

Spring 2012

the

Gabriel

The Magazine for Christians in Recovery

ISSUE FOCUS: GROWING IN THE WORD

- * THREE UNIQUE BIBLE STUDIES IN THIS ISSUE
- * TWO NEW RECOVERY CONTRIBUTORS
- * SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE CIR DIRECTOR!

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The Gabriel

The Gabriel is a publication of Christians-in-Recovery® dedicated to the uplifting and inspiration of it's members and friends. It is published 4 times a year, once each quarter.

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CIR Membership—Contributors

Christians in Recovery®, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. We are a group of recovering Christians dedicated to personal one-on-one sharing of faith, strength and hope as we live each day in recovery. We work to regain and maintain balance and order in our lives through active discussion of the 12 Steps, the Bible, and experiences in our own recovery from abuse, family dysfunction, depression, anxiety, grief, relationships and/or addictions of alcohol, drugs, food, pornography, sexual addiction, etc. CIR is comprised of people like you who become Members and/or Donate. CIR is governed by a Board of Directors that meets on a regular basis.

Our Vision

It is the vision of the Board and Supporting Members of CIR to continue to use the latest technology, in addition to conventional means, to reach those who would normally not seek help-- to catch those who fall through the cracks-- and to further spread Christian hope, healing and fellowship to those in need of recovery. Our vision to go well beyond recovery so people can fully discover, explore and magnify all possibilities God intends for them as individuals.

Christians in Recovery® is NOT:

A crises center or hotline

A substitute for attending church

A professional therapy group

A substitute for professional help or assistance

Geared to any one denomination

Intended to replace secular recovery groups or meetings

Intended to replace or undermine any other Christian organization or group.

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Growing in the Word



If you look on the Table of Contents on the previous page you'll see the little Bible icon pictured above. We had three (3!) Bible Studies submitted for publication this month so the Issue Focus was easy - Growing in the Word. After all it's Spring (and yes, the flowers above as well as the irises on the cover are from my own yard).

Do you have a difficult time "finding time" to do your Bible reading? Why is that? I don't know either. I heard a wonderful example given recently. I know it was a well-known speaker/evangelist but forgive me if I can't remember who. What was said though was extremely thought-provoking.

If you compare eating regular food to Spiritual food an interesting comparison comes out. With physical food, if we go for a while without eating we get more and more hungry until we eventually HAVE to eat. And the more food we eat the less hungry we feel. In contrast, when we are fed by the Spirit (eating spiritual food, such as reading our Bible, the more we eat the hungrier we become!! And the more we are fed spiritually, the hungrier and hungrier for it we become. But with Spiritual food, we also know that the longer we go without being fed spiritually the less hungry for it we become! In the beginning we might not even want to eat (translate read our Bibles, meditate, pray) very much and find it hard to even read a chapter a day. But if we discipline ourselves to do just that as we would training a child to eat three meals a day, then a wonderful thing happens - we hunger for more!

I hope the Bible Studies in this issue of the Gabriel and in face all the articles that have been contributed will feed your soul and jump start your Spiritual hunger for more.

I would also like to encourage more of our readers to submit things they have shared on the CIR Forum or in meetings or writings for publication in the next Gabriel. It is truly the voice of the entire membership of Christians in Recovery. There are many who may

need to hear your story or read your words of inspiration of experience, strength and hope.



Finally I want to thank Obie for all the hard work she has done not just in recent weeks but especially so with undertaking to bring Alcoholics Victorious under the widening CIR umbrella. We are excited about the new potential of actual face to face Alcoholics Victorious Meetings and hopefully even brand new f2f Christians in Recovery Meetings! As always, may God bless you in your growth.

Clara T

Editor, The Gabriel

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VOLUNTEERS!!
CIR WOULD NOT
BE POSSIBLE
WITHOUT YOU.**

Special Announcement from CIR's Director of Operations



Alcoholics Victorious



a program of

Christians in Recovery

<http://christians-in-recovery.org>

Christians in Recovery® has long been an online ministry serving the needs of people through the Internet. We have good news! Alcoholics Victorious (AV), founded in 1948, has come under the umbrella of CIR. With the union of the ministry of CIR and the program of AV we are a driving force serving the needs of the Christian recovery community.

AV - <http://alcoholicsvictorious.org> - is a network of local face to face meetings all over the US, Canada and world-wide. With the union of the ministry of CIR and the program of AV we are well equipped to serve your needs.

