Most of us have grown up in a Christian home, were born again in the womb of our mother on account of the faith of our parents, have been filled with the Holy Spirit, and have been trained in the culture of serving the Lord. However, having *seen* the kingdom of God, we do not *enter* the kingdom of God by our religious compliance or self-righteous achievements. The choice that belongs to entering the kingdom of God is embracing the lordship of the Holy Spirit. We enter the kingdom of God and mature as a son of God, by being born of water and the Spirit.

Joh 3:5. Once we are baptised into Christ's death, and baptised with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit enables us to embrace our unique participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. The only aspiration we should be concerned with is obeying the leadership and direction of the Holy Spirit!

Those who walk according to the Spirit are being delivered *from* striving to achieve a righteousness of their own and are delivered *to* a personal and intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit who is the Lord of their life. He is directing them, leading them, and enabling their fellowship in Christ's offering and suffering journey.

Godly sorrow

We all experience the grief associated with unfulfilled expectations. We get down on ourselves, we get angry, and we may even find that we are tempted to withdraw from our participation in fellowship with our brethren. The Scriptures call this grief 'worldly sorrow'. 2Co 7:10. Those who set their mind on the flesh indulge in this emotional energy, believing they deserve better and that they have the right to remain upset.

Worldly sorrow leads to death, meaning that a person is overcome with dissatisfaction, anger, contention, jealousy, outbursts of wrath, dissension, and many other works of the flesh. Gal 5:19-21. Those who do not move beyond this type of emotional response stall in their growth as a son of God. They remain immature.

Particularly when our *religious compliance* is not acknowledged, appreciated, or affirmed by others, we tend to get very upset. However, the lack of attention we receive is really quite instructive. It reminds us that our brethren are not interested in our self-righteous projections, and

neither is God. In fact, the Holy Spirit is directly opposed to them! He has devoted Himself to our sanctification as sons of God and is, therefore, actively resisting us when we walk after the flesh. Joh 16:13. He stands right in our way, warring against our carnal aspirations so that we cannot achieve them. Gal 5:17. This is very frustrating for us and is actually part of His help toward us. The Holy Spirit is the One causing our sorrow, so that we might turn to His lordship and avoid the death associated with pursuing our own way.

Thankfully, the Holy Spirit enables us to see that our self-righteous and religious aspirations are sin, because they are not what He is asking us to do. Mourning for our sin and darkness is the beginning of godly sorrow. 2Co 7:9-10. The Spirit enables us to let go of our self-centred grief for our failed aspirations, and to participate in God's own sorrow for our sin. We accept that our aspirations and our self-centred grief have both been brought to nothing through the offering of Christ and have been left in the sea of God's forgetfulness. By the Holy Spirit, we, too, are enabled to let them go because they are coming to nothing in us.

He then leads us in our participation in the travail of Christ which establishes us in the truth of our name and sonship. By the motivation of the Spirit within us, we desire to live the life and do the works that Jesus has already accomplished for us through His offering journey, once for all.

Aware that we have no capacity to achieve the righteousness of God in the strength of our flesh, we come to accept that we are bankrupt in spirit and cry out to the Holy Spirit to help us. As we pray in the Holy Spirit, He helps us in our weaknesses. Rom 8:26-27. He helps us to resist the temptation to draw back from our God-given relational context. He enables us to relinquish control of who, and what, we want to be, and instead obey His direction for our life. He leads us to follow Christ, which will be a way that we do not personally, or naturally, want to go. Following Christ means embracing our participation in the wounding events of His offering journey from Gethsemane to the cross.

This is the very point that Jesus explained to the disciple Peter when He met him on the shore of the sea of Tiberias. Joh 21:18.

Example of the disciple Peter

Peter had earlier received the call to follow Christ when he was a young adult. Mat 4:19. He loved the idea of this! As best he could, he did

everything Jesus asked him to do and was a great friend to Jesus. However, Peter's religious aspiration to love and follow Jesus was revealed to be of no substance when Jesus was being wounded in the court of Caiaphas. Prior to Christ's death, Peter had exclaimed 'Lord ... I will lay down my life for Your sake', and 'Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!' Joh 13:37. Mat 26:35. At best, his self-righteousness was found to be earthly and temporary, as he denied even knowing Jesus. At worst, it was revealed to be demonic, as he cursed and swore while answering the crowd. Jas 3:15.

After Jesus was resurrected, He confronted Peter regarding whether he loved Him. Joh 21:15. Note, Jesus was not questioning Peter's desire or commitment to love. Rather, He was addressing Peter's inadequacy to achieve it in his flesh. Jesus' word enabled Peter to see that his self-righteous view of himself as a friend of Jesus was sin. This had produced only religious compliance. Peter did not love Jesus. Peter loved his *own idea* of what it meant to follow Jesus and to be His friend. This was Peter's darkness. Luk 11:35.

Peter believed so sincerely in his own righteousness and had zealously pursued it with all of his fleshly strength. He was grieved as Jesus questioned him multiple times. Although this was not a pleasant experience, Peter embraced the initiative of the Lord towards him and was trained by it. Jesus said to Peter, 'When you were younger [immature] you girded yourself and walked where you wished.' He was learning that the choice to follow Christ was not demonstrated by his religious compliance. Rather, it would be by embracing the Holy Spirit as the Lord of his life. This is what Jesus meant when He said, 'When you are old [mature], you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.' The 'another' was the Holy Spirit, and 'where you do not wish' was Peter's unique participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ.

Jesus could then call to Peter, a second time, 'Follow Me'. Joh 21:19. This time, the Holy Spirit, as the Lord of Peter's life, was going to lead him and help him to obey Jesus. After Peter turned from Jesus, he saw John, and immediately began to compare himself with his peer. Joh 21:21. Evidently, a person's aspirations can often be constructed from their perception of who their peers are, what they are doing, and how they are doing it. This is an issue that many of us will need the Holy Spirit to help us put off.

Like the disciple Peter, we will all encounter times in our life when we feel as though our integrity and commitment are being questioned. And like Peter, this can cause us great grief! We hate the thought that our religious compliance isn't good enough. We resent that our own aspirations to follow Christ and to be righteous come to nothing. The reality is that this is a great place to be! As we choose the lordship of the Holy Spirit, we receive His capacity to turn quickly from our worldly sorrow when our aspirations fail. 2Co 3:16. We spend less time worrying about our failures and feelings of shame, and more time praying in the Holy Spirit and asking for His help to turn from them. By His enabling, godly sorrow produces repentance within us, by which we forsake our own ideas, dreams, and plans for our life, and are established in the truth of our sonship.

Conclusion

What a relief that the Holy Spirit not only resists our fleshly aspirations, but also helps us to deal with them properly! He doesn't just highlight our failures and leave us with all of our poor responses. He is with us and in us for the sake of fellowship with us, even when we feel like we are doing a bad job. Our work is to keep ourselves in the love of God and remain in fellowship with Him by praying in the Spirit. Jud 1:20-21. The Holy Spirit can work with us when we accept our inadequacies and remain in relationship with Him and our brethren.

A son of God is not trying to avoid aspiration. Nor do they pretend that their failing self-righteousness is not a cause of upset and frustration. These issues are part of growing up. Importantly, our focus is *turning* from our carnality to the Holy Spirit. We submit to His lordship every day. As we walk according to the Spirit, we will mature in our sonship, demonstrated by the fact that we are increasing in sight and capacity for our participation in the body of Christ.

Article 6

Marriage and the New Covenant

Tim Maurice

‘Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.’

Rom 7:1-4.

Living carnally is summed up by Paul as ‘you who know the law’. We must all recognise that, to some degree, we have approached the subject of marriage this way. We know the Law (what we think God says), we know our own other law (what we think we want), we are driven by the law of

sin and the emotions it arouses, we assess what we believe the lusts of our flesh are, and then we compute all of these components in the law of our mind, filtering it through our desires, finally reaching a conclusion, which becomes our *aspiration*.

The result is death and enmity. We are stuck in the maze of carnality. Who is going to deliver us from this mess of condemnation? Praise be to God, we are delivered as we walk by the Spirit. The book of Romans gives us vital keys in this endeavour. The following articles will walk through some of the principles and steps which Paul laid out in Romans so that a couple can arrive at their wedding day confident of receiving a remnant of the Spirit.

Arriving at the blessing of the remnant of the Spirit is to believe with believing Abraham, and to find what our father Abraham found with his wife Sarah. Abraham was credited with the righteousness of God and received *exanastasis*, with his wife Sarah, to become the father of a new humanity, in Christ.

Abraham's faith joined him to bringing forth the godly seed of the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, whose day of offering he saw in the Spirit with much rejoicing. Abraham also saw the city of which he and his wife had been made the parents, bequeathing to their children the pathway of participation in the New Covenant of the Spirit. They demonstrated the sanctification by which every couple after them could be recovered to marriage in the image of God, thereby receiving a remnant of the Lord's own Spirit, which is something altogether new, and apart from the Law.

'Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, You who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father, And to Sarah who bore you; For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him.' Isa 51:1-2.

