



Led By The Spirit

By David Luff

We have been taught for many years in this Move of the Spirit that to become sons of God we must be led by the Spirit. Therefore, it is important for us to learn in a practical way, how to follow the Spirit's leading. Galatians 5:16-18, 25: "So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law." And then in verse 25, "Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit." We notice the order of things. First, walk in the Spirit and by walking in the Spirit we will not carry out the desires of the flesh. Sometimes it's easy for us to read scriptures that are so familiar to us that we miss some very important points. Human nature leads us to take the opposite approach, to say, "If we can just fight the desires of the flesh, then we can walk in the Spirit." But that's not the order that is given to us in the Scripture. It says, "Walk by the Spirit and then we will not fulfill the desires of the flesh." I remember at the last Scripture Studies, Bro. Hinchliff said the only criterion listed in the Scripture for being a son of God, a mature son of God, is to be led by the Spirit. If that is the criterion, and we speak a lot about Sonship and going on into Sonship, then it seems critically important that we learn how to be led by the Spirit. I confess to you that I've had to do a lot of searching on this subject. We hear it so much and it rolls off

of our tongues very easily, but I wonder if we really understand how to truly be led by the Holy Spirit. I must admit that that's not something that just comes real easily for me.

I Thessalonians 5:23 says, "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." It's an interesting thing to realize that God has made us a triune being. We have three distinct parts and those parts all have very distinctive functions. It is important that we understand what these functions are. Genesis 1:27 says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Now some of the notes in some of the later translations say the first chapter is kind of an overview chapter, and it just speaks of everything God created; man and so on. Then in the second chapter, He gets very specific about how He created man. I read something the other day, and I'm not a Hebrew scholar, but it spoke to me that in this particular verse, the Hebrew word for created is "*bara*" and it means "creating something out of nothing." Hebrews 11:3 says, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which [do appear]." So it said that God made all of this out of nothing. Then Genesis 2:7 says, "...And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living [soul]." In this

case the word for **formed** is different from the word that was used in the first chapter and it means to create something out of something that's already been created, and that's what God did. He created man's body out of the dust of the earth. Then it says, He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living [soul]." It seems to me that the creation of man that is mentioned in the first chapter is the creation of man's spirit and it is man's spirit that God breathed into that body that He had created. When the spirit of man was united with the physical body of man, the human soul was formed. The soul-life of man came into existence and he then was that triune being: spirit, soul, and body. Now let's think about what the roles of these various parts of man are. First let us consider the spirit of man. John 4:24 says, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." God is saying to us that He is a Spirit and if we are going to relate to God, we're going to have to relate to Him through our spirit. God has given us a spirit so we might commune with Him who is Spirit, the Holy Spirit. The way we know God is by the Spirit. I Corinthians 2:9-11 says this, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so

the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” I’ve read that scripture many times and the impression that I have always gotten is that the things of God are so magnificent and so wonderful and so far away and someday we’ll see all these things, but that Scripture says so much more to us. It says, “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.” I think what He’s saying to us is that the revelation of God does not come via our physical senses such as our eyes and ears or even through our intellect. He’s saying they are perceived and known by the Spirit of God. It is by God’s Spirit speaking to our spirit that He reveals to us His nature and the things that He wants to communicate to us. It was from God’s Spirit to man’s spirit that man was to receive life and the wisdom of God. Now when we speak of life - I’m sure that everybody already knows this, but we’ll just say it anyway - life and death with God doesn’t mean the state of existence or the ceasing to exist. Life speaks of the state of awareness of God or the quickening of our spirits, and when He speaks of being dead it doesn’t mean that we’re physically dead, obviously, but it means our spirits are dead as far as our awareness of God. We are unable to commune with God. When we are alive it means our spirits are alive and we can commune with God. People can walk around, they can laugh, they can cry, they can eat, sleep, fight, hate, love, all of these different things and still be spiritually dead. So it is essential for us to grasp that man was never intended to have within himself, independent from God, the wisdom to lead a successful life. He was to have access through his spirit to God’s wisdom. Because of man’s access to divine wisdom through his spirit, his spirit, not his soul, was to have rulership over his life. We know that when the spirit is joined with the body, the human soul is formed. Man is unique in this way. There are heavenly beings, angels, and heavenly spirits, which dwell in the heavenly realm only. There are animals, all the orders of the animal kingdom that dwell in the realm of the natural. But man is unique in that he has a spirit, soul, and body and can dwell in the heavenly realm as well as in the natural realm at the same time. When God gave man dominion over the things that He had created, He created him to be able to do that. God intended to communicate Himself, His love-nature, by His Spirit to man’s spirit. Then, man’s spirit, flowing out through his soul-nature, through his mind, his emotions, and his

