



The Sharon Star

Spiritual Growth

By Mervin Sundbo

(All scripture passages are taken from the *New King James Version* unless otherwise stated)

When I was going through the many odds and ends in my briefcase recently, I came upon something written by Howard Hendricks, who shares this insight about the value of learning:

“When I was a college student, I worked in the college dining hall, and on my way to work at 5:30 every morning, I walked past the home of one of my professors. Through a window I could see the light on at his desk, morning after morning.

At night I stayed late at the library to take advantage of evening study hours, and returning home at 10:30 or 11:00, I would again see his desk light on. He was always pouring over his books.

One day he invited me home for lunch, and after the meal I said to him, ‘Would you mind if I asked you a question?’

‘Of course not.’

‘What keeps you studying? You never seem to stop.’

His answer was, ‘Son, I would rather have my students drink from a running stream than a stagnant pool.’”

We know about the running stream. We know where to drink. If we drink from the fountain of life, it will be life to us. Revelation 21:6 says, “And He said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the

Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.’” Just as the professor did not want his students to drink from the stagnant pool, for that would not be conducive to learning, neither do we want to drink from that which will not be favourable to spiritual growth.

While drinking from the fountain of life is vital to spiritual growth, the presence of adversity and correction is also an essential component of that fountain. In Hebrews 12:6, we read, “For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.” And Proverbs 24:10 says this, “If you faint in the day of adversity, Your strength is small.” Chastening, scourging and adversity are not pleasant experiences to the flesh, but they are necessary in our walk to maturity. We will surely reach our goal if we keep our eye single on the One who leads and guides us. We must put our confidence in the God who cannot fail rather than in the arm of flesh that shall surely fail. He is able to give us the victory regardless of the magnitude of the obstacles that confront us. The obstacles are necessary and are there for a purpose. In Luke 9:62, Jesus says, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” I like to think of looking back in this way. We recall, in a thankful way, the

experiences through which God has taken us. I don’t think it hurts to look back in the manner described in Isaiah 51:1, “‘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.’” Also, in Psalm 40:2, the psalmist expresses thankfulness for what the Lord has done for him in these words: “He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps.” We don’t look back because we desire to be back. There is no standing still with God, and there is no going back; there is only going on, for God is eternally progressive. When the going got tough for Israel, they began to murmur and complain and yearn for the leeks and garlic of Egypt, even though they knew from experience that it was a land of oppression. God wanted to take them out from the bondage of taskmasters into the bounty of the land of promise. His promise today is to take us out of spiritual bondage (to some extent, this has already been accomplished), and to bring us in to a state of maturity. God will have mature sons. Ephesians 4:11-15, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (KJV). If these scriptures have been made real to you, you will know and understand that the maturity of which I speak is not a figment of man's imaginings, nor is it a product of the theology of man, but rather it is absolute truth as written in the scriptures and revealed by the Spirit.

Paul said in Philippians 3:13-14, "...but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." We don't look back with a longing to be back, for He has called us "out of darkness into His marvellous light" (I Peter 2:9). We should always be thankful for His goodness, for His many blessings and for the way in which He has led us, day-by-day, month-by-month and year-by-year. It is hard for me to believe that almost forty years have passed since I was first introduced to this Move of the Spirit. What a glorious experience it was to be established in that which is of the eternal. Praise God! I was the kind of person who lived and enjoyed the realm of the temporal and who put considerable emphasis on the material. I've had to readjust my priorities and give up many of my goals. Jesus said in Matthew 6:19-20, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal." And in the thirty-third verse of the same chapter, Jesus says, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things

shall be added to you."