If you are looking for a local face-to-face meeting, search our online database: <http://christians-in-recovery.org/db>

If you cannot find a local meeting in your area, consider starting a local AV or CIR group! We will provide you with the literature and resources you need to get started. Learn more about starting a local Alcoholics Victorious or Christians in Recovery meeting:

http://christians-in-recovery.org/AboutCIR_StartGroup

Do not overlook the CIR web site with it's thousands of pages of information and resources available to you online.

We are here to serve YOU!

Obie

Executive Director

Christians in Recovery®

<http://christians-in-recovery.org>

and

Alcoholics Victorious

<http://alcoholicsvictorious.org/>

Romans: An Introduction

Part 1 of a continuing series

by L. Michael Hill aka Penguin



This is the first of three contributed Bible studies in this Issue of The Gabriel! And in what we hope will be a regular feature, our own Penguin brings us part I of a study of Romans.

...

Martin Luther wrote that the Book of Romans was the principal part of the New Testament. He felt every Christian should know it by heart, word for word, and should feed upon it every day. He concluded that the more Romans is studied the more precious and sweet to the taste it becomes.

I have found this to be the case in my own Christian life. Romans was the first bible book I ever opened. I was 23 at the time, newly Christian, and in need of important spiritual food to provide energy for my new life. I have gone to that book repeatedly for a variety of reasons and in different contexts. Now that I am on the “back nine” of life (I am 69), I find myself going to it again and again. It becomes a measuring rod against which I compare my life and growth in Christ. And it affirms that I am justified before God through faith alone. I need that. In the church I attend, they can get pretty “picky” over the statement: *actions speak louder than words*. Very often they want the actions just as they are – having forgotten what defines us as

Christians: faith in the saving power of the Cross of Christ.

Just about everyone agrees that Romans is not easy reading when you go there the first time. Admittedly you have to return to it again and again. I do believe that the Holy Spirit will provide help to those who need it. I know that for a fact.

As a retired teacher, I know this: The first major important factor in good teaching is repetition. The second major important factor in good teaching is repetition, and the third major important factor in good teaching is repetition. Do you get my drift? You go there again and again and again. You go there in prayer and expecting to be fed. Even if you find just one verse, that single taste alone will feed you well. In my own experience, strength and hope, I have found the following single verses to really apply to my life. I would love to quote each one of them, but space does not allow. So, here is the list:

Romans 1:17; 2:29; 3:23; 3:28; 5:1; 5:8; 5:18; 6:3; 6:8-9; 6:14; 6:22; 6:23; 7:24-25; 8:1; 8:14-15; 8:26; 8:28; 8:38-39; 9:31-32; 10:9;

10:12-13; 10:17; 11:33; 12:1-2; 13:8; 14:13; 14:17; and 16:25-26.

One of the beauties of Scripture is how it teaches just through the Word, without commentary. Prayerfully check out those verses and let the Spirit speak...and teach. No matter how often I return to these verses, I am repeatedly blessed.

“The Just Shall Live by Faith” is the central thesis of Paul’s letter (Romans 1:17; 5:1; 5:8; and 10:17). And many mistakenly think that is pretty much what Romans is all about. It isn’t. There is more. The discussion of Romans 1:17 lasts just eight chapters. Other issues are addressed in the remaining chapters.

These six words are the basis for the Protestant Reformation. The history behind this is fascinating as one reads about the spiritual journey of Martin Luther, and then to look into the theology and writings of such writers as John Calvin. And then it gets quite interesting as you start to see why it was important to get the Bible out to the layperson – something not done in Luther’s time. The story of how the English Bible, as an example, came to be is at once depressing, and yet uplifting as men of faith never gave up and now we have that Bible in our homes, sometimes in several versions.

Let’s face it: those six words set the world on its ear. And who wrote them? The Holy Spirit.

Let’s put it this way: think about any denomination you know of. Think about your own denomination. Then see that your definition of that group is based more on their works, not their faith. Look within your own

**The Just
Shall Live
by Faith**

church. Think through how you are supposed to do this thing or that thing, or not do this or that thing, and how your congregation becomes a culture defined by anything but faith. This is why it is so important for any church to say close to the Word – to know that works are important but not primary, and that works are defined first from faith.