will, and through the actions of his body would let the nature of God’s love flow into the creation. That was the purpose that God had when he created mankind. Now there’s a problem because man’s spirit got subverted and this happened, of course, in the Garden of Eden. I might just paraphrase a few things with regard to that. God made this beautiful garden and filled it with all of these different trees that were beautiful to look at and were good for food. In the middle of the garden there were two trees: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. When we think about this, a lot of the time the focus is on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because that’s the tree that got us into trouble. God had said to eat freely of all the trees of the garden except one, and that was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. What was and still is the tree of life? Jesus! Jesus was the tree of life in the Garden of Eden. Can anyone deny that God had full intentions of Adam and Eve partaking of that fruit? It was sitting right there in the middle of the Garden. It wasn’t hidden away. God appears to have stacked the cards against Him. God has laid His plan out very clearly. He’s got nothing hidden. He said, “If you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:17) Now, Satan on the other hand, is not bound by those kinds of operating parameters. He will use deceptiveness, coercion, pressure, whatever he can to get us to do the thing that he wants us to do. The Bible says that the serpent was more clever or crafty than any other of the creatures that God had created. I’ve always wondered about that. Why was he considered so deceptive in this case? He came and he asked Eve, “Hath God said that you cannot eat of any tree of the garden?” Eve knew the answer. She said, “We can eat of any tree of the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” Why was Satan’s question so clever? It was pretty straightforward. Eve knew the answer. She did put in a few phrases that God didn’t say. She said, “We’re not even supposed to touch it.” God didn’t say that specifically according to the Scripture, but never the less, Satan had succeeded in getting her thinking independently about it. Satan said, “When you eat of this fruit, you will be as gods, knowing good and evil.” Immediately Eve started thinking independently of God and we see what began to happen. That’s where Satan’s

deceptiveness came forth. This soul-nature started rising up, and Eve began to think, “God is withholding something good from me. It’s something that He doesn’t want me to have. Well, why not? Why shouldn’t I have this?” **And the hook was in the jaw!** She wanted that wisdom which was independent of God. Prior to this time she had no wisdom except what God gave her. She and Adam were totally dependent on God. Then the other attractions came into effect. The fruit was good to look at, it was good for food, and it was effective to make her independently wise. That’s where the trouble began and the rest of us have come under the consequences of that from then on. What happened was that the soul-nature rose up and usurped its position over the spirit. God gave us minds and emotions and a will, but He did not intend for us to be ruled by them. We are to be ruled by our spirits under the direction and leadership of the Holy Spirit. When man sinned his spirit became dead to God. It didn’t cease to exist but as far as its purpose of being able to communicate with God, it was dead. The soul nature came out of the servant’s quarters and took over the throne room of man’s life. As a result, man lives out all of his goals, his purposes and everything, according to his own desires, his own sinful nature apart and separate from God. Even after we are saved and filled with the Holy Spirit, we sometimes become impatient with God and fall back on our own wisdom and cleverness that comes forth from that soul nature. It’s what we are used to doing because we were born with that nature. However, it produces no lasting good fruit. Just look at the world situation today. Look at the way God’s purposes have been subverted. Where God desires unity, we see division. Where God desires diversity, the world promotes unity. God says, “I want men to be men and women to be women.” What do we find the world advocating? Unification! Just the opposite of what God wants. God establishes roles for husbands, for wives, for children, for elders, for deacons and so on. What’s the world’s response to establishing this kind of order? Jealousy! Where God establishes that men are to take responsibility for their actions, what does the world do? It places blame. Where God has established an authority structure, the world responds in rebellion. Where God has established His delegated authority, the world responds with tyranny. Man was never designed to be ruled by

his soul or his body. He was to be ruled by the Holy Spirit, through his own God-given spirit. Now, Praise God, He had a plan and that plan involved the conversion of man. So we thank God for the plan of salvation, the regeneration of man.