God has never promised that the road to sonship would be easy, or that we would walk on paths strewn with nice red roses. Sometimes there are potholes in the road and obstacles in our pathway, but that does not mean that we should turn back or give up. Isaiah 48:10 says, "Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction." Half-heartedness and lukewarmness are not pleasing to God. He said He would sooner that we were hot or cold rather than lukewarm. God wants a zealous and perseverant people, even in the face of adversity. Adversity is designed to do for us what nothing else can. Adversity is a given; we can count on it. Let me remind you of the three young Hebrews who refused to compromise their commitment to their God, even though they faced certain death in a fiery furnace. They were not presumptuous. They believed their God was able to deliver them from death by fire, but whether deliverance or execution awaited them, they would not bow down to the image that Nebuchadnezzar had fashioned. We find as we read on that when the king looked into the furnace, there were four men walking loose in the fire, "and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Daniel 3:25). They came through the fire with the bonds that bound them burnt off, and there was no smell of smoke on their garments. Glory to God! You see, this is a type of what will happen to us when we go through the furnace of affliction if we exercise the same faith and take the same attitude as Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego did. The bonds that hold us prisoner, that is, the flesh, shall be burnt away, and we shall be set free, even in the midst of that which was designed to encumber us. There is no bondage over which our God is not the Master. He delivered Israel from Egyptian oppression, He delivered Daniel from the lions' den, He delivered three young Hebrews from certain death in the fiery furnace and He is able to deliver His people today from every enemy that would stand in defiance against them. The thing that gives us

the most trouble is our flesh, but as we lay our all on the altar of sacrifice, God will cause the flesh to be burned away so that out of the ashes of that sacrifice there will arise a new spiritual creation; a new creature who will no longer be bound by the limitations and dictates of the flesh. What a day that will be!

I remember someone saying words to this effect, "That which is truly virtuous has been put to the test and has passed the test. There is no virtue until it has been tested and tried." It struck me in these meetings, as the various brethren were ministering on the fruit of the spirit and all of its segments, that there is testing that comes along with manifestation of those fruits. Can I really claim to possess temperance, for example, until I have been tested along that line? I don't think so. Life is great when everything is coming up roses. But the reality is, as every gardener knows, that there are times when weeds appear and they have to be dealt with. There are mornings when the sun isn't shining, the clouds hang heavy, the birds aren't singing, and our world seems to be caving in upon us. But I have discovered that God never changes, regardless of the circumstances. Just because the clouds obscure the sun does not mean the sun isn't shining. Similarly, just because I am encountering some struggles does not mean that God has abandoned me. I recall that a few hours after my wife passed away, brother Whitter came to my parents' home in Prince Albert. It was early in the morning, and I will never forget how I appreciated his presence at that trying time. After he prayed, he said to me, "The clouds that hang heavy on you now will dissipate, and the sun will once again shine for you." I clung to those words because I believed that he spoke them by the Holy Spirit. I won't go into detail here, except to say that the day came when my sun rose and shone again. Thank God for the fruit of the spirit manifest through ministries. Yes, I will only show forth the attributes of Christ after I have been tested and He has instilled them within me. If I can manifest the fruit (the nature of

Christ), there will be an edification, a reconciliation or blessing that will follow.

One fruit of the spirit that we've been talking about is love. I came across a poem that describes love in much the same way as Paul does in the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians.

God's Gift Divine

Love is enduring
 And patient and kind,
 It judges all things
 With the heart, not the mind,
 And love can transform
 The most commonplace
 Into beauty and splendor
 And sweetness and grace...
 For love is unselfish,
 Giving more than it takes,
 And no matter what happens
 Love never forsakes,
 It's faithful and trusting
 And always believing,
 Guileless and honest
 And never deceiving...
 Yes, love is beyond
 What man can define,
 For love is immortal,
 God's Gift Is Divine!

Author Unknown

Agape love is sacrificial and is the highest form of love. This is the love that Christ had in His heart when, in obedience to the Father, He gave His life for the sins of mankind. Because of that sacrifice, eternal life is available to every man, woman and child. God wants to endue us with the same love as Jesus possessed. It is this love that husbands are supposed to have for their wives. It is easy to see that a wife will have no difficulty with submission and obedience if her husband shows sacrificial love to her. It will be a natural response to a kind and loving husband. As God places more and more of this love in the hearts of husbands and fathers, our marriages and homes will come into greater oneness than we have ever experienced before.