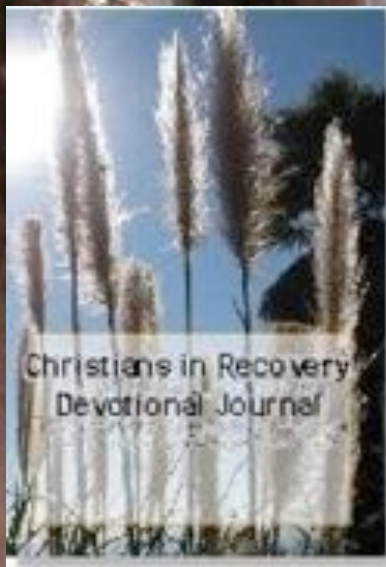
Paul was addressing a people who put works first. Most of the Christians of that time were Jewish. And often they brought the rites of their former religion with them: circumcision, the Levitical sacrifices, and so on. Other non-Jewish Christians (the Gentiles) also came to be. Then when Emperor Claudius drove the Jews out of Rome, the church was primarily Gentile. Then when the Jews later returned they saw how their beliefs differed from the Gentiles in terms of works. Paul's letter was designed to get these two factions together through the principle of justification by faith alone. It is always said that Romans describes Paul's theology. I am sure he would be in agreement with the fact that Romans contains God's theology.

It is my goal in these segments on Romans to look at the book with broad strokes that might then inspire you to spend some time with this book yourself. I really do believe that if you do not read the entire Bible, the one book you need to read, other than the Gospels, is Romans. It is located perfectly in the Canon: after Acts, which is preceded by the four Gospels. My point is that the defining of the person and work of Christ in the Gospels, followed by the story of the early church in Acts, sets up the need for and placement of the book of Romans in the Canon.

I am Michael the Penguin and I am a Christian in Recovery.

Michael better known on the CIR forums as Penguin, since his retirement from the teaching faculty of a Southern University has worked on a special calling to write a commentary on the entire Bible. Many of these writings may be seen on the Bible Forum on the CIR Website We are delighted to be able to publish his work in the Gabriel.

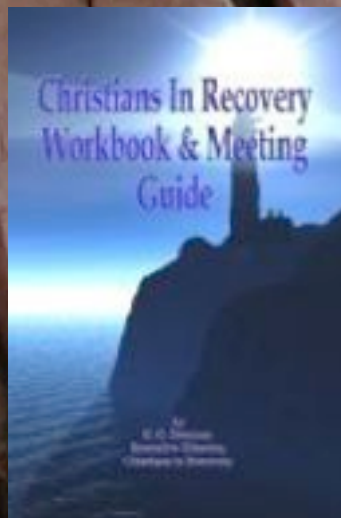
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Inner Core Madness

The Art of Onion Peeling --The Condition of Your Spiritual Heart

2 RECOGNIZING OUR CHOICES

A basic tenet of Christianity is that God has given His children free will, the ability and privilege to choose.

To accomplish this, God gave men free moral agency to enable us to choose to follow His way and assist in the development of His image in us, since we cannot be in His image unless we voluntarily choose to do so. Then the character is truly ours, as well as being truly His, because it is inscribed in us as a result of what we have believed and experienced. **—Genesis 1:26—**

Choice. What an important thing we all have to do over and over during our life. This is life's greatest lesson. It is truly amazing how many people are unaware or forget that they are making choices all the time. Little ones that are seemingly unimportant,



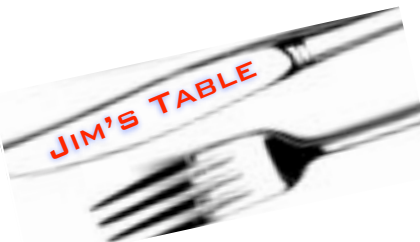
and big ones that change our life, good or bad.

God gave us a great gift – the free will or the power to choose. God also gave us the ability to recognize that we live by choice and not by chance. This great gift is intimately connected to our character, our values, how we treat others, how we handle adversity, how much we learn, what we accomplish in life, our belief system, our purpose and our attitude as we go about our daily tasks.

we may wonder, "Why doesn't God do that for me? Why do I have to struggle with this food addiction, with lust, worry, and fear, with a freely and openly expressive tongue?"

Occasionally God does grant instantaneous understanding, but more often He leads us through a process that requires obedience, faith, discipline and time. God is committed to winning our heart, developing our heart and developing our character. That's not too hard to understand.

The Gabriel's Associate Editor, Jim Aquila, brings us part two of his series on Inner Core Madness. Thank you Jim!