I Corinthians 15:45-47 says, "So it is written: 'The first man Adam became a living being;'" the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven." I like that. There's a first Adam and a last Adam. There's a first man and a second man. It says that Jesus was the first man because there are other men to come after, the second, the third, fourth and on and on, which we are. In the experience of the new birth, it is man's spirit that is recreated and restored to life. His soul and body are not immediately and totally affected at that point. It is the spirit that is regenerated and made completely new. It said in that first scripture that we read in I Thessalonians 5:23 that we are spirit, soul, and body and God intends to sanctify us through and through. Hebrews 7:25 says, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the **uttermost** that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." I think the term *uttermost* means *all of us*, the complete man; spirit, soul, and body. God wants to redeem and recreate for Himself the entire man.

Matthew 16:25-26 says, "For whosoever will save his life... (And if you would just put into there, soul-life. That's the life he's talking about. It's that life that's kind of in between the spirit and the body) ... shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his [soul] life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" There is no earthly gain that can compensate for the failure to yield up our soul nature and to receive the nature of Christ. He wants us to lose that life and gain the life in the Spirit. Let's talk a bit about the functions of the regenerated human spirit. I Corinthians 2:11-12 says, "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God." We **know**, k-n-o-w, **know** the things of God by the Spirit, but we gain understanding with our minds. When we first began to be taught the wonderful truths of the Move of the Spirit, although

they were new to us, we knew even as they were being spoken, that they were true. We knew that they were right by the Spirit of God witnessing to our regenerated spirits. However, it took some time and meditation for our minds to gain a full understanding of these truths. In order to be able to communicate these things effectively to others, we have to understand them with our minds. That's why God gave us our minds. The mind doesn't receive the revelation of life; only the spirit can do that. The mind is designed to handle information. As we study and think about the things that we know by the Spirit, we are enabled to communicate these things to others. Now we still have this soul-life in us. God has regenerated our spirits; we are alive to God. Praise God for that! That is the beginning and it's very important that that happens. It is also very important that we get liberty in tongues. God doesn't communicate directly to our minds. He communicates through the Holy Spirit to our spirit, and that's why being able to communicate with God in the Spirit, in the prayer language of the unknown tongue that He has given us, is so critical. Think about the way spiritual gifts are given. Christendom in general depends on the natural mind and human reasoning to determine spiritual gifts. They start by writing down on paper what they feel are their strengths. People who know them do the same thing. By this process they distil out their gifts. That's using our minds and our natural human reasoning. It doesn't mean that they don't mean well, but God has taught us that He will communicate these things to us by the Spirit, through prophecy and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. It's an amazing thing to experience that, to experience God speaking these things through the Spirit.

Now God has made two glorious provisions for us as part of our total salvation benefits. One is the work of the cross and the second is the work of the Holy Spirit. Without the work of the cross, God cannot deal with fallen man. I Corinthians 1:18 says, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." The cross of Jesus Christ is loaded with power. The cross deals with our sins, that is true, but it also deals with our sinfulness, our sinful nature. The completeness of God's provision of salvation is almost more than we can understand. The Holy Spirit, then, makes

what was accomplished on the cross to be actually experienced in our lives.

John 12: 32-33 says this, "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die." I've read this many times before. I have always thought of this as meaning when we lift Jesus up; people will see the glory of Jesus and be drawn to Him. I think that's true. However, I think the second sentence directs us to an even deeper meaning. "He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die." This is where water baptism becomes such an important part of our Christian experience. Romans 6:3-6 says, "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin" Galatians 6:14 says, "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." And finally, Galatians 5:24 says, "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires." There are spiritual principles that are sometimes difficult for us to get our minds around, and this to me is one of those. However, whether we fully understand it or not does not negate the truth of it. God sees us as being crucified with Christ. If we could somehow visualize this in our minds as we look upon Jesus on the cross and think of these things that we struggle with. Just believe that you have been nailed to the cross with Jesus Christ. That is a fact! That has taken place whether we can understand it yet or not. That is the main thing that water baptism represents. We're saying that we believe that when we enter the waters of baptism we are personally identifying with Christ in His death. When we come out of the waters of baptism we are identifying ourselves with Christ in His resurrection. There are a lot of places in the scripture where it talks about being in Christ, seated in heavenly places. That's the way God sees us. We are seated in those heavenly places because God sees us as being

resurrected. Praise God! Now, we still have to deal with this issue of authority.