I was thinking that when I first met my wife, there was a feeling associated with her; but I didn't really know her. But the day came when I got to know her. I want you to see

something here. Feeling was not removed in order that knowing might be established. Feeling may have waned to some extent, and knowing may have become more pronounced, but the two (feeling and knowing) have come together, so that over the years, we (husband and wife) might more and more become one. And so, when we speak about the anointing of feeling, the anointing of knowing and the anointing of becoming, let us remember that God may cause the intensity of the first two to diminish, but He doesn't remove them. Feeling and knowing are building blocks to becoming. I am glad that I am still able to feel the moving of the Spirit. I am glad that I know more about how the Spirit moves today than I knew thirty-five years ago. I am glad that He didn't take away feeling, but is adding knowing, so that we might enter into becoming. Becoming or coming into the likeness and image of Christ is what God is really after, and it should also be the longing and desire of our hearts as well. He is bringing many sons to glory! Hallelujah!

I wonder how often we limit God to that which our finite minds can grasp. God is limitless; He is infinite. The songwriter penned these lines in the chorus of "He Giveth More Grace:"

His love has no limit, His grace
 has no measure,
 His pow'r has no boundary known
 unto men;
 For out of His infinite riches in
 Jesus,
 He giveth, and giveth, and giveth
 again!

Doubt is nothing more than a lack of confidence or disbelief. God is absolute, and His promises are irrevocable. He is sure; He is reality and He is truth. In Him there is no darkness and there is no doubt. My doubts and fears are part of my flesh, and my flesh is that which is of the temporal and the passing. I wonder if we spend too much time catering to the needs of the flesh and too little time nurturing our spiritual needs, resulting in lives that are out of balance. I

Corinthians 3:16 says, "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" And in Colossians 1:27, we read, "To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." These two scriptures clearly show that God has chosen to make these temples of earth His dwelling place. The permanent has taken up His abode within the hearts and lives of all those who will accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour. What a glorious privilege it is to be a habitation for deity; and by His indwelling presence, He will bring us to maturity, even "to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

There is a poem that I have committed to memory that expresses the difference between doubt and faith, and I will quote it to you. It is titled "Faith," and this is what it says:

Doubt sees the obstacles,
 Faith sees the way.
 Doubt sees the darkest night,
 But faith sees the day.

Doubt fears to take a step,
 But faith soars on high.
 Doubt questions, "Who believes?"
 Faith answers, "I."

"Fear knocked on the door; faith answered, and there was no one there." These two (faith and fear) are not compatible. They do not like dwelling together. So, when fear knocks on our door, let's allow faith to answer, and fear will flee. "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7). What a difference between faith and doubt. They are opposites. God wants us to have His faith, for it is a grain of mustard seed of His faith that will remove the mountain. Sometimes our mountain is sickness. Let us see what the scripture says about the removal of that mountain. "And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven" (James 5:15). I encourage you to read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews; it is the faith chapter.

Called To Sonship - Not Worldliness

By A. Hinchliff

The priests tended the table of shew bread, the altar of incense, and the golden candlestick. They were in the first room beyond the outer court called the holy place. The holy place is a type of our place of ministry. The table of shewbread is where we partake of the living bread. Literally, the shewbread means the bread of the presence. As we partake of it, we partake of the presence of God in our life and in our walk. Right in front of the veil was the altar of incense, where our prayers ascend as incense unto God. Then, there was the golden candlestick, which they kept lighted all the time in that holy place. That is a type of the church as the light of the world. Our whole ministry is typified by this table on which the bread was placed, by the altar of incense, and by that golden candlestick. Beyond the veil, the veil that was rent when Christ died on the cross, was the holiest of all that is spoken of in the scripture that we just quoted, and is where we enter into sonship. That is where Christ went into the presence of God with His own blood as a sacrifice in the holiest of all in the heavenly tabernacle. Going beyond that veil is a type of our entering into the presence of God in sonship.