YOU ARE WHAT YOU CHOOSE - THE PROCESS

The first thing we must understand is that change is a process that is taking place even as you read. It is the accumulation of many small behaviors that rarely happens overnight. It involves training, testing and time. There are no shortcuts. We hear of people being dramatically delivered from drug or alcohol addiction, and

THE DESIRE

Agency is a gift from our Heavenly Father. It is the ability and privilege God gives us to choose and 'to act for ourselves and not to be acted upon.

What price am I willing to pay to be like Jesus, not to surpass Him? Am I willing to burn all my bridges and make that one change in my life that will bring me to His side? Deep within our heart is a desire

to please God. It's fear that holds me back. To surrender to the will of God is a scary thing. When our desire to be like Jesus is greater than our willingness to stay where we are, we have taken that one big step toward spiritual balance.

DEVELOPING THE ULTIMATE RELATIONSHIP

The ultimate issue in life is what or whom we worship. The process of true change takes place as we are discouraged from our love and worship of self-pleasure and this world; and our hearts become wholly devoted to Christ.

SPIRITUAL CHANGE REQUIRES WILLINGNESS

As a college student I can hardly remember the hardships that I had to go through. I learned much later that willingness means consciously cooperating with the Holy Spirit, yielding to Him so that He can change me to the image of Christ. The problem is I want the outcome without the process. This is the case for most of us we want victory without the warfare.

Praying and hoping for spiritual change is futile if we sit glued to a television set or neglect the means that God has provided for our growth in grace. Bible study, meditation, worship, prayer, fasting, accountability and obedience are disciplines that produce a harvest of righteousness in our lives.

GAINING FAITH IN HIS CONSIDERATION OF US

So which is it? Does God do the work for us, or do we? According to Scripture, the answer is "yes."

Philippians 2:12-13 says, "Work out your salvation...for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose." True spiritual change is initiated and enabled by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

To be like God is not a matter of trying harder, but rather of walking in the reality of a supernatural change that already has taken place.

To be like God is not a matter of trying harder, but rather of walking in the reality of a supernatural change that already has taken place. It is a process by which the change of God has come about within us and is worked out in our daily behavior. **2 Corinthians 3:18** – "We all [Christians], with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being changed [transformed] into the same image [the image of God] from glory to glory [from that of man to God] just as by [the means of] the Spirit of the Lord." – John W. Ritenbaugh-

It is a lifelong and sometimes painful process. But we have the confidence that one day the transformation will be complete, and, "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" **1 John 3:2**.

SUMMARY - BECOMING A RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL

The choices we make in our life are connected to how willing we are to take responsibility for those choices. Simple, by making no choices yea-or-nay, you will

remain in the same behavior and performing the same activities that you did before the opportunity of change presented itself.

Be willing to take responsibility for the ways in which you may be causing your own pain, and accept responsibility for creating your own peace and joy. Think what it would be like if everyone were a little more humble. It surely would be a more productive life if we were willing to admit that we don't know everything, and that we have weaknesses and behavior that we would like to change. Of course there is a simple answer; we are preoccupied and selfish to risk giving up the life we are living. Why, if I change, no one would like me any more".

People will think that I'm weak and not able to handle my situation.

WILLINGNESS

Willingness states that we are ready to do something without being forced. I know that was a big problem for me because I wanted to analyze everything, "should I, or shouldn't I". Of course as you might have guessed I was good at procrastination. The truth of the matter was that I was in denial. "I was quite satisfied to experience my moments of pleasure." The truth of the matter was that I couldn't find a safe place without spiritual guidance, and I wasn't ready to invite the Holy Spirit into my heart. I was just not ready.

Saint Augustine once said, "Pride is the commencement of all sin." "Why can't I find joy and peace and skip the pain?" Of course I didn't realize, not having a rational "thinker" – brain that I could have everything if I would be willing to go through the process each day of my life.

Some might say that people turn to their compulsive behavior, their compulsive activities when they feel anxious, or when they were fearful, angry, depressed, guilty, hurt, alone, rejected, helpless, lonely, and sad, or unworthy. There did I get everything in? The idea of feeling long lasting suppressed emotional pain is very scary. The wonderful truth is you can handle it when you learn how. Fear of these feelings and emotions is based on beliefs about pain that you acquired in childhood - beliefs, that as adults are false.