Romans 7:21-23 says, "So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members." We see two competing laws at work here. One is the Law of God and the other is the law of sin and death. Often we think law is bad and grace is good. That's not entirely true. The law of sin and death is bad, but the Law of God is good. The Law of God is the very expression of His nature. We know that lying is bad. Why is lying bad? Some people might say it's bad because God said not to do it. Well that's true, but the more fundamental reason is that it is against the very nature of God, the nature that God wants to impart to us. The Law of God demands obedience on the basis of the authority it claims. There's an ought-ness to the Law of God. When we consider the Law of God, we know we ought to do what it says to do or we ought not to do what it says not to do. Even when we are disobedient to the law, we are very aware of our disobedience because God has been very clear about what He wants and what He doesn't want. The law of sin and death operates in a whole different way. Its operating parameters are not clearly spelled out. It is communicated to our hearts through deception, and it expresses Satan's nature. People think they can take or leave the things associated with the law of sin and death. One of the Brethren, in one of our prayer meetings said sin does this, "It takes you farther than you wanted to go, it makes you stay longer than you wanted to stay, and it costs more than you wanted to pay." It's called a law because you get sucked into it thinking that you can take it or leave it, but you can't. The further you get into it, the more you get captured by it and you become a prisoner to it. That's what Paul was saying there in the seventh chapter of Romans. He used that very term. He says, "...waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members." (Romans 7:23) We are taken captive by that and we become a prisoner. Colossians 2:8 says, "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather

than on Christ." It's a warning to Christians. Don't be taken in. Don't let the world squeeze you into its mould. It's written in a lot of different ways in the Scripture. Authority, real authority that is effective in our lives, is only that which we consider to be legitimate. If we don't consider authority as legitimate, it doesn't have much effect on us. It can demand that we feel and do a certain thing, but if we don't feel it is legitimate, we don't do it or at least we don't do it as long as we think we can get away with not doing it. Let's take the example of a child that's being taught not to lie. Bro. Holt ministered on this at the North Battleford camp and encouraged parents about being consistent and being persistent in training children. It is also very important that every parent be consistent in their own lives as they train their children. Let's take the example of a mother here, who is teaching little Johnny not to lie. She's told him that lying is wrong. When Johnny gets caught in a lie and Mother punishes Johnny by spanking his backside. So he learns lying is not a good thing because there are undesirable consequences associated with it. Later on that afternoon Mrs. Johnson from down the street comes and knocks on the door. Mrs. Johnson is very irritating to Johnny's mother. She does not enjoy Mrs. Johnson's visits. She peeps out the curtain and sees it's Mrs. Johnson at the door and says, "Oh Johnny, go answer the door and tell Mrs. Johnson that mother had to go out for a while." Now Johnny learns something else. He learns that on one hand lying is an abomination to the Lord. On the other hand he learns it can be very helpful in a time of trouble. So now you've got this ought-ness of the law, but you've also got something developing within Johnny, which is becoming an inner value. He starts thinking, "Well, I better not lie when Mom's around, but if it serves my purposes later on when she's not around, it seems to work pretty well. If there's no one big enough around to smack me up-side the head, I'll do it if it serves my purpose." What we begin to see here is the effect that an external law has. That's what the law of God, written as the Ten Commandments is, an external law. There is nothing wrong with the law. The law is perfect. It is a wonderful, perfect, expression of the nature of God; but it is an external law. The internal law is this law of sin and death. Whenever there's a competition between an external law and an internal value, what do you think is going to win

out every time? The internal value is going to win. As we have prepared for our young people's camps, this has been so much on my heart. How do we communicate the things of God to our young people, not as external law but in such a way that they become internal values to them? There is nothing unrighteous about the law, but the problem is that if it isn't internalized, if it is not an inner value, then what is inside is going to win-out over what's on the outside.

Romans 6:16 states a very important principle. "Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?" We are going to become slaves to whomever or whatever we choose to obey. If we want to obey sin and the law of sin then we can do that, and our obedience grants authority to that law. It says we can also become slaves to obedience, which leads to righteousness. As I meditated on this Scripture, the following example came to mind. I thought about the children that God has given to Jan and me. They were all good children growing up. They all seemed to have a nature that caused them to want to obey, but they still had to be taught in the early years to be obedient which required various ways of discipline. Sometimes you just had to give them a look. Sometimes you had to give them a little talking to. Rarely did it take more than that, but you did what was necessary. As they began to get older, because they had become "slaves to obedience" to us as their parents, they continued to obey out of that nature. It had become their nature to obey, their internal value. Then I noticed something that was very interesting. After our two older children were married and had their own spouses, their own homes, and their own children, they still sought the approval of mom and dad for the things that they did. They wanted that affirmation from us that what they were doing, how they were spending their money, purchases they were considering, etc. met with our approval. If we didn't think that it was ok, then that would really bother them. Yet they were adults. They had their own families; they had their own wives and husbands. They were out from under that law, so to speak, but yet they had become a slave to it as a result of long obedience to it. We made a special effort to affirm them in their

decisions until they began to realize they were no longer under that law.