OUR CALLING IS TO SONSHIP - NOT WORLDLINESS

Our calling is to sonship, not worldliness. That is something that we have to be very careful about. We must guard against worldliness creeping into our lives. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 6:9-10). Inheriting the kingdom is another term that you could substitute for sonship. Our calling is to a much higher level than these things listed. "And such were

some of you: but ye are washed," Praise God for that washing and cleansing! "...but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:11). What a wonderful experience to be able to enter in to. "As children copy their fathers you, as God's children, are to copy Him. Live your lives in love - the same sort of love which Christ gives us and which He perfectly expressed when He gave Himself up for us in sacrifice to God. But as for sexual immorality in all its forms, and the itch to get your hands on what belongs to other people - don't even talk about such things - they are no fit subjects for Christians to talk about. The keynote of your conversation should not be nastiness or silliness or flippancy, but a sense of all that we owe to God. For of this much you can be quite certain: that neither the immoral nor the dirty-minded nor the covetous man (which latter is, in effect, worshipping a false God) has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Don't let anyone fool you on this point, however plausible his argument. It is these very things which bring down the wrath of God upon the disobedient. Have nothing to do with men like that - once you were 'darkness' but now you are light" (Ephesians 5:1-8 Phillips).

That is very good instruction. Have nothing to do with men like that. "Live then as children of light. The light produces in men quite the opposite of sins like these - everything that is wholesome and good and true" (Ephesians 5:8&9 Phillips). We pray that the light will produce the opposite within us - the opposite to the sins of the age in which we live. Let the light of God produce within us the things that glorify His Name. "Let your lives be living proof of the things which please God. Steer clear of the activities of darkness; let your lives show by contrast how dreary and futile these things are. (You

know the sort of things I mean - to detail their secret doings is really too shameful)" (Ephesians 5:10-12 Phillips). Paul was ashamed to even talk about the things that go on in the earth. "For light is capable of 'showing up' everything for what it really is..." The light of Christ, the light of the gospel, shows up the things of darkness and sin for what they really are. "...It is even possible (after all, it happened with you!) for light to turn the thing it shines upon into light also" (Ephesians 5:13 Phillips). We thank God for the change that has been brought about in the lives of God's people because the light of the gospel has shone upon them. Paul then quotes from the scriptures. "'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.' Live life then with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life but as those who do. Make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days. Don't be vague but firmly grasp what you know to be the will of God" (Ephesians 5:14-17 Phillips). We pray that God will help us to enter in fully to the things that God is calling us to. We don't have time to be playing around with the things that belong to the carnal realm. We pray that God will help us to press toward the mark that He has set before us. Be followers of God.

"Mortify (put to death) therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection (affection that goes beyond the proper limits), evil concupiscence (evil desire), and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And

have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Colossians 3:5-10). How thankful we are for that transformation that takes place when our lives are surrendered to the Lord.

“For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard” (Matthew 20:1). When he hired these men, they agreed to work for a penny a day. Later in the day, he hired more men and made the same agreement with them. About the 11th hour he hired other men. When it was time to pay the men, he paid the ones that were hired last the same as he paid the others. That caused an argument. “We have worked all day in the heat and mosquitoes and have sweated and laboured. These who have only been here an hour get the same as we do.” Then the householder said, “Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen” Matthew 20:15-16).

It was the attitude of the workmen that comes into play here. It was the householder’s prerogative as to how much the men were paid. He said, “I can do what I want to with what is mine.” The last shall be first and the first last. We must have the proper attitude. Many are called but few chosen. Our attitude toward the things that God has called us to has a great deal to do with our entering into the things of God. It is important that we learn to minister the Spirit of God.

“Let this mind be in you (let this attitude be in you), which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery (something to be grasped after) to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:5-8). That is the attitude that was in Christ, the Son of God.

In Luke 4:18, we read about His purpose in coming. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to

the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.” This was the purpose of the coming of Christ, and describes the ministry that He had. I would like you to make a comparison between this scripture and Isaiah 14, which describes the attitude of Lucifer. We read here how Jesus came to give recovering of sight to the blind and to set at liberty them that are bruised and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?” (Isaiah 14:12-17). There is a tremendous contrast between the attitude of the devil and Christ. We see that the devil is to be brought down to hell. Because of His attitude, Christ is to be lifted up, as we read in Philippians 2:9-11: “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Christ has become the Head of the body, the church. Attitude plays a tremendous part in our growth and in our progress toward sonship.