FALSE BELIEFS ABOUT PAIN

Identifying a belief is like solving a mystery. You have to follow some clues. To get down to the hidden core, in the unconscious it is like peeling back one layer of hurt at a time until you get down to the core. Negative thoughts may block your way, and you may say to yourself, "They, others, will think I'm a stupid idiot." This is the fear, an emotion, but not the belief. Fears associated with what others think of us are very common. This same pattern can occur in the mind when asking for a raise, or asking someone out on a date, or asking for what we want. Some of us, like I was, would build mountains of reasons as to why we can't, but the biggest reason I found was that I was no longer a victim. I now had a choice that I didn't realize when I was younger. It was difficult to admit that I may be creating my own pain.

I was no longer sure that I could handle anything, much less, pain. "What's the point?" "I will just open my self to the possibility of losing control of myself and others." From some where I had to find the courage and the willingness to test this new concept out. There goes my analyzing again. For instance, when people think we are idiots it doesn't hurt at all. It only hurts if we believe that we are idiots. This is the real cause of pain that we fear.

I began to realize that there is one more layer here, and that I often don't really know what people are thinking. I usually make the assumption about what they thought about me and then believe that assumption. There are a number of other beliefs bundled in this scenario. You can be sure that this is one gift that we were not given that is that we can accurately read other people's minds and know what they think about us. This leads me to tell you that we have to change your point of view in order to change a core belief.

Wanting to Take Full Responsibility for Your Feelings

There is nothing difficult to understand about what *repentance* means. It simply means "to change one's mind." It implies changing one's mind in relation to God and His way of life for us. By its very nature this pattern of thinking is to consciously wanting to take responsibility for offending God. The idea of offending God, and thereby eliminating the areas and causes of unhappiness in our lives, is the primary motivating force behind wanting to follow God's plan.

This is a very important point. It reflects the desire to follow God's plan, fully expecting that the path will be filled with "pot-holes". Compulsive addictive behavior tends to lead us away from our potential joyful existence, in the service to God."

Jim has been an Associate Editor of The Gabriel for several years. He is a certified Naturopathic Therapist. More of his writing may be found on his website here:

<http://www.alt-4-health.com/>



Behold I Will Do A New Thing

This first article in the Spring 2012 Gabriel is a thought-provoking Bible Study on Genesis Chapter 1 brought to us by BAPearl, one of CIR's most loyal and active volunteers and moderator of our Bible Study Forum

Several aspects of these verses in Genesis struck me in a powerful way, and for several reasons. However, they are all related, and so I want to attempt to tie them all together in this post.

The first aspect of this Scripture that really spoke to me is in [Genesis 1:2](#), when the Lord says,

The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Have you ever felt lifeless, without energy, kind of like a worthless "formless," lump on a log? I know I have. And, quite often, I still can find myself in that place if I do not watch my thoughts. I can feel totally powerless to do anything positive about my life and my circumstances.

The good news is, I have a Saviour, a Heavenly Father, Who cares so much for me that He gave His All to draw me to Himself and let me know that He loves me, that He cares. How do I know this? This Scripture verse, [Genesis 1:2](#), reminds me of the tremendous care of my Abba! Father. The New NKJV Life Application Bible says the following about this verse:

"The image of the Spirit of God hovering over the waters is similar to a mother bird caring for and protecting its young."

[Deuteronomy 32:11](#) and 12 also speak of our Lord's loving care of us in the same way, as does [Isaiah 31:5](#):

*As an eagle stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, Spreading out its wings, taking them up, Carrying them on its wings,
So the LORD alone led him,
And there was no foreign god with him.
Deuteronomy 32:11,12, NKJV*

Like birds flying about, So will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem.

*Defending, He will also deliver it;
Passing over, He will preserve it."
Isaiah 31:5, NKJV*

This tremendous love and care is soothing and comforting, and I am reminded of [Psalm 8:3](#) and the wonder of David when he penned these words:

*When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,
What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him? NKJV*

Sharing the awe that David experienced is what brings me to the second aspect of these verses that demonstrated to me that, truly, God put His All into the creation of the earth and into making provision for us, His people, found in [Genesis 1:3-5](#), still on God's first day of creating the world:

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day. NKJV

What is so striking to me is that the meaning of the word "light" in these verses differs from the meaning of the word "lights" found in verses 14-18 in the same chapter. In [Genesis 1:3](#), when the Lord says, *"Let there be light"; and there was light,* the word for "light" in the Greek is "or," meaning "lumination" or (concretely) luminary (in every sense, including lightning, happiness."