Now, here's the last important principle that I want to cover. Jeremiah 31:31-33 says "...I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a Husband to them, declares the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, declares the Lord, I will put My law within them, and on their hearts I will write it; and I will be their God, and they will be My people." God even then began to reveal to us what His plan was. He knew this external law was perfect, but the external law was going to be weakened by the flesh. It could never change us. He said He would write His laws on our hearts so that they would become our internal values. We are free in the Spirit to do many things as long as we stay in the parameters that God has established.

Ezekiel 36:25-27 says this, "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover I will give you a new heart and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a new heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." So not only is the law to be internalized, but the polluted heart is cleansed and God puts the Spirit of Christ in us.

Why did Jesus live thirty-three years? Why not ten years or fifteen or thirty-five or whatever? What was it about thirty-three years? Why couldn't He have just come as a man, died a perfect man and our sins would be covered? Not only is Christ's death important to our salvation, but also His life that He lived is important to our salvation, the salvation of the total man. In those thirty-three years Jesus was tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin. He was cursed; He had lies told about Him; He had all kinds of different false accusations spoken against Him; He was even called a devil. These were things that were so totally opposite to what He was, but in every case He was obedient to the things that God had for Him to do. Scripture says that Christ learned obedience through the things that He suffered. Not the same way we do by

trial and error and by making mistakes, but in every single thing, to which He was subjected, He was sinless. It was in the life that Christ lived that the laws of God were written, by the Holy Spirit, on His heart. By His perfect life, Jesus condemned sin in the flesh so that the righteousness of God might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit (Romans 8:3-4). Also in the eighth chapter of Romans it says, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering and so He condemned sin in sinful man," (Romans 1:1-3). There are three laws mentioned in this passage: the law of sin and death, the Law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and the Law of God.

As was stated earlier, the Law of God is perfect. Ps. 19:7 says, "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul." The problem is not with the external Law of the Lord. The problem is that it is weakened by the sinful nature. Let us consider the natural law of gravity. It is a good law. It keeps us from floating into space as we go about our daily lives. However, the law of gravity imposes certain limitations on us. If we try to reach the third floor of a building by walking up the vertical side of the building, we won't get too far before we find ourselves on our backsides on the pavement. However, we can get to the third floor by using the stairs or the elevator. We have not negated the law of gravity, but we have overcome its limitations on us by employing a higher law, so to speak. This law recognizes the law of gravity, but at the same time allows us to overcome its limitations. This is what the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus does for us in the spiritual realm. It not only sets us free from the law of sin and death but by virtue of it being a higher law, it meets the demands of the external Law of God by becoming a Law within us, written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

This takes place as we obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit. To paraphrase Romans 6:16, as we obey the Spirit, we become a slave to obedience, and obedience becomes our nature. It won't be like, "well I ought to do this, I ought to do that, or I ought to do the other." The more we obey it, the more we

become a slave to that which we obey, just like our children did, and pretty soon it becomes our nature. In doing so the Holy Spirit writes God's laws upon our heart. That's where they have to be written or we'll constantly be battling with this oughtness of the Law of God, which is weakened by the sinful nature.