As this Scripture exhorts us, we must look to Abraham our father and Sarah who bore us, in order to follow after the righteousness which comes through justification. Looking to them in this way shows us the pathway of our sanctification, through which we can receive the offering love of God, as we walk in the faith of our baptism. Like them, we can receive a share of the Lord's own name, strengthening us to court, marry, and raise children to the glory of God.

We can only do this by the Spirit, and not by the Law. Paul made the point in the book of Galatians, and then elaborated upon it in the book of

Romans, that we cannot establish a spiritual marriage culture while we remain in bondage under the Old Covenant; that is, while we believe that we can apply the Scriptures and ask the Holy Spirit to support us in the private project of our own romance, aspirations, and search for happiness. The experience of Abraham and Sarah instructs us on how this will turn out – in enmity, carnal behaviour, and a promotion of the flesh over the Spirit.

Thankfully, the Scriptures also instruct us on Abraham and Sarah's recovery to one spirit in the marriage. They found recovery through faith and obedience, and were able to receive a remnant of the Spirit. As such, they were able to establish the culture of the New Jerusalem, which is also the culture that the Lord intends for our marriages.

'Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.' Gal 4:21-26.

There are two covenants – one of the flesh and one of the Spirit. These two covenants are the two alternative versions of life that we can live, and they also represent two kinds of marriage – one carnal and one spiritual. We can only live by the Spirit, in the 'newness of the letter', when we have recognised and repented of the wickedness of our carnal versions of courtship and marriage. Otherwise, we will not be free; nor will we belong to the Jerusalem above, which is free.

Marriage reveals a mystery

In looking at this subject, it will be helpful to remember that marriage between a man and a woman is a mystery which relates directly to the marriage of Christ and the church.

'For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in

particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.' Eph 5:30-33.

As we know, a 'mystery' in the biblical sense is not a mere concept which can be apprehended intellectually. A mystery is a spiritual reality which is illuminated to our heart in the anointing of the Spirit. Therefore, as we approach the subject of courtship and marriage, we need to walk spiritually in relation to these matters, rather than becoming embroiled in carnal arguments about human behaviour, emotions, and historical precedent.

The Lord is asking us to die to our law-keeping attempts to appropriate marriage to ourselves for private purposes and, instead, to be illuminated by the Spirit to see what *His* purpose is in the 'newness of life' in the culture of the New Jerusalem. God's purpose is to bring many sons to glory in the fatherhood and motherhood of Abraham and Sarah, whose children we are if we enter, and participate in, the city of God by faith, walking by the Spirit.

As we have said already, romantic love must be disabled and then upgraded to offering love, if the relationship is to be redeemed from a carnal state and sanctified in one spirit. Such sanctification is only possible if there has *first* been an action of justification, which means relational accountability and recovery, for any matter which is an offence against the two people being joined in one spirit in the first place.

The book of Romans offers us a picture of the sanctifying steps by which a couple can recover their marriage and participate in the culture of the bride, the church, who is married to Christ. In this way, the sanctification of both unions becomes a clear expression of the culture of God's house and of the unfolding mystery of our participation in establishing that culture.

Remnant of the Spirit

'Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant. But did He not make them one, Having a remnant of the Spirit?' Mal 2:14-15.

The remnant of the Spirit is a unique capacity, graciously granted by the Lord, to enable a couple to be joined in one spirit. The remnant of the Spirit in marriage is the seal that entitles that marriage to an inheritance in the bride city. This seal is given to us by the Holy Spirit. A couple who has received a remnant of the Spirit are able to possess their share in the

ground, or land, which is their inheritance inside the New Jerusalem. To put it another way, the blessing of the remnant of the Spirit allows our marriages to be founded on the one foundation of Christ.

As such, we must disavow the endeavour to build on the foundation of Christ, using our own materials, such as 'wood, hay and stubble'. These are the materials sourced from our experience, personal wisdom, family history and private dreams, and constitute the romantic pursuit of a way which is right in our own eyes. This is what it means to adulterate the word, and which causes people to be 'adulterers' with respect to being joined to Christ and one another. We must put this off and find the wisdom which comes down from above. This is a very important point to note during courtship, when the activity of building a foundation begins.

If we insist upon attempting to establish our own ground as a couple within the Lord's city, we will find ourselves resisting the word and culture that the Lord is building into His people. It is vital that we receive the call to repentance which the word is provoking. We need to be clear on this point, because the polarising effect of the word is felt by every person. At some point, the word will jar upon our private perspectives or where we fear exposure. It is at such points that we must turn to the Lord and ask for help to be strengthened not to draw back, avoiding the temptation to react or merely to comply.

Failure to sanctify ourselves in this way will cause a relationship to end up on a ground which is outside the city. The end point of this polarisation is that people find themselves in company with, and affirming, those who have rejected the pathway of sanctification. The apostle John gave us the fully polarised position in the book of Revelation:

'Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practises falsehood.' Rev 22:14-15.

It goes without saying that none of us would wish to find our household in this condition. The next article looks at some elements of the sanctification which ensures that we do not.

Article 7

Justified, sanctified and glorified

Tim Maurice

Putting off old culture

As those who are coming out of the culture of 'the unclean daughters of Zion', we are in need of washing of our robes. These robes are the garments of shame with which we have attempted to clothe ourselves by prescribing our own culture within the boundaries of our private religion. We have sought to wear 'our own apparel' and to 'eat our own food', presuming that we can be called by the name of Christ. Isa 4:1. It is for this reason that the apostle Paul began the book of Romans with the key statement, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel'. Rom 1:16. All recovery begins with the removal of our shame as we meet Christ face to face and heart to heart.

The presumption of clothing ourselves is nowhere more operative than in marriage. As we have said already, there is a spiritual conjunction between the marriage of a man and a woman and the marriage of Christ and the church which is a mystery. That is because the culture of the latter is to be the culture of the former. Marriage is not intended by God as a private province for the pursuit of a personally defined happiness,

fulfilment or, as in the case of the Scripture above in Isaiah, for the removal of 'our reproach'. Marriage is a blessing from God for the purpose of establishing godly households in one Spirit and the bringing forth of godly seed.

Both of these things are only possible when a man and a woman receive 'a remnant of the Spirit'. If they do not receive this blessing from the Lord, all their attempts to be one spirit together will be projections of false serenity. Such a projection will never deal with the underlying enmity between two separate people who cannot meet together in fellowship as head and helper. Two identities can only be joined in one spirit when the Lord Himself joins them together, making them one. He does this personally and uniquely for each couple.

The Scriptures record the histories of families which fell into sin and uncleanness, because of their fallen marriage covenants; and equally, they testify of marriages being recovered. Marriage is a major theme of the prophetic Scriptures in which Israel and Judah preferred 'harlotry', or adultery, with other gods, rather than abiding in fellowship with Yahweh who loved them and who constantly called them to return to Him. The Lord's intention for His people is that they be betrothed to Him - joined in the love and fellowship of one Spirit. This is His kind intention towards all who dwell inside the walls of the New Jerusalem.

Outside the city, however, is another culture. It is inhabited by those who seek to establish their own righteousness upon a ground that is not within the lines which the Holy Spirit has drawn. These are foolish virgins who, though having access to the anointing of the Spirit in fellowship, prefer to postpone obedience in the hope that their personal commitment will qualify their inclusion in the New Jerusalem.

This is a point to which we must take heed. We cannot presume to have one culture in our private houses, while paying lip service to the culture which the Lord insists upon in *His* house. There is only one culture in the house of the Lord. This is part of the mystery of the relationship between our marriages (what we do in our houses) and the marriage of Christ in the church (what we do in His house).

We can see, then, that marriage is a serious matter which places upon us an obligation to find the Lord's culture in this new relational setting.

A new culture of marriage

'Moreover, whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.'
Rom 8:30.

The above passage gives us the trajectory of Paul's gospel treatment in the book of Romans. Paul was not ashamed of the gospel which proclaimed the word of his predestination. He knew that he was set apart for good works in Christ Jesus, and he knew what those works were. He wanted every person who heard the good news to know the word of their own predestination in the same way, so that they could come to 'the obedience of faith'. Rom 16:26.

Paul was clear: those who believe the word of the gospel will behave accountably and bring their deeds into the light. Their mouths are completely stopped - meaning that they have died to their own way - and they meet the Lord face to face. In this way, the fear of the Lord is 'before their eyes'. Rom 3:18-19. They receive faith and understand that, 'by works of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin'. Rom 3:20.

For this reason, the believer can be justified; that is, made righteous. As Paul wrote in the next verse: 'But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been manifested, [although] being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe.' Rom 3:21-22.

'All who believe' are those who walk in the faith and steps of believing Abraham who is called 'the father of all who believe'. Rom 4:11. Abraham was circumcised so that he could *become* the father of all those who believe. This was his predestination, to which he was called and which he then believed. (Note the steps - predestined, called, justified). For this reason, Abraham was justified and became our father - the father of those 'who have believed'. Heb 4:3.

The final step in Paul's scheme from Romans Chapter 8 is 'glorified'. Abraham was not merely glorified in the sense that he went up into glory when he died. More than that, he glorified the Lord while still in his own flesh as he, in type, remained joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering. As a result, the Lord glorified Abraham, granting him the capacity of His own life in Abraham's mortal body - *exanastasis*. With Sarah, Abraham was conformed to the image of God in the fellowship of one spirit so

that, together, they could bring forth a son who could be joined to the predestination of Christ Himself, through offering.