This is so relevant because of the many descriptions of the Lord God Almighty Himself throughout the Scriptures as lightning. The following is a small sampling:

When He utters His voice— There is a multitude of waters in the heavens: " He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; He makes lightnings for the rain; He brings the wind out of His treasures. Jeremiah 1:16, NKJV

His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude. Daniel 10:6, NKJV

Please note especially in Jeremiah that the prophet speaks of the Creator's voice, and it was in speaking that all things came into being, including you and I! Thus, the Lord poured His very essence, Light, into His creation!

I also believe this to be so because of what Jesus says to the rich ruler in Mark 10:18:

And Jesus said to him, Why do you call Me [essentially and perfectly morally] good? There is no one [essentially and perfectly morally] good--except God alone. [Amplified Bible]

Following every act of His creation, God said that "it was good." There was only one exception, and that was humanity, and we were "very good"! How could creation not be God Himself poured out into His world, when only God is good? Furthermore, as John testifies in his Gospel in the first chapter, verses 8-10:

He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the

world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. John 1:8-10

So God is Good and God is Light. And He wants us to be surrounded by Him and His Light, and so He created the stars and the moon and the sun:

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. 17 God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 So the evening and the morning were the fourth day. NKJV

The "lights" spoken of in these verses are the word "ma'or" in the Greek, meaning "a light, a luminary, a center of radiant light; properly a luminous body or luminary, that is, (abstractly) light (as an element); figuratively brightness, that is, cheerfulness; specifically a chandelier: - bright, light."

So while the stars and the moon and the sun contain the Light of God, they are "bodies" reflecting His Light, rather than the One Source. In addition, the light in verse 2 is defined as "what makes a sensible impression on the organs of vision." This speaks to me of God's ability to give us revelation knowledge of Who He is - the very Light of the world!

So if you are feeling empty and as if there is nothing you can do to change your circumstances today, do not lose hope! Jesus is your Source of Hope, and He promises you that, just as in the beginning of time, He will transform your world:

*Behold, I will do a new thing,
Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it?
I will even make a road in the wilderness
And rivers in the desert. Isaiah 43:19, NKJV*

Alleluia! Amen!

~ BA Pearl

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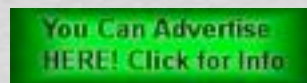
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[Alcoholics Victorious](#)

is now a program of
Christians in Recovery!

[See the Video about Alcoholics Victorious Meetings.](#)

ANSWERS

[Can Jesus save... that person,
that situation, that problem?](#)

[Emotions & Recovery: Grief](#)

[Expressing Emotions in Eating
Disorder Recovery](#)

TIP FOR SUPPORTING MEMBERS

CIR is always open to
suggestions! Why not drop us
one now: [Contact Us](#)

CIR NEWS - SPRING 2012

GOOD READING!



Hope and Help - Self-Injurers and Cutters

"Cutting" is a complex, dangerous, and addictive-life behavior. This will give you insight for dealing with this problem from a Biblical perspective.



Hope and Help - Gambling

You will learn about the heart issues that produce a desire to gamble. You will gain Hope and practical Help from the biblical approach to dealing with the heart issues of gambling. Authored by Mark Shaw

HELP FOR RECOVERY

[Self-Forgiveness](#)

[How You Can Get Sober and
Stay Sober For Good](#)

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[The Scary Rise in Adult Eating
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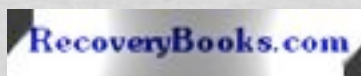
[Caregiver stress: Tips for taking
care of yourself](#)

So busy caring for a loved one
that you fail to care for yourself?

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TechMission and City Vision College

<http://www.techmission.org>

<http://www.cityvision.edu>

Phone: 816-960-2008 City Vision College
Academic Office

Email: rjarboe@cityvision.edu or
rachaelj@techmission.org

[SoulCare 101](#) for Pastors, Counselors and Friends

Enhance your personal or professional ministry through this course as you learn how to engage in other people's lives at a meaningful level and make a lasting difference. Join Dr. Larry Crabb in this course which focuses on the inner life, where we become who we were intended and long to be.

FOR RECOVERY PROFESSIONALS

[Some Advice for Urban Ministry Workers](#)

WISDOM FROM A CIR MEMBER

As long as I view myself as a victim, I can never be victorious. When Jesus died on the cross he said, "It is finished." The moment I accepted Jesus Christ into my life I became a victor and overcomer....as long as I keep my focus on Him and what He has done and continues to do in my life. The past? -- It is finished!