I want to close by sharing an example with you of how this has worked out in my own life. Some weeks ago my wife, Jan, was struggling with something. I love my wife, and I wanted to ease the struggle. I tried to deal with her employing logic and said, "Well logically what you're struggling with doesn't really make sense. Look here..." and I went through all my logical reasoning, but it didn't seem to have much positive effect. So I kept on with my strategy, and the more times I went over it, the louder I would get, thinking that more volume would give more emphasis. Of course that didn't work and only resulted in further frustration for her and for me. Several days later I was meditating about this encounter. It was like the Holy Spirit said to me, "What do you think you were doing?" And I said, "Lord, (and I'm paraphrasing a little bit, but this is kind of like what happened) I was trying to show her the logic of why what she was feeling was not reasonable." And He said, "Well, how well did it work?" I said, "It didn't work very well at all." He said, "Have you ever tried that technique before?" I said, "Oh yes! For thirty-eight years I've tried that technique." He said, "Did it work the other times?" I said, "No, it didn't work the other times either." So you begin to see where the conversation was going. It was as if He spoke to me and said, "You know, that struggle that she's going through is My business. It's really not your business the way you were trying to deal with it. What do you think your responsibilities are?" I thought about it and said, "Well it's to love her as Christ loved the church." And He said, "What do you think would flow out of that?" And I said, "Well, there would be fruit like gentleness, kindness, patience, all of those kinds of things." "That's right." And as that began to settle in on my mind and in my heart, I said, "Lord, I am so sorry for doing that. I apologize to You for taking that approach. I know better than that." He said, "Well that's good. What else are you going to do?" I said, "Lord, I'm going to apologize to my wife." And I did. You know what I believe happened? I believe that because

of my immediate obedience to the voice of the Holy Spirit, God wrote that law upon my heart. The next time that issue comes up, I won't deal with it the same way as I have in the past because my nature, I believe, is changed, at least in that area. There are a lot more areas in my life, some perhaps more important, some maybe less important, that still have to be changed. If we obey once and twice and the third time, pretty soon obedience in that particular area becomes our nature. We become a slave to obedience.

Sometimes He corrects us afterwards, like the case I mentioned. The best thing to do is not to try to justify yourself to the Holy Spirit. Just say, "Lord you're right, I'm wrong, I'm sorry, I apologize." If someone else is involved, you go to them and say, "I was wrong, I'm sorry, I apologize" and as we're obedient to these things, as they come along in our lives, then the Holy Spirit, who is within us, will write that law upon our hearts. That's where the law has to be written in order for it to be effective in our lives. It's got

to be more than an external law. The Law of life in Christ Jesus has to be written on our hearts. I hope that we'll all learn to do that. It's a process, day by day, little by little. Isa. 28:10 says, "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little." Let us be obedient to the Holy Spirit. A few times of obedience in a particular area and it will begin to become our new nature. It will become the nature of Christ within us. Praise the Lord!

Growing To Maturity In Christ

By Mervin Sundbo

When we analyze the word 'grow,' we see that it is a verb. A verb is usually associated with action. In plant life, we see progressive growth from the seed that germinates, to the tender shoot, to a strong healthy plant, with one purpose programmed into it and that is to produce fruit or seed. Conditions need to be just right for normal growth to occur. For example, the seed requires moisture and warmth to germinate, nourished by nutrients in the soil that encourage strong and vigorous growth. As the plant matures, these same conditions apply. Sunlight, darkness, wind and rain all play vital roles in its development. If the plant never experienced adversity, it would not likely survive. The competent gardener prepares the plant for adverse conditions by providing adequate water, but not in excess because the gardener knows that the plant's roots need to seek out the moisture available deeper in the soil. The struggle for survival will establish the root system and result in a stable plant that the wind will not easily damage. Similarly, the gardener will protect the plant from hot sunlight or severe wind when it is just a small tender shoot because adversity at this stage of development may be detrimental to healthy growth. However, as the plant grows stronger, it can withstand the adverse elements that are determined to cause it injury. Remember, the goal is to produce fruit or seed and when the plant is nourished and cared for properly, it will produce abundant fruit, whereas, if it succumbs to the undesirable conditions, it will die or produce no fruit at all.

In the parable of the sower, we see

that some seed "fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold" (Matt. 13:8, KJV). When Jesus explained the parable, He said, "But the seed sown on good soil is the man who both hears and understands the message. His life shows good crop, a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown" (Matt. 13:23, Phillips).

Growth permeates the natural realm, whether we look at the plant or animal kingdoms. The beginning of all living things is very small (a seed), but growth results in a physically mature plant, animal or human being. Physical maturity brings the ability to reproduce or to bear fruit, which is obviously part of God's plan, for in Genesis He says to all that He created, "Be fruitful, and multiply" (Genesis 1:28).

The natural is analogous to the spiritual in many ways. Just as in the natural, life begins with a birth, so in the spiritual, our new life begins with a rebirth. Natural life is initiated through corruptible seed and the conclusion is physical death, whereas, the new birth has its origin in incorruptible seed and the culmination of that is eternal life. 1 Peter 1:23 says, "We have been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever."