There is a lot of good instruction in I Thessalonians. “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (I Thessalonians 5:22). We have to be very, very careful. Abstain from things that could appear evil. Maybe there is nothing wrong with it, but because people don’t always see the whole picture, it could appear evil to them. So abstain from anything that could appear evil. This is very important for the Christian who is walking with the Lord. “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul

and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thessalonians 5:23). To sanctify means to set apart for a holy purpose. This was Paul’s desire for the Thessalonian Christians: that they would be set apart completely for God. Paul prayed about their whole spirit, soul, and body. We talk about entering into life. When we become conscious of God, our spirit has taken on life. A dead spirit isn’t conscious of God at all, but when we become conscious of the fact that God is speaking to us, there has come a measure of life to our spirit. When we accept Jesus Christ and are born again, our soul comes alive, and we are praying for the day when our body takes on life; the day when our bodies enter into the resurrection. We are praying for the day when we enter fully into sonship. God desires that we should be set apart for His purpose. Israel was set apart as a holy nation, a nation of priests.

Let us consider our responsibility to those who are “without.” I didn’t realise that there were so many scriptures along this line. “That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing” (I Thessalonians 4:12). To walk honestly is a very important thing, and this advice must be adhered to in all things with all diligence. This next scripture is talking about the qualifications of elders. “Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (I Timothy 3:7). This applies to all of us. The qualifications for elders’ characters actually apply to every member of the church. It is not just the elders who have to measure up to these things, but we all should have these fruits in our lives. “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:10). We must walk in such a way that we bring credit to our Master’s Name by our works. When Paul speaks of our knowledge of God increasing, he is not speaking of mental knowledge, but experimental knowledge, where our knowledge actually bears the fruit of the Spirit. “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time” (Colossians 4:5). We must be wise in our dealings with the world.

“Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed” (II

Corinthians 6:3). Whose ministry is he talking about? Mine or yours or someone else's? He is talking about our own personal ministry. Giving no offence in anything that the ministry be not blamed. "But in all things approving ourselves (or commending ourselves) as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (II Corinthians 6:4-10). What a list of wonderful things to enter into! The mature son will possess them all. We have such a responsibility in letting our light shine, and in letting the knowledge of God be spread abroad in the world.

Peter talks of similar things in I Peter; "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (I Peter 3:8-12). You have to read these over and meditate on them and think about them. We see that what God is calling us to is a noble, high, and holy calling.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:15-17). Loving the

world is not the way into sonship. John says that what the world consists of is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. These things do not come from God. These things belong to the world, and it will pass away. He who does God's will, will abide forever. He enters into the calling of sonship. "Never give your hearts to this world or to any of the things in it. A man cannot love the Father and love the world at the same time. For the whole world system, based as it is on men's primitive desires, their greedy ambitions and the glamour of all they think splendid, is not derived from the Father at all, but from the world itself. The world and all its passionate desires will one day disappear. But the man who is following God's will is part of the permanent and cannot die" (I John 2:15-17 Phillips).

When Jesus was tempted after His baptism, He was tempted in these three things. He was baptized of John in the Jordan River. A voice then came from heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Matthew 3:17-4:1). It is possible to be led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted. Probably that is what is happening on those days when we think that God has forsaken us. This would give us a chance to manifest the strength of the Lord that is in us. Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights, and then the tempter came to Him.

The first temptation was to command the stones to be turned into bread. It was the desire of His flesh to have something to eat. Jesus' answer was, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

Then the devil took Him and put Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said, "If you are the Son of God cast yourself down. The scripture says that His angels will take charge of you and guard you from even stumbling over a stone". (paraphrase) This is the pride of life. Why, I can jump off the pinnacle of the temple and God will pick me up and look after me. Some people have similar ideas. Jesus' answer was, "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matthew 4:7).

Then the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him the glory of all the kingdoms of the world.

He said to Jesus, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me" (Matthew 4:9, NKJV). Jesus told him to leave because we are instructed in the Word of God, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10). Jesus could look out from that high mountain and see all the kingdoms of the world. His eye could desire those things, and we likewise could desire many, many things that probably are not good for us. As we read in I John 2:15-16, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of this world." These are the three points in which Jesus was tempted after His baptism. We are tempted in exactly the same way as He was tempted by the things that are in the world. Love not the world. Our calling is to sonship and not to worldliness; not entering into the things of the world or desiring the things that the world gives.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHILDREN AND SONS

There is a definite difference in the scriptures between children and sons. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" (John 1:11-12). He gave them authority, or put within their grasp, the ability to become children. In our King James Version it says "sons," but the other modern translations say children.