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

[How Do I Say Good-Bye?](#) - Dealing with grief.

[Who Needs Recovery?](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CIR needs Chat Room Greeters to be in the rooms 24/7 or as close to that as possible. Our members are all over the world so it should not be that difficult. Even if you can commit to only one hour per week, it will help. Below is the schedule and we will be filling it in as people volunteer so you can see the empty time periods that need attention.

You can learn more about being a Greeter here:

<http://christians-in-recovery.org/>

[Tools_Chat_Greeter](#)

If you are interested in being a greeter, please

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Moving from Being "in Recovery" to Having "Recovered"

Article by Richard Burns

Would you like to recover from alcoholism and addiction? Do you believe that God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, can relieve you of those problems? According to the fourth edition of [*Alcoholics Anonymous*](#)--known affectionately within A.A. as the "Big Book"--an effective way to recover from alcoholism is to establish a relationship with God. Note the following statement about the personal stories in the Big Book:

Each individual, in the personal stories, describes in his own language and from his own point of view the way he established his relationship with God [[*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed. \(New York City, N.Y.: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 2001\), 29\]](#)].

In fact, if you have become a child of God by way of the new birth--i.e., a Christian--you don't need to establish a relationship with God, as you already have one. The pre-publication, "multilith edition" of the first edition of the Big Book (also known as the "Original Manuscript") words the statement quoted above in a way that children of God may find to be clearer and more helpful:

Each individual, in the personal stories, describes in his own language, and from his own point of view the way he found or rediscovered God. [*The Book That Started It All: The Original Working Manuscript of Alcoholics Anonymous* (Center City, Minn. Hazelden Foundation, 2010) Manuscript page 17, book page 45].

[The Big Book](#) sets forth the cure for alcoholism experienced and proclaimed by A.A.'s pioneers. And that cure involved finding or rediscovering God.

The Twelve Step A.A. Way That is Still in Publication and Still Works

Alcoholics Anonymous history is filled with urgings that the suffering alcoholic "find" God. (See, for example, pages 58-59 of the fourth edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous*.) The idea was suggested by Professor William James, a man who is quoted in the Big Book and who wrote about the "variety" of ways men have "found" God through a "spiritual" experience. On page 9 of the second of his earliest books, *Realizing Religion*, Reverend Samuel Moor Shoemaker, Jr., Rector of Calvary Episcopal Church in New York--whom Bill Wilson specifically called a "co-founder of A.A."--made the following statements about "finding God":

You need to find God. . . . You need a vital religious

experience. . . . You need Jesus Christ.

And Bill Wilson--who called Shoemaker his teacher of ideas--put the following famous, oft-repeated expression in the Big Book:

But there is One who has all power--that One is God. May you find Him now! [*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., 59]

And there were, and still are, 12 suggested steps to recovery that include the idea that the A.A. "solution" is based on "three pertinent ideas":

- (a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.
- (b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.
- (c) That God could and would if He were sought. [*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., 60]

The original A.A. "solution" comes back over and over to God. As item "C" above plainly says: "God could and would if He were sought." That solution applies to the "natural man" ([1 Cor 2:14](#)), who needs to "establish a relationship with God" (or "find God"). It also applies to the child of God, who needs to "rediscover God," with whom he or she already has a relationship. [See also [Hebrews 11:6](#) as to the importance of believing that God "is" (or "exists") and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.]

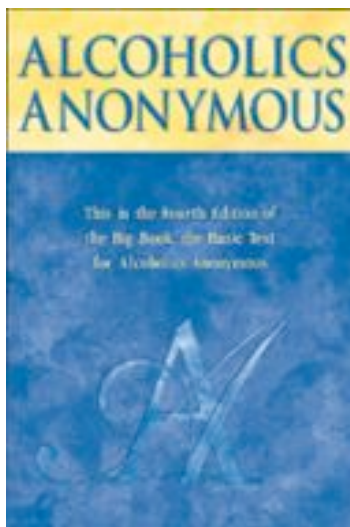
The Solution Through That "Vital Religious Experience"

Bill Wilson made clear that the path to "finding or rediscovering God" (or "establishing a relationship with God," as the first-through-fourth editions of the Big Book put it)--was available to all those who went to any lengths to follow his suggested program of recovery:

There is a solution. . . .

The great fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows and toward God's universe. [*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