An expectation follows natural birth and that is that growth will take place. The babe doesn't remain a babe, but develops, through proper food, rest, exercise, education and training into a child, a teenager and an adult with all the accompanying physical, intellectual,

emotional, social and psychological changes. Maturity is the goal and is a gradual process. If the nourishment is right and there is a proper motivation and stimulation, the babe develops into a mature and productive adult over a period of years. Similarly, when we are born again, there is an expectation that spiritual growth will occur and this, too, comes in stages. Gradually and progressively, the babe in Christ can become a mature Son of God. John 1:12 says, "But as many as receive Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (KJV). God's own son made a humble entrance into this world, born in the same manner as we all were born, and his first lodging was in a manger. The Savior came not as a mature son, but as a babe, and he grew into maturity. The scripture in Heb. 5:8-9 says, "Though he was a son, yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered, And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." It was through the obedience of Jesus to the will of the Father that he gained perfection or maturity and thus became the source or giver of eternal salvation to everyone who obeys him. One important sign of maturity is obedience. Jesus said, "I do what the Father gives me to do and I say what the Father tells me to say." He came to do His Father's will and that was to serve and to sacrifice. In serving, He met the needs of people; He healed the sick, raised the dead, ministered new hope to the hopeless, fed the multitude and forgave the sins of the penitent. In sacrificing, He gave His life for the sins

of the entire world, and in so doing, He opened the door to eternal life for every repentant heart. You see, the manger was only a temporary lodging for the Son of God. The ultimate habitation of the Savior is in the hearts and lives of men and women, boys and girls. The inn today is the human heart. Receiving Christ as our personal Savior is the first step in "growing to maturity in Christ."

Now I will turn to a few scriptures that speak about spiritual growth. Eph. 4:15, "But we are meant to speak the truth in love, and to grow up in every way into Christ, the head" (Phillips). Heb. 6:1, "...Let us go on to perfection..." Or let us go on to maturity. 1 Peter 2:2, "Like newborn babes, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good" (NIV). 2 Peter 3:18, "...Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Phil. 2:12-13, "...Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." The Phillips translates this scripture as follows: "...complete the salvation that God has given you with a proper sense of awe and responsibility. For it is God who is at work within you, giving you the will and the power to achieve His purpose."

I will tell you a brief story to illustrate how adversity can create an attitude of determination to succeed in a very difficult situation. As far as I know this is a true story. Sir Edmund Hillary was the first man to climb Mount Everest. On May 29, 1953, he scaled the highest mountain then known to man - 29,000 feet. He was knighted for his efforts. He even made American Express card commercials because of it! However, until we read his book,

High Adventure, we don't understand that Hillary had to grow into his success. You see, in 1952, at 33 years of age, he attempted to climb Mount Everest, but failed. A few weeks later, a group in England asked him to address its members.

Hillary walked on stage to a thunderous applause. The audience was recognizing an attempt at greatness, but Hillary saw himself as a failure.

He moved away from the microphone and walked to the edge of the platform. He clenched his fist and pointed at a picture of the mountain. He said in a loud voice, "Mount Everest, you beat me the first time, but I'll beat you the next time

because you've grown all you are going to grow... but I'm still growing."

This story has many spiritual applications. There was a man who said, "Failure is only the opportunity to begin again more intelligently." In addition, the same man said, "Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal." Adversity comes to everyone eventually and it is a given for those who want to walk with God. You cannot avoid the trying times; the fiery trials. They either knock us flat or make us strong. If taken in the right attitude, they build into us what nothing else can. Whatever God sends our way is designed for our growth. Is. 30:20 says, "...the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction." In Is. 48:10, "Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction." Eph. 4:13 has not yet been fulfilled because we have not yet come to the maturity that Paul is speaking of in this scripture. "Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." This scripture speaks of spiritual growth, culminating in maturity in Christ. God wants mature sons, not little children. Maturity is great gain. The mature in Christ will manifest the fruit of the Spirit. Fruit grows to maturity. Maturity is a process of growth. Gal. 5:22-23 lists the fruit of the Spirit as follows: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance (moderation or self-control)." Phil. 4:5, "Let your

moderation be known unto all men." As our desire to walk closer to the Lord increases, the more the fruit of the spirit will be manifest in our lives.