When we accept Jesus Christ, we are born into the kingdom of God. We have the authority to be children of God. We can say with no fear, "God is my Father." We are born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). This is how our new birth takes place. We are born as children into the kingdom of God.

We must look at the words that are translated "sons" and that are translated "children." "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:16-17).

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not” (I John 3:1). Notice that of these three scriptures that we have just quoted, the first one, John 1:11, used the word sons, Romans 8:16 used the word children, and I John 3:1 uses the word sons. These three are all translated from the same Greek word, which is “tekonon.” This word means “one born,” and it denotes immaturity. It is never used of Christ when He is spoken of as the Son of God. Let us read I John 3:2-3 from Weymouth: “Beloved, we are now God’s children, but what we are to be has not yet been manifested...” Hallelujah! He says we are God’s children, but what we are to be has not yet been manifested. That is still ahead of us. That is what we are desiring with all our hearts to enter into. “...We know that if He appears we shall be like Him, Because we shall see Him as He is...” We’ll see Him in one

another; we’ll see Him with our eyes as the disciples saw Him that day when He was taken up into Heaven, and the angel said that in like manner He would come again. “...Anyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifieth himself as He is pure.”

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14). This is a different Greek word that is used here for sons. The Greek word is “huios,” and, translated into English, it means descendant, or offspring. It denotes maturity or one who is full-grown. When Christ is spoken of as the Son of God, this word is always used. In Matthew 3:17, we read, “And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” The word Son here is the Greek word Huios. It shows that He was mature. “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29).

The same word “huios” is used to speak of Christ again.

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4-5). Huios is used here to speak of God’s Son, and also to speak of those who are to receive the adoption of sons. That is what God has in mind for us: the adoption of Sons. “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15). The expression “Abba, Father” can only be used by someone who is a fleshly descendant of the father. When Paul speaks of “Abba, Father,” it is because we have been born into the family of God. An adopted child could not use the word, “Abba.” Only one born into the family could use it. We have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, “Abba, Father.”

INDIANA YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEETING December 2004

Mon. evening, Dec. 27 thru Fri., noon, Dec. 31, 2004.

Mt. St. Francis Retreat Center, St. Francis, Indiana, 47146, phone (812) 923-8817.

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Go 2 miles on I 50 to 2nd set of flashing lights. Center is on left. **Come one and all, bring your friends and let's have a great time learning and sharing together.**

Bring: Bibles, notebooks, pens and pencils, personals, extra towels and washcloths if desired, snacks for after service.

Contact Ken Jones, 190 Grove Ave., Hampshire, IL 60140

Phone: 847-683-3448 or email: KenBrenJones@juno.com

Costs: Adults \$65, Teens \$54 (11-17) Children \$32 (2-10)

NORTH BATTLEFORD NEW YEAR'S YOUTH RETREAT Dec. 29, 2004 - Jan. 2, 2005

As part of Sharon Schools Educational Program the North Battleford Young Peoples' Gathering will begin with the supper meal Wednesday, Dec. 29, 2004 and will run through until after the noon meal Sunday, Jan. 2, 2005.

Bring your usual things: bedding, towel, toilet articles, warm clothing, musical instrument, Bible, notebooks, skates and broomball brooms and hockey gear, gym clothes and footwear.

We thank the Mothers for their past contributions of baking and suggest that similar offerings would be gratefully received again this year.

(If the Elders feel to send any financial help from the churches, it will be greatly appreciated).

This invitation is extended to teenagers and older singles and young married couples. We would like to encourage older singles to attend with a focus on their ministry and issues. We also would like to encourage young married couples to come for fellowship and to assist with the ministry. Please have one of your young people write at an early date stating approximately the number of boys and girls hoping to attend.

Send to Sharon Schools, Box 878, North Battleford, Sask. S9A 2Z3. Registration Fee: \$25.00 on arrival.

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