This is the capacity of the New Jerusalem, whose parents Abraham and Sarah are by faith. We have been predestined to a share in the glory of the New Jerusalem if we believe and walk in the same way that Abraham and Sarah believed and walked. We are also given *exanastasis* to walk out the journey of our life through the seven wounding events of Christ, so that we can find recovery in the image and likeness of God.

Moreover, husbands and wives, together, can be conformed to the image of God in one spirit so that they can be joined in one spirit by the love of God. Consequently, they will be able to bring forth godly seed. In closing, let's restate this new culture in point form.

Summary points

- The marriage of Christ and His church provides a pattern for Christian marriage, and a context for Christian marriages.
- Receiving the remnant of the Spirit grants a couple their 'plot' in the bride city. A couple receives a remnant of the Spirit when they die to the obligations of romantic love and are sanctified to one another in the offering love of God.
- The sanctifying waypoints towards this are encompassed in our baptism. It is through baptism that an individual becomes dead to the law; and it is the same for the woman, the church, so that she can be married to Christ. This marriage is in the New Covenant of the Spirit.
- The *culture* of the remnant of the Spirit looks like this. A man, by the Holy Spirit, submits to the lordship of Christ. A woman, by obedience to the lordship of the Spirit, is able to offer herself to her husband and submit to him as to Christ. She cannot do this by trying very hard or by attempting to hear from Christ. She can only do so by receiving a remnant of the Spirit.
- The book of Romans describes how a marriage can be delivered to the New Covenant by the Spirit. Israel was married to Christ under the Old Covenant. This covenant is the law of carnal requirements, the basis of carnal religion, and results only in spiritual and physical death. Christians can marry in this way. In coming to the New Covenant, the Old Covenant must be annulled.

- The point here is that there is a new marriage covenant for the church, the bride of Christ. Similarly, there is a new covenant of marriage for a man and a woman. Israel is no longer geographical Israel. At Christ's third wound, Israel became Jew and Gentile in one body. We belong to this new nation, which is also the bride of Christ, by being born of the Spirit and by continuing to be led by the Spirit and not the flesh.
- Righteousness as a gift received through participation in baptism, enables romantic love and all its obligations to be replaced by offering love and its sanctification.
- Each party recognises that they cannot do anything to recover, or to redeem, the other from their respective dilemmas or areas of struggle. Nor is there is obligation for them to do so.
- Offering love and its sanctification, therefore, replace romantic love and its list of commandments. The pressure to perform, project or falsely promise is removed, leaving the couple with a clear picture of the way things really are. They thus have an accurate and unvarnished perspective of one another and can choose one another in the truth by the Spirit.
- This is very important, because on the other side of the equation, married couples find it very difficult to renegotiate their mutual, often unspoken, obligations. So difficult is it, that many people prefer divorce over any renegotiation of their marriage covenant. For this reason, it is very important to deal with these matters in courtship. The lie of seeking identity verification through romance needs to be identified and renounced. It must be replaced, through sanctification, by offering love. By this means, the couple can arrive at reality and eternal life! That is, they will have life in their marriage.
- With regard to headship, Christ is not speaking to the woman. The Spirit leads the man to hear from Christ. In turn, the woman is able to hear from the Spirit so that she can be brought to her obedience to her husband, whether he is a believer or not. In this way, the grace of life through headship comes to a household.

Article 8

Steps towards receiving a remnant of the Spirit

Tim Maurice

Where does a courting couple begin? Left to themselves, the two of them are going to end up in a religious maze of some description, that is for certain. As Paul put it, 'For what I am doing, I do not understand'. Rom 7:15. Even the earliest stages of courtship will be marked by expectations and obligations, which both parties hold and of which the other will gradually become aware. These expectations and obligations will become the basis of their marriage covenant unless they are identified and renounced.

It is a great relief when a couple can let go of marriage as a law, where there is a continual need to apply the 'letter' of interpretation through argument and counterargument. When a relationship is allowed to die to this as its foundation, a new relationship can begin. The new relationship can be based on the 'newness of the Spirit', allowing a couple to join in one spirit without hindrance.

Justification and recovery

Justification becomes very real at the point where a transgression needs to come into the light. All recovery begins with relational accountability. Equally, all lameness is amplified through an unwillingness to be accountable. The endpoint of non-accountability is victimhood. A courtship cannot grow if one party responds to the circumstances of life as a victim. If the other person accepts this proposition, they will be placed in the role of carer and compensator for the one they would like to marry.

If the couple wish to proceed with their relationship, there will have to be recovery through justification. The party who has been causing the offence will have to confess and renounce their behaviour. Righteousness can only be ministered as a person believes the word of the gospel. For instance, where immorality has taken place, it must be brought into the light. A young man or woman should not get a shock on the other side of marriage because of a disclosure which should have taken place during courtship. Moreover, in such instances, one party must not demand that the other person 'keeps their secret' as a demonstration of love.

Binding a person to this kind of confidentiality is a form of gross manipulation, and it will not result in righteousness or sanctification. Walking in darkness this way is an action of unbelief whereby, instead of relying on the finished work of Christ's offering for their cleansing, the person asks their spouse to be the one who covers their shame. When such things occur, the marriage becomes a fortress against the word and against the messengers who proclaim it.

And the matter need not be one of sexual immorality. It may be an illegal action, some form of dishonesty, dodgy business practice, an issue of unforgiveness, unbelief, unclean family connections, and so on. The point is, a man and a woman must not set up their own altar, where they 'process' their collective sin together in the dark. This will only breed corruption and alienation. What is more, even in their mutual agreement, they will never find the capacity to be one spirit. The Lord has much better things in view for our marriages.

What is the alternative? It starts with each person being released to their individual accountability. A man cannot attempt to cover a woman's sin, simply because he is 'in love with her' or because he believes that his headship can function in the place of the blood of Christ. A woman must

not be convinced that she should 'cover' for her husband as part of her submission as his helper.

The Scriptures are clear: no person can redeem, or spiritually compensate for, their brother: 'None of them can by any means redeem his brother, Nor give to God a ransom for him— For the redemption of their souls is costly, And it shall cease forever— That he should continue to live eternally, And not see the Pit.' Psa 49:7-9.

This is where offering love must replace romantic love. Romantic love is possessive, whereas offering love has faith for life to be laid down and to be taken up again. This was the faith of Abraham with regard to Isaac. Abraham believed God for resurrection life in his son and was therefore able to release him to his predestination. Abraham did not try to interfere with the Holy Spirit's dealings with Isaac. He did not attempt to redeem Isaac from his suffering.

This is offering love in action. This is the love which the Holy Spirit pours into our heart when He brings the New Covenant of the Spirit to us. Offering love is the life of the New Covenant. Trying to serve one another in marriage through romantic love will result only in the establishment of a covenant of carnal commandments, comprised of expectations, obligations and unyielding demands. As Paul wrote to the Romans, this form of covenant must die if a couple is to receive a remnant of the Spirit.

'Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.' Rom 7:1-2.

So let's take a couple that knows the law and wants to get married. With the best will in the world, and with all the most biblical thoughts about marriage and love, that man will need special help from the Lord to love that woman as he ought. Moreover, he will never be able to exercise headship by attempting to relate to Christ or the Scriptures in such a way that he knows what he is doing. He is going to have to find the capacity for headship in fellowship with his brethren; specifically, in fellowship with the presbytery.

He cannot attempt to exercise headship simply based on the knowledge that Christ is the Head of the body, and that he is a member of the body. His membership of the body must be true to the Father's intention, and it

must find a witness among those with whom the man is in fellowship. If not, the man will have to stand in what he calls his 'own faith', following the dictates of his 'own conscience' in pursuit of 'his own love'.

Equally, in spite of whatever she may think, a woman will not have it within her heart or her experience to be able to submit to the man. She has never been comparable to any person before; how could she know what it really means? Especially when it comes to being made comparable to a particular man; not the type of man she has imagined and not the style of headship she thinks is good, but an individual and original case. She is going to need the help of the Holy Spirit. Nor can she attempt to fudge the issue by attempting to bypass her husband's headship by believing that she can just go straight to Christ for that.

'Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.' Rom 7:4-6.

According to Paul, the couple is going to need to become dead to the law of their marriage in order to see a new covenant established between them. This is where the sanctifying steps will be so important, so that there is real recovery towards being conformed together in the image of God. This action of being conformed together will mean that the couple is 'built together' through obedience to Christ, so that they can establish a spiritual house.

'Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.' 1Pe 2:7-8.

The man will learn obedience to his head, Christ; and the woman will learn to receive the headship of her husband and to obey him. If they reject this as the means of being built together, Christ the cornerstone will become an offence to them and they will be unable to become 'a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.' Eph 2:22. This is because, in His

mercy, the Lord Himself becomes a stumbling stone to anyone who attempts to build upon Him with the materials of their own devising.

As a courting couple finds justification and sanctification together, they will learn to serve one another in the newness of the Spirit. As such, they will have faith to receive a remnant of the Lord's Spirit to be joined in marriage. They will join the faith of believing Abraham and Sarah. As such, their marriage will give them entry into participation in the life and culture of the New Jerusalem, the bride of Christ.

Summary

1. Justification. There must be relational accountability before marriage for transgressions which have taken place in the lives of the individuals. There can be no surprises after marriage, and no statements by a man or a woman that it is only between them and God. Forgiveness and reconciliation must be fully realised, otherwise there will be an unbridgeable gap between the couple for the whole of their marriage.
2. Each member of the couple must die to the law through the body of Christ. They do so as they walk in the faith of their baptism. Now that they can walk in the light together, they are able to have fellowship in the daily experience of the dying and the living of Christ. As such, the righteousness of God is being revealed in them. They have agreed together that this is the way that they will live, having disavowed their earlier attempt to establish their own righteousness, which produced only corruption.
3. Sanctification. Both parties can demonstrate that they know how to cleanse their own way and are thus fit to be joined to another. They are walking in the fear of the Lord with clean hands and a pure heart with respect to their own sonship and ongoing recovery. They agree wholeheartedly that sanctification, being led by the Spirit, is the will of God for them.
4. They can then glory in their tribulations as they are chastened by the hand of the Father. This works in them patient endurance and perseverance, and addresses issues of lameness and immaturity. Both parties learn to make straight paths for their feet, freeing the other person from any obligation to compensate for their lameness or lack.

Article 9

The creation of the first man

Luke Pomery

The creation of man

In the unfolding of Their covenant plan, God (*Elohim*) created the heavens and earth, the angels, and all the living creatures of the earth. Gen 1:4-25. However, on the sixth day of creation, we notice that it was the *LORD* God - that is, *Yahweh Elohim* - who created man. Gen 2:7-25. Moses summarised the LORD God's creation of man by stating that He 'created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; *male and female He created them*'. Gen 1:27. Importantly, we recognise here that it is was the male *and* the female *together* which constituted 'the creation of man' in its entirety. That is, 'the first man' was only *complete* after the woman had been formed from the rib that was taken out of his side and they were joined by God in marriage. Gen 2:18-25.

At the conclusion of each day of creation, God saw that what He had made was 'good'. Gen 1:4-25. Nevertheless, we note that He regarded the creation of man, as male and female, as being '*very good*'. Gen 1:31. *Yahweh Elohim's* creation of man all happened *through* the offering work of the Son of God. Joh 1:1-3. Col 1:15-18. Psa 139:14. Let us now consider

the distinct steps in the *creation of man* and the *formation of woman*, in more detail.

The creation of the man's *biological body* preceded the creation of his spirit and soul. The Son of God created the man's body from the dust of the ground. This was the *first* step of his creation. Then, through a *second* creative action, the Son of God breathed into the man's nostrils, causing the man to receive his *spirit and soul*. Zec 12:1. Gen 2:7. Thus, man was created *triune* in nature, meaning that he possessed all three aspects of *body, soul and spirit*. 1Th 5:23.

It is helpful to realise that even though the man had possession of his own identity and was accountable for his own expression and decisions, *the man had not yet received his sonship name*. This predestined 'name', by which he would be called and born as a son of God, *still resided in the Son*, the Seed of the Father. Therefore, although man had been created as an accountable 'living being', he had *not yet* been born of God.

Furthermore, within the creative action of breathing into man 'the breath of Yahweh', the Son was also committing to the man *every* identity who would ever be born thereafter through the process of *procreation*.

Gen 1:28. Gen 2:7. Upon conception, every person receives a body, soul and spirit. Their existence does not predate their conception within the womb of their mother. King David understood the wonderous commencement of his own existence - body, soul and spirit - within his mother's womb, when he wrote, 'For You formed my inward parts [spirit and soul]; You covered me in my mother's womb ... My frame [lit. bones; indicative of the foetus] was not hidden from You ... Your eyes saw my substance [lit. embryo], being yet unformed.' Psa 139:13-16.

Finding a comparable helper

Having created the man as a living being, the LORD God said, 'It is *not good* that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.' Gen 2:18. Man needed a comparable person for *fellowship* so that they, *together*, might know the width, length, depth and height of the love of Christ. Eph 3:18. In fellowship with the LORD God, man and his comparable helper could know and participate in the purpose of God. As part of their participation in God's everlasting covenant purpose, the man and his comparable helper could multiply identities through procreation. Therefore, a search was instigated by the LORD God with the intent of *finding a comparable helper* for the man. Even though the man - now

called Adam - had named and integrated all of creation, *a helper comparable could not be found* for him! Gen 2:20.

Adam would need to *participate in the offering of Christ* in order for his spirit and life to be multiplied beyond himself. Jesus described His offering in this way, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, *it remains alone*; but if it dies, it produces much grain.' Joh 12:24. Adam would need to, figuratively, 'go into the ground and die', so that, through this process, he would no longer remain alone. Rather, a comparable helper *would* be found for him - one formed by God.

The formation of woman

The LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam. He took a rib from Adam's side, from which He *formed* a woman. Gen 2:21. We note an important distinction here, between the Son of God firstly *creating* man and then later *forming* the woman from the man's rib. This is a key point for us to understand. The woman was not *created* separately, or independently, from the man! Rather, the woman was taken out of man and formed 'from the man'. Gen 2:23. 1Co 11:8. Making this point, the apostle Paul stated, 'Nevertheless, neither is man independent of the woman, *nor woman independent of man*, in the Lord.' 1Co 11:11.

The woman's comparability to the man would happen in two phases of offering. The first aspect of offering involved Adam; the second aspect involved the woman. First, *Adam laid down his life in a deep sleep* so that the LORD God could draw the woman from his side, through offering. The formation of the woman from the rib of the man is a picture, or type, of the formation of the church from the side of Christ. The church was *married* to Christ, as His comparable bride, on the day of His offering. Eph 5:30. Joh 19:34.

The LORD God formed the body of the woman from the biological substance of *Adam's* body. The structure and substance of her body is the same as the man's. Hence, Adam declared, '[She] is now bone of *my bones* [same structure] and flesh of *my flesh* [same substance].' Gen 2:23. Evidently, her bones and flesh were *the same* as his. However, even though the woman's body was formed from the same substance as Adam's, the LORD God had *uniquely formed* her body with the capacities specific to her being a *woman*. Her body was distinctively formed as *female*.

The woman's body was made comparable to the man. She was to be the figurative 'ground' into which the seed from Adam was placed. As a mother, the woman would bring forth, from that seed, another identity through the creative process of *procreation*. The gender of every conceived child - *male* or *female* - is contained within the seed from their father. From conception, the child's body, soul and spirit are formed in the likeness of their parents. However, even though every person comes into existence through the biological process of procreation, the Scriptures teach us that their body, soul and spirit *belong to God*. Zec 12:1. Eze 18:4. 1Co 6:20.

The LORD God formed the 'spirit' of the woman from the life that was resident within the rib taken from Adam's side. *From this life*, the feminine identity of the woman's inward person was formed. Like the man, she was formed triune in nature - body, soul and spirit. Therefore, Adam stated, in relation to the inward person of the woman, 'She shall be called Woman [that is, the feminine identity and expression of her inner person was *named*, by him, as 'Woman'], because she was taken out of Man.' Gen 2:23.

The second aspect of offering which established comparability required the *woman's* participation. By faith, *she would need to lay down her life in offering to reveal her husband and to become the vessel of multiplication*. A particularly helpful example of this second phase of offering is seen in Sarah with her husband, Abraham. 1Pe 3:5-6. For this reason, the prophet Isaiah directed us to, 'Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you'. Isa 51:2. Sarah became a comparable helper to Abraham by preserving his life. Without fear and terror, she laid down her life *in the same darkness of Christ's offering* which Abram had earlier experienced. Gen 15:12. God protected and preserved her. Gen 12:17-19. Furthermore, by faith, she became the vessel of multiplication. Through the faith of Abraham *and the faith of Sarah*, we see a numberless multitude of sons and daughters who would be born of God and choose to follow in these same steps of faith. Rom 4:12,16.

The covenant of marriage

The *covenant of marriage* was established by *the LORD God*. It came from Him - it did not originate from man. From the beginning of the creation, the LORD God created man as male and female, and He then joined them together as one spirit and one flesh by instituting the covenant of marriage. Mar 10:6-9. Mal 2:11. The man and the woman were given a

remnant of Yahweh's Spirit, making them one. Adam and the woman were married on the day that she was formed from his side, at the time when the LORD God presented her to him. Gen 2:22.

In *Yahweh*, we see that the sum of all diversity is *Three* - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. However, the sum of all *human* diversity is seen in the comparability of these *two* - male and female! In this way, we understand that a man and a woman *joined in marriage* are an expression of the worship that belongs to Yahweh *Elohim*. Yahweh *Elohim* relate to one another in Spirit and in reality; They reveal one another by offering. And, in receiving a remnant of the Spirit, the dynamic of *offering, motivated by love* in Yahweh, has now been extended to the relationship of *marriage*. Therefore, the marriage covenant, instituted by the LORD God, is a 'picture' of the Godhead model - functioning in the same manner as Their own life and relationship! The *two* have been made *one* spirit, and yet, they can bring forth a *multitude* of spirits.

The *tree of life* is a symbol of *the fellowship of headship* in the garden of Eden. The life and expression of Adam and the woman (later named Eve) was dependent upon their ongoing connection to this fellowship. To become a comparable helper in Adam's work, the woman would need to choose, by faith, *to participate in the fellowship of headship* at the tree of life. 1Co 11:3. Sadly however, after they fell from this fellowship with the LORD God, Adam and the woman were *no longer* one spirit. They would need to recover the fellowship of one spirit with the LORD God, and with one another, at the tree of life. Even under the Old Covenant, we note that, *through faith*, a couple could recover the *one-spirit* fellowship of their marriage. Mal 2:15-16.

The establishment of the first family

After the woman was formed from Adam's side, God blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth.' Gen 1:28. It was not until after the Fall when Adam named her Eve, meaning 'the mother of all living', that their participation in this process of procreation was realised. Gen 3:20. Then, as they recovered a remnant of the Spirit, Adam *knew* Eve his wife, meaning they were *able to fellowship together* in relation to the blessing given to them by God. Gen 4:25. Their knowing of one another was a participation in the Everlasting Covenant, by which identities were multiplied with the promise of becoming sons of God and glorified sons of men.

Upon the arrival of their first child, Adam and Eve, with their child, became 'a nuclear family'. A nuclear family is a husband and his wife along with the children who are born to that married couple. A nuclear family is distinct from the extended family, which may incorporate three or four generations. Gen 2:24. Evidently, a husband and his wife, with their children, *are separate from, yet still belong to*, the extended families of their parents. The Scriptures teach us that the realities of the nuclear family and the extended family are to be properly understood and appreciated, and appropriately honoured. Eph 6:1-4. 2Ti 1:5. Est 2:7.

Conclusion

In Their fellowship, *before*, Yahweh *Elohim* determined to bring forth a multitude of sons of God who would be born of Their life and joined to Their fellowship. Their desire and purpose for mankind was expressed in the statement, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness'. Gen 1:26. We note that the same principles that applied to the creation of the first man - as body, soul, and spirit - also apply to the creation of every person who is brought forth through the process of procreation. And now, importantly, every person has the promise of being formed into the image and likeness of God as they *choose to join the glorifying process that Christ pioneered* as the Son of Man.

Article 10

The triune nature of man

Luke Pomery

The LORD God created the first man, and every person thereafter, to be *triune* in nature. Every person is the union of three parts - *body, soul and spirit*. The Scriptures describe the triune nature of man in this way: 'Now may the God of peace Himself *sanctify you completely*, and may your *whole spirit, soul and body* be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' 1Th 5:23. To be 'preserved blameless', we need to receive the Lord's sanctifying work in our body, soul and spirit.

In the Scriptures, 'the outward man' refers to a person's physical body; whereas 'the inward man' refers to the indivisible, yet distinguishable, elements of their soul and spirit. 2Co 4:16. The apostle Paul remarked that, although they cannot be separated, the word of God *exposes the distinction* between one's soul and spirit. Heb 4:12.

While ever we maintain our participation in Christ's offering, our spirit and soul are being continually renewed and regenerated into the image and likeness of God. Tit 3:5. On the day of resurrection, our body will be raised as an immortal, spiritual body in the likeness of Christ's resurrection body.

Spirit

Let us consider what constitutes the *spirit* of a person. First, a person's *identity* – that is, 'who they are' – resides within their spirit. Their identity includes their gender – male or female – along with the unique characteristics of their abilities and temperament. All of this detail belongs to their 'natural' name. Ecc 6:10. Nevertheless, it is only as a person is connected to their 'sonship' name, which is written in Christ, who is the Seed of the Father, that their identity can have true and full expression.

Second, a person's *conscience* is a faculty of their spirit. Conscience refers to the fundamental capacity to 'know within oneself' apart from any cognitive reasoning. As a result of the Fall, mankind has 'an evil conscience' that can bear witness only through our fallen 'knowledge of good and evil'. Heb 10:22. Thus, each person's conscience becomes 'a law unto themselves' according to their own definition of 'good', which is indicative of another law within their heart. Rom 2:15. Rom 7:23. Nevertheless, those who are joined to the offering and sufferings of Christ *have their conscience cleansed* from these self-righteous, dead works. Heb 9:14. With a cleansed conscience – which is a true awareness of oneself – we can now bear witness in the Holy Spirit that we are sons of God. Rom 9:1. Rom 8:16.

Third, the spirit of a person grants them the capacity to *worship*, to *fellowship*, to *know* others and to *be known* by others. Relationship, therefore, is a 'spirit-to-spirit' knowing of one another. Gal 4:9. We have a spirit-to-spirit relationship with the LORD God. Joh 4:24. Equally, the reality of being joined spirit-to-spirit applies to *every* sanctified relationship between the members of Christ's body! The Holy Spirit enables us to be joined in one Spirit with the Lord, and with others who are also sons of God. 1Co 6:17. Eph 4:3.

Solomon described the spirit of a person as 'the lamp of Yahweh'. Pro 20:27. A person who is joined to the fellowship of Yahweh has their spirit, or lamp, *full of light*. Mat 6:22. In contrast, a person who is disconnected from the fellowship of Yahweh has their spirit, or lamp, *in darkness*. Pro 13:9. Although they do have identity, they have no spiritual understanding. 1Co 2:14. They are unable to know Yahweh or to know themselves.

Soul

The soul encompasses a person's capacity and desire *to express*, or *to communicate*, that which belongs to their spirit. For us, our individual identity is *uniquely expressed* through the masculine or feminine expression of our soul. The soul of a woman conveys her identity through the emotions, affections and perceptions that pertain to the various elements of her expression as a woman, a daughter, a sister or a mother. Equally, the same principle applies to every man.

The specific faculties of our soul are our *mind*, our *will* and our *emotions*. From these faculties comes a myriad of masculine or feminine expressions that incorporate our thoughts, feelings, desires, concerns, volition, as well as our intended presentation of 'who we are' to others. A person who is born of the Spirit is free to *set their mind* on the things of the Spirit. Rom 8:5. Thus, our mind can be *subject to* our spirit as we are *being led* by the Holy Spirit. The mind is therefore no longer the decision-maker, or director, of our life.

Importantly, it is through the faculties of our soul that we express sanctified friendship and affection toward one another within the body of Christ! 1Th 5:26. Such expression of Christian friendship is seen from man to man, from woman to woman, from man to woman, and vice versa – and across all age groups. A man meets a woman in the body of Christ as being a sister. He meets an older woman as being a mother, while he meets a young woman as being a youth. However, a man only ever meets *one* woman as his wife – and there is a unique expression of affection that belongs to husband and wife.

A wonderful example of the one-spirit bond of friendship affection is seen between King David and Jonathan, the son of Saul. The Scriptures recorded this profound friendship as that of loving the other 'as their own soul'. 1Sa 18:1. Their *friendship in first love* became an instructive exemplar for the whole nation. 2Sa 1:17,26. The same is true for presbyters who are genuinely bonded in brotherly love. Rev 3:7. Their relational example of true friendship affection multiplies as a ministry among the lampstand church.

Body

The faculties of our 'body' – which include our senses, physical capacities and appetites – are the means by which our soul expresses itself within the physical, material and biological world. Our soul is expressed through

the faculties of our body. While a person can relate with others 'spirit-to-spirit' and 'soul-to-soul', we acknowledge that such interaction is not actually possible apart from the expression and use of one's *body*. In reality, we communicate and relate with one another *through* the use of our body, with its physical expression and capacities. Furthermore, our body is the vehicle that has been suitably fashioned for us to fulfil the will of God through our *works*. Heb 10:5,7.

When a child is conceived within the womb of their mother, that child is either *male* or *female*. The gender of their biological body has been determined by the seed of the child's father. During the weeks of gestation which follow their conception, their identity and soul are then formed *in accordance with the gender of their body*. The body is crafted to be the vehicle through which the gender of their identity (spirit) and soul will be expressed. This is an important point. The gender of a person's physical body cannot be altered; otherwise, it would be in conflict with the gender of their identity and soul – which, likewise, cannot be altered! Any attempt to do so, because a person is not happy with their gender, causes only severe identity confusion.

Every person's physical body requires the maturity and application of *discipline*. The apostle Paul described this fact when he said, 'But *I discipline my body* [with its lusts and desires] and *bring it into subjection* [to the one-spirit fellowship], lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.' 1Co 9:27. The key point is that a person's body needs to be managed by their *soul and spirit*. And this is possible only as our *spirit* is led and helped by the Holy Spirit!

The psalmist described the alternative, where our soul is, instead, tied to the various appetites and desires of our body, writing, 'My soul clings to the dust [from which the biological body was formed]; *revive me according to Your word*'. Psa 119:25. A person's soul cleaves to the dust when their spirit is in darkness, meaning that their awareness of themselves is no longer coming from God. They endeavour to know themselves *through* what they do in their physical body – either through the exercise of their fleshly capacities or through the information collected through their senses.

Our body and soul are revived as our spirit learns to *cling to the word of the Lord*, and to *the fellowship of one Spirit* with Him and with one another. Luk 4:4. 1Co 6:17. Our body becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit, who makes our whole being – *body, soul and spirit* – a temple for the *agape* fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim*. 1Co 3:16.

Article II

Understanding romance

Luke Pomery

The key focus of this paper is to consider *the development of godly romance* within an exclusive man-to-woman relationship which has a view towards marriage. As we shall come to understand, the development of godly romance is a critical component of the season of courtship. A *growing affection of worship*, which has been accountably and freely chosen by a man and a woman over a season of courtship, is able to then become a commitment to being made one spirit, and then one flesh.

Leaving and cleaving

In the book of Genesis, we read concerning marriage, 'For this reason a man shall *leave* his father and his mother, and be joined [*cleave*] to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'. Gen 2:24. The foremost conditions for a marriage are maturity and viability. Is the man and is the woman sufficiently *mature* for marriage; and is their relationship *viable* for marriage? Maturity and viability are, respectively, the same two principles of *leaving* father and mother, and *cleaving* (or, being joined) as 'man and wife'. Let's consider both of these principles, or prerequisites, further.

The process of *leaving* can only commence if a person is ready for marriage. In summary, readiness for marriage, or marriageability, is demonstrated in the capacity to sustain the fellowship that is necessary for marriage. Furthermore, the process of *leaving* also means that both the man and the woman are able to *freely choose* one another and find the will of God for their life. The capacity to choose one another, free from any other pervading influence or rationale, is another measure of their *maturity*.

If one, or both of them, are not mature enough to make this choice, then the union would become an unequal yoke. 2Co 6:14. There are a number of competing motivations that could inhibit their capacity to choose one another in freedom - including immaturity, incapacity, or being in bondage to self-centredness. Variables such as these would prove to limit a person's ability to 'leave father and mother' and to personally sustain the fellowship that is necessary for marriage.

The account of Rebekah's interaction with Abraham's servant is a helpful example of the faith and culture of a single woman that indicates her personal maturity for marriage. Rebekah's readiness to become a friend to Isaac was demonstrated in her service to Abraham's servant helper, who was a *type* of the Holy Spirit. Gen 24:10-11,17-20. We note that Rebekah readily watered his ten camels. These 'camels' are a symbol of those who labour and bear a burden in the administration of the Spirit, but who, at times, can become difficult and needy when doing their work. Rebekah did not hesitate, but rather made haste to care for them! Rebekah is a type of the virgin church who is married to Christ. Every woman who belongs to the bride city needs to have this same faith and culture - that is, a willingness and perseverance in refreshing the saints.

The process of *cleaving* means that the man and the woman, who are in a sanctified relationship together, are able to find a one-spirit connection through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives to the couple a portion of Yahweh's 'Spirit', which is the capacity for 'knowing' and for fellowship. The *affection of worship* expressed between the man and the woman, as they meet in freedom, is *godly romance*. We shall consider the development of godly romance later in this paper.

The courtship search

Let us now consider the endeavour of a 'courtship search'. The Bible states that there *is* such a thing as a 'courtship search'! We noted in the earlier article, 'The creation of the first man', that after Adam named all the animals there was still *not found* a helper comparable for

him. Gen 2:20. Clearly, there was a process of searching for a helper comparable. Also, we read in the book of Proverbs, 'He who *finds* a wife, *finds* a good thing, and obtains favour from the LORD'. Pro 18:22. Let us consider the 'good thing' which is being sought after.

Firstly, the good thing is the very *process* of finding. Thus, there is a proper *way* of 'finding' a spouse by those who are mature and free to proceed in this phase of life. Both the man and the woman can trust in the integrity of the process and, by faith, freely offer themselves to the season. We noted that the process by which the woman was formed as a comparable helper to Adam involved a distinct season of offering for the man and also for the woman. This process of offering towards comparability is also true for *every* courting couple.

The process of finding commences with the development of broad Christian friendship with many sisters or with many brothers. We shall define this season of broad relating as '*agape friendship*'. Once a young person has come of age and has a readiness towards marriage, they can take a season of time to meet their sisters or their brothers, who are in this same phase of life. The development of *broad Christian friendships* with a faith and view towards marriage happens in the context of the *agape* meal, publicly and from house to house. Thus, '*agape friendship*' is an appropriate term to describe these non-exclusive relationships, which are formed and developed in the context of the *agape* meal.

Importantly, the man or the woman is not seeking friendships with those who are outside of the fellowship of the *agape* meal. Nor are they seeking to keep their relationship 'hidden in the dark'. It is vital to realise that a relationship which is not grounded upon the *agape* meal will develop *an alternative 'form' of romance*, which is based on obligation. We shall consider fallen romance later in this paper.

Within the context of the New Jerusalem, *agape* friendship is without partiality. Thus, a person can meet their brothers or sisters for no other reason apart from the freedom to do so. After a season of *agape* friendship, they are free to choose one another, as an exclusive friend, with a view towards developing godly romance. And likewise, motivated by *agape*, they are equally free to *not* continue to develop their relationship but, rather, remain as good Christian friends. Solomon described the process of *proceeding to an exclusive friendship*, writing, 'Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all'. Pro 31:29. Here we note the development of broad friendship with many virtuous daughters of Zion and then to the development of godly romance with *one sister*.

Secondly, when you are on the courtship search, it will be necessary for you to also find 'a way of escape' for yourself. In real terms, you are going into a potentially *dangerous* zone, and you need to exercise an appropriate degree of caution for the duration of your search. For the Scripture says, 'And I find *more bitter than death* the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are fetters. He who pleases God shall escape from her, but the sinner shall be *trapped by her*.' Ecc 7:26. During the courtship search, it will be necessary to escape from this kind of woman. Being 'trapped by her' would be a stark contrast to the reality of 'finding a wife' in maturity and freedom. You will please God as you receive illumination from Him concerning *the nature* of the bond, or union, that you are to seek throughout this process; *and* as you discard the historical notions of what you 'expected' or 'hoped' it to be.

Thirdly, the 'good thing' which the young person is finding during the courtship search, is a *sanctified woman* or a *sanctified man*. In the book of Proverbs, a sanctified woman is referred to as a 'virtuous wife'. Solomon wrote, '*Who can find a virtuous wife?* For her worth is far above rubies'. Pro 31:10. The apostle Peter described a virtuous wife as a woman who trusts in God, adorns herself with a gentle and quiet spirit, and who demonstrates submission within the fellowship of headship. 1Pe 3:4-5.

Finding affection

Let us consider, now, the example of a man and a woman who are finding a *one-spirit relationship* during a courtship. Their 'affection of worship', which is a spirit-to-spirit meeting of one another that is enabled by the Holy Spirit, *is* true godly romance. It is helpful to recognise that each of them will uniquely convey this *affection* towards the other in accordance with the masculine or feminine *expression of their soul*.

Godly romance is between a man and a woman who are meeting in fellowship, where they are *knowing* one another. Said simply, they are 'truly meeting'! In this way, true godly romance is a worshipping fellowship. They are learning and growing in the precious culture of relationship, whereby each one is *always met and never conquered*. The desire and affection of continually meeting the other person *is* godly romance.

Romance operates in sanctified *freedom*. The element of the freedom of choice that exists within Yahweh is also true for us! Indeed, this is how Yahweh *Elohim* function - They meet and worship one another in *freedom*; for this is the love of God. And, what is true in Yahweh *Elohim*

as *Three*, is now expressed as the freedom that is found between a godly man and godly woman, *as two*, in a marriage. What is true in Yahweh is true in the married couple. The love of God expressed to one another, as they remain joined in fellowship, *is godly romance!* And, since romance operates in freedom, we acknowledge that it *cannot be organised or arranged by others*.

Fallen romance

We need to realise the danger of the relationship being established upon 'fallen romance' with its *obligations* - instead of 'godly romance' with its *sanctification*. Fallen romance is an identity-verifying *default*. An immature or 'lost' spirit - that is, someone who doesn't know themselves - seeks self-realisation through the possession of the other person. The other person becomes a resource to satisfy their wanton desire for fulfilment and identity expression. However, because their self-centred agendas align - she is seeking a man, and he is seeking a woman - it can feel like they are 'madly in love'! This is why King Solomon stated, 'Charm is deceitful, and beauty is passing'. Pro 31:30. Indeed, for every couple, their relationship will default to this kind of fallen romance unless they are delivered to a new way of relating.

The selection of a special friend, as a way of securing another because of self-interest, is a *trading* mechanism which does damage to, and denies, true freedom of choice. Obligation, in this way, is motivated by fear. These kinds of agreements can even be brokered by a third party; be it a friend or an extended family member. When one severs from this kind of obligation, it provokes an angry reaction in the extended family of the other. In such scenarios, we see that the freedom of choice that should have been afforded to the man and to the woman, is not honoured.

This principle of an 'extended family arrangement', either to secure a husband for a daughter or to secure a wife for a son, can operate in *many* ways. The overexertion of extended-family pressure upon a couple for the purpose of 'a successful outcome' will restrict the formation of their one-spirit bond! This will become an 'unequal yoke' due to the lack of the freedom of choice that is being imposed upon the situation. This is particularly true where the young person, because of immaturity or incapacity, is unable to speak clearly on these matters of choice with their family, and with others. Instead, family should *free* their mature children to simply meet each other and choose one another for themselves.

Importantly, there *is* a valid place for the extended family to provide an appropriate relational context for young people who are choosing one another in maturity and freedom. Indeed, the man and the woman are also *free* to discuss the choices that they are making in the context of their extended family. And such conversation should be a highly valuable and healthy point of fellowship along the journey, so that young people are not misguided in their venture.

In some situations, we note that pre-existing sexual immorality between a young man and a young woman can become a reason why extended families feel pressured to pursue an 'arranged' type of marriage between them. However, 'getting people married' because of sexual immorality is merely an attempt to make 'legitimate' what is actually illegitimate. Simply becoming 'one flesh' does not mean that the couple are 'one spirit'. The promise in the Old Testament is that God would give a remnant of His Spirit to a *sanctified relationship*, for He seeks godly offspring. Mal 2:15. Without a remnant of Yahweh's Spirit, the couple would have no access to the blessing promised to Abraham. Furthermore, the children born to that union would not be adopted sons of God. Clearly, in such circumstances, pushing for a 'quick marriage' would not be an appropriate course of action.

Marriage reformation

A short note to conclude on the recovery of godly romance within a marriage. *The nature of romance* - whether 'godly romance' or 'fallen romance' - that is established within a courtship will invariably define *the nature of the covenant* in which the married couple are joined. It is shocking to realise that most marriages would be more willing to divorce than to *renegotiate* the romantic obligations that they nominated, and inadvertently agreed to, during their courtship. Only a participation in the 'death' of the cross of Christ is able to annul these former obligations, thus freeing a couple to recover godly romance. Needless to say, it is much better to learn the culture of godly romance in courtship *before* you are married!

By faith, a young person *can be clear* on the culture of fallen romance which they are refusing - both in themselves and from the other. Also, a husband and wife can renegotiate the bond of their marriage covenant as they meet the Lord themselves and mourn alone. They can recover godly romance within their marriage as they let go of control and learn to meet in the freedom of offering. The *motivation* of the relational bond then *shifts* away from envy and moves to become *agape*, the love of God.

Article 12

Blood guilty in the family

Richie Kaa

The ministry of the bride city

In the recent season, we have received an important upgrade in our understanding concerning the work of the bride city, the New Jerusalem. This city, comprising a network of worthy houses, is the corporate bride of Christ who has been fashioned as the comparable helper to Christ in the bringing forth of sons of God, who are spiritual. These are those who are born to see and then enter the kingdom.

The bringing forth of the sons of God occurs in two ways. Firstly, this includes children born into covenant homes who are then raised by God-fearing parents. This also refers to the work of evangelism among a house-to-house network, gathering and establishing those coming out from the world and coming into the kingdom.

Accordingly, Paul was intent on equipping the citizens of the bride city with a proper understanding of their ministry work and also the pitfalls and impediments that would hinder their fruitfulness. A central take-away from Paul's equipping ministry is that carnality was, and

remains, a terminal condition for any Christian. This is because the carnal way of living esteems the other law as an acceptable source of righteousness. But in truth, this only brings a believer back under the law of sin and death and under the judgement of God, preventing them from obeying what the Spirit is directing them to do. This is because they have exchanged their participation in the *agape* meal for the preservation of their self-image and its associated priorities. These have become an idol in their heart. Paul described such a mind as hostile to God and unable to obey God's law. Rom 8:7.

A lordship crisis

For those of us who have been raised in a Christian home, the benefits will seem obvious enough. They include being born of the divine nature from conception, being trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and learning the culture of fellowship and offering. These are indeed commendable milestones that are established under the faith of believing parents. But the faith of believing parents can only carry a person so far. As such, we must be very clear not to confuse these achievements as evidence of the choice that belongs to the process of entering the kingdom of heaven. In fact, it is timely to confirm that any choice prior to a personal encounter with the lordship of the Spirit is nothing more than compliance.

Family fortress

To be clear, compliance is the action of conforming to a defined measure or standard. The belief that compliance can achieve the righteousness of God works this way. A covenant home is nominated as God's intended beginning point for training and the establishment of sons in the culture of the kingdom. In this sense, family carries the primary mandate for the training of children to mature to their proper point of accountable choosing age.

However, when carnality remains their culture, the mandate of such a house becomes confused, provoking well-meaning parents to install their own religious benchmark of right-living, rather than joining the *agape* meal where the word of the messenger can be received. It is only here that the family can obtain understanding concerning their obedience.

Otherwise, the result is that children are trained according to a familiar culture of religious righteousness, even though, at first, they may appear secure and obedient. This should not be confused with the righteousness

that comes by faith. Rather, it signals a far more serious problem, which the Scriptures refer to as 'blood-guilty', which is the condition of being culpable for bloodshed or murder. Any household espousing a gospel that has defined an alternative version of right-living with loyalty to the family's self-defined standard and its corresponding obligations, should give urgent attention to address this matter.

The point is as simple as it is stark. Any parent who shields their children from the *agape* meal is guilty of their blood. Parents of such homes, typically presume that the identity of their children belongs to them as their personal possession. This is a form of conquering that is motivated by a father's fallen need to have dominion and by a mother's fallen need to express her god-like delusion.

The consequence is that their children are damaged and impeded from knowing the Lord and from growing and maturing in their sonship, and this often turns their children into 'twice the child of hell' that they themselves are. Mat 23:15. Parents in such homes express statements like, 'we do it this way in *our* family', and they become indignant when a visitor says something that violates their religious standard of living. This is a 'family first' gospel and is completely opposed to the gospel of God.

Hindered from entering

Common, too, among carnal households are those who are struggling with sin that so easily entangles them. This is because they are trapped in the maze of carnality, having been trained to set their mind on the family's definition of what is good and right. This has caused them to come into conflict with the Spirit, who is resisting their fleshly efforts whilst they, too, resist the Spirit's leading and work of convicting. This in turn hinders them from walking according to their sanctification and, ultimately, from entering the everlasting kingdom.

For this reason, every young person must understand their need to personally meet and surrender to the lordship of the Holy Spirit. Children who are raised in such homes will grow and learn to assess their performance in life based on their success or failure against this measure. This will inevitably bring them under condemnation. This then provokes the fear of death which motivates their religious activities, including confession and prayer, all with a view of attaining relief from their wretched and fleshly strivings. Living in this way will never achieve the righteousness that comes by faith.

Faith leads to righteousness

Faith leading to righteousness is only received when a family gives absolute priority to their participation in the fellowship of the *agape* meal of Christ and His bride. This means counting all other pursuits, priorities and gospels, as loss. When this is their resolve, a family will receive faith by the hearing of the word of Christ. His faith works by love, and we know that the love of God is poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit. This is how He enables our obedience. As we mature in our sonship, we must learn that obedience without faith is compliance, and faith without obedience is a dead work. Jas 2:17. True obedience is the fruit of faith by which the righteousness of God is revealed, and is the means by which Satan is overcome and cast down from every home in heavenly places.

Covenant home

This confirms that not every household sitting among the congregation is a covenant household or part of the ministry of the bride city. This is because not every marriage has received a remnant of the Spirit and, therefore, is unable to be joined in one Spirit with the Lord. A family fortress (that is, blood-guilty) will set out in much the same way as a covenant home. But a fortress home will always reserve the right to determine their own position, particularly on matters most relevant to their interests.

Such homes become their own measure and quickly become estranged from *agape* fellowship. However, the clear point of distinction concerning a house will pivot on the issue of what the children are free to choose. Children who have been raised within a fortress are typically prevented from making this choice, and impeded from connecting to the capacity of the Holy Spirit who is dedicated to enabling their obedience to the word of God and their walk according to their sanctification. Jesus gave a very clear warning concerning those who cause a little one who believes in Him, to sin or stumble. Mat 8:13. He said that it would be better for a millstone to be hung around his neck and he was drowned in the depths of the sea. Mar 9:42. Those who remain locked up to this fortress dynamic, are brought into conflict with the Holy Spirit who is resisting their loyalty and obligation to the familiar dynamics in which they have been raised. And if their parents won't free them, then they must release themselves. Unless they are delivered from the family fortress, they will never be free from the besetting conditions that plague them and the condemnation they live under.

Article 13

Making straight paths for our feet

Richie Kaa

Deliverance and recovery from sin is one of the most important matters that every Christian must address. Unless we are illuminated to God's provision for recovery, we will remain ensnared by sin, troubled by 'the accuser', and helplessly addicted to fleshly ministry methods that only compound our condemnation. Our beginning point is to confess that we have built with wood, hay and stubble and must now turn in order to be taught again. In this regard, many will be helped by first conceding that they have found no reprieve for matters of entrenched sin that remain within their own lives or households, despite much prayer, confession, and counsel.

Thankfully, the Lord is illuminating to us our likeness to the rich, young ruler. Mar 10. His worldly riches revealed that his treasures were not in heaven, but were located on earth, according to the way in which he had 'built his house'. His youthfulness revealed his immaturity (carnality) and his need for training. All the while, his rulership revealed that he remained in complete control of his every move, and was subject to no-one.

You are still carnal

We remain as 'a rich, young ruler' when we live by the other law, authoring a favourable image and lifestyle for ourselves, based upon our knowledge of good and evil.

By this knowledge, we covet the life of God as a highly valued commodity, which we then seek by taking hold of God's Law (i.e. God's word), in the belief that we can fulfil this through our own strength and capacity. This is how we 'build with wood, hay and stubble'. 1Co 3:18. Before long, we find ourselves confused and compromised, confessing, like Paul, 'I do not understand what I am doing.' Paul referred to this condition as 'wretched'.

This includes our inability to do 'the good' which we set out to do; and our inability to stop the evil which we are trying not to do. This is because the Holy Spirit is resisting our fleshly efforts, in the hope that we will become properly joined to the New Covenant of the Spirit, in which He can lead us in the truth of our sanctification.

It also includes our failure to uphold the self-righteous standards that we have aspired to, causing our hearts to condemn us. Under the weight of condemnation, we are provoked to action by the fear of death.

The ministry of condemnation

Religious activities that are motivated by condemnation are widespread among Christians. However, they represent a departure from the culture of *agape*, and are inherently defective. This is because they do not belong to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Rather, the person's motivation remains carnal and completely self-focused, as they seek only to be absolved of sin, which provides temporary relief from condemnation, but no lasting change. This is because the religious activities leave a sinner in a state of being completely ignorant of their sin and of its impact on themselves and others.

Those who seek a 'priest' in order to make confession demonstrate that they are motivated by shame, and that they desire to manage their sin in a confidential setting so that their image is not tarnished. The book of Hebrews reminds us that Christ 'despised the shame'. Heb 12:2. The shame that He despised is *our* shame. This is because it motivates us to hide our sin in darkness and behind the veil of self-righteous projection. In this regard, we recall the words of Jesus when He declared that 'everyone practising evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen.' Joh 3:20-21.

Those who seek out a 'prophet' in order to find healing demonstrate that their 'gospel' is a resource, and that healing can be gained by some kind of reciprocal interaction. This reminds us of Naaman, who sought the prophet Elisha, believing that he could purchase his healing. However, Elisha confronted Naaman's expectations by refusing to speak with him face to face; instead, sending a messenger. Thus began Naaman's healing, which required him to first be emptied of all his expectations so that he could receive and obey the word of God. Poverty of spirit needed to be his starting point, addressing within him any sense of self-importance, and helping him to 'count as loss' every accolade or reason why he might believe himself to be a deserving recipient of this healing. Unless resolved, these matters would prevent his participation in the process. However, as Naaman renounced these, he met the God of Israel personally, and could then obediently participate in his own healing.

Those who seek out a counsellor to resolve their moral and ethical dilemmas demonstrate their refusal to be personally accountable for their sanctification, believing it to be the job of a spiritual 'expert' to address their shortcomings. The inevitable lack of progress from such an interaction is then blamed on the poor quality of counsel. In truth, our only hope is that the word of God brings conviction by the Holy Spirit. This is the only way through which a person can receive the dignity of first seeking Christ, themselves, to find godly sorrow and repentance. The evidence of this is that they will present themselves in the light of *agape* fellowship to make faithful confession, and to then engage in a season of healing among those who have been impacted by their sin.

The point which we must clearly hear is that confession of sin to a church leader is self-righteous, and neither leads to life nor brings change. Such a pursuit is carnal, and only multiplies the corruption of both the confessor and the one who entertains and answers their confession, bringing them both under condemnation. Eze 14:1-11.

Defining sin

In order to understand God's provision for our deliverance and recovery, we must first consider our definition of sin. A common and persistent misconception concerning sin is that it is defined by the ten commandments; not the stone tablet variety that Moses received, but the personally crafted standard of right living that we each define for ourself. This is where we depart from *agape* fellowship and replace the leading of the Spirit with all manner of self-imposed regulations, believing this to be the only way to righteousness. This is precisely the error of those who practise severe self-discipline and abstinence. Importantly, our only hope

is, instead, to hear the urgent call of the Spirit, to surrender to His lordship, and to be properly joined to the New Covenant of the Spirit. He is 'the Spirit of truth' and is dedicated to joining us to the offering journey of Christ where all provision has been made.

Making a project of our deliverance from slavery

The words of the New Testament authors instruct those who are seeking deliverance and recovery from sin to take a proactive and personally accountable approach. For this reason, individuals and families who are encumbered by besetting sin (or spiritual leprosy) are encouraged to make a 'project' of their deliverance from this slavery. Immediately, this raises the question of how a person can initiate such a project without it being a carnal endeavour which serves only to compound their condemnation. The answer is *by faith, through the Spirit*.

When someone is born to see the kingdom of God - whether through birth into a covenant home or through receiving the gospel directly - they have received faith to be connected to the New Covenant of the Holy Spirit, but they haven't yet been joined. It is then only through being born of 'water and Spirit', which is our baptism, that a son of God is enabled to enter and to be immersed in - to *join* - the fellowship of Yahweh in the offering and sufferings of Christ.

Receiving a new heart and a new spirit

This reality connects us to Ezekiel's prophecy which describes the substantial work of new birth that occurs in the life of a son of God as they participate in Christ's offering journey. The Lord *gives us a new heart and puts a new spirit within us*. The new heart and the new spirit are progressively renewed through a believer's ongoing fellowship in the seven wounding events that belong to Christ's offering and sufferings.

The heart is the meeting point of soul and spirit. As such, the new heart that is given to us carries the benefit of being progressively circumcised of the other law. It also allows our conscience (a faculty of the spirit) to bear witness with the Holy Spirit, granting to us knowledge (of sanctification of self and others) without reason. Furthermore, it enables our mind (a faculty of the soul) to be set on the things of the Spirit, granting to us the capacity to think spiritually. The new spirit, then, describes the identity of a new creation son being joined to our name in Christ and being equipped for our sanctified works of love, which include the need to personally participate in our own healing.

The Lord will then *take the heart of stone out of our flesh and will give us a heart of flesh*. Eze 36:26. 'The heart of stone' refers to the hearts of those who live under the Law Covenant. The removal of this stony, stubborn heart is consistent with the progressive circumcision of the other law that causes us to define our own standard of right living, and to live by our preference to go our own way. In its place, He will give to us a regenerated heart that is tender and responsive to His leading.

The Lord will then *put His Spirit within us, and will cause us to walk in His statutes, and to keep His judgements and do them*. Those who are joined to the offering of Christ will also receive the Holy Spirit, who is helping us through His convicting and sanctifying work to walk, keep and do. His ministry will enable us to walk blamelessly, to keep ourselves in His love, and to be doers of His word.

This culminates in our being joined to His elect community where we *shall dwell in the land that He gave to our fathers; we shall be His people, and He will be our God*. Eze 36:28. This speaks of our inheritance as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, the context for our participation in *agape* fellowship. It is from this place that we will know the progressive work of deliverance, healing and recovery as we become the righteousness of God.

Conviction leading to faithful confession

Those who are joined to Christ's offering will know the convicting work of the Holy Spirit who grants us grace, which enables us to see our sin, to own our sin, and to seek repentance. This is how the Spirit helps us to be accountable for our sin.

A person who is exercising faith by the love that the Holy Spirit pours into their heart will then apply themselves to *agape* fellowship. This is where they are fed; and where they are known as they speak by faith. It is also in this context that we are directed by the Scriptures to make faithful confession. 'Confess your trespasses to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.' Jas 5:16. This healing is both the washing of regeneration and the renewing of our minds by the Holy Spirit. Additionally, it is relational restoration with those who have been injured by our sin. Healing, then, is the impartation of faith that initiates the construction of a straight pathway upon which we make accountable steps of recovery.

Make straight paths for your feet

Within the parameters of such a 'project', it will be helpful to conduct a simple 'audit' in which the problem area of besetting sin is considered, and the various factors that have contributed to it are prayerfully identified and their influence prayerfully understood. This is part of our accountability, and begins the process of our personally making straight paths. If that which is lame is not given straight paths, it will be dislocated and turned out of the way, referring to our being completely polarised out of His body.

The making of straight paths will likely include a season of regular prayer and fasting, the employment of certain protective factors (i.e. the use of supervision software, revised routine) and the removal of identified risk factors (i.e. removal of devices and activities, decommissioning social media accounts, and so on). However, this can be achieved only as we lift up our hands (without wrath and doubting) so that we can strengthen our feeble knees that have until now refused to bow to His lordship. This is how we 'lay aside every weight and sin that so easily entangles' us. Heb 12:1.

The primary issue isn't our aberrant behaviours; rather, it is our refusal to submit to His lordship in preference for our own righteousness. As we walk in this new way, we will be progressively healed for our proper participation in the chastening of the Father, which is training us (causing us to mature) to bring forth the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Heb 12:11. Our diligent commitment to our recovery also will include regular fellowship around an inventory of progress in order to identify the changes that are being made.

Recovered to will and to do for His good pleasure

As we receive the capacity for obedience from the Holy Spirit, and are established in diligence and in the fear of the Lord, God is able to work in us 'to will and to do for His good pleasure'. Php 2:13. The evidence of His lordship being active in our life is that we will be motivated to do the works of love. These works will become our preoccupation in emptying ourselves for the sake of revealing other members of the body. In this respect, our recovery and ongoing vigilance will be motivated by the love that we have for our brethren and by our desire to serve them.