Our level of maturity can be measured by the degree to which these beautiful attributes of Christ are operative in our daily lives. Christ not only possessed the fruit of the Spirit, but the fruit was manifest in His actions. Fruit was an intrinsic part of His nature. God wants each of us to possess and to demonstrate, in our daily walk, the same fruit. He wants us to be partakers of the divine nature; to come forth in the likeness and image of Christ. 2 Peter 1:3-4 says, "His divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness. Thus He has given us, through these things, His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants of the divine nature." (N.R.S.).

In Rom. 13:14, we find this powerful scripture, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts." The NIV translation says, "Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature." To put on something is to be clothed in it or to wear it as a mantle or a covering. There is no better garment to put on than the Lord Jesus Christ. We want to put off our carnal nature, which is the mantle of the flesh (the transitory) and put on His nature (the permanent or the spiritual).

DATES OF IMPORTANCE	
Indiana Young People's Meeting	Dec. 27 - 31, 2006
North Battleford New Year's Youth Retreat ...	Dec. 28, 2006 - Jan. 1, 2007
Big Spring, Texas	Jan. 26 - 28, 2007
North Carolina Winter Camp	Feb. 23 - 25, 2007
Feast North Battleford	April 5 - 8, 2007
Illinois Gathering (King's House)	May 4 - 6, 2007
Camp North Battleford	July 1 - 8, 2007
North Carolina Summer Camp	July 22 - 28, 2007
Pinelaw Summer Family Camp	Aug. 6 - 12, 2007
Hidden Acres	Aug. 31 - Sept. 3, 2007
Park Valley	Aug. 31 - Sept. 3, 2007
Winkler	Aug. 31 - Sept. 3, 2007
Minden Meetings	Sept. 28 - 30, 2007
Pinelaw Family Camp	Nov. 9-12, 2007

INDIANA YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEETING - December 2006

Wednesday evening, Dec. 27 thru Sunday., noon, Dec. 31, 2006.
Mt. St. Francis Retreat Center, St. Francis, Indiana, 47146, phone (812) 923-8817.
Location just 10 miles from downtown Louisville, KY. All under one roof, gym, recreation rooms, hundreds of acres of woods and hills to hike and sled on. 53 private rooms w/bath and air conditioning. **How to Get There.** From West (St. Louis, etc.) I 64 to U.S. I 50 West, go 2 miles on US I 50 to 2nd set of flashing lights, the center is on the left.

From North: I 65 South to I 265 West 10 miles to U.S. I 50 exit, go 2 miles on I 50 to 2nd set of flashing lights, center on left.
From South and East: I 64 West thru Louisville across Ohio River then 4 miles to U.S. I 50 East highway.

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: Bob Wood, 7 N 933 Pharlapp Dr., St. Charles, IL 60175

Phone: 630-513-6642 or email: sandrakwood@aol.com

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

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CALLED HOME

ARNOLD TONN

August 23, 2006

Big Spring, Texas

.....

JESSE ABRAHAMSON

Sept. 14, 2006

Broderick, Saskatchewan

NORTH BATTLEFORD NEW YEAR'S YOUTH RETREAT Dec. 28, 2006- Jan. 1, 2007

As part of Sharon Schools Educational Program
the North Battleford Young Peoples' Gathering will begin
with the supper meal Thursday, December 28, 2006
and will run through until after the noon meal Monday, January 1, 2007.

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.**

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:
Sharon Children's Homes and Schools
Box 878, North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada, S9A 2Z3

KINGDOM-SONSHIP GATHERING

"Unto HIM shall the gathering of the people be."

JANUARY 26-27-28, 2007 — Big Spring, Texas

New Location: **SPRING TABERNACLE, 1209 Wright Street**
(Courtesy of Mona Lou Tonn)

Brethren from Sharon Schools in North Battleford will be present to minister the Kingdom Word.

It's important to let us know you're coming.
Normally, the saints gather from many locations, including new friends of "kindred" spirit from near and far.

Although never huge in size, the gathering is rich in anointing, a special time of spiritual ministry and fellowship.

Services: Opening service is Friday evening and final service is Sunday evening, also 10 am Saturday and Sunday.
January 26-27-28, 2007.

Location: Big Spring in west Texas.

Motel accommodations at reasonable rates are available.

Those flying should book to Midland/Odessa, if possible, about 40 miles from Big Spring. Dallas is almost 4 hours away.

Contact-Reservations-Full Details:
TERRY MILLER - Ph. 204-466-2673

Email: sharonbroadcast@yahoo.com
or

JERRY KOLTES - Ph. 940-391-1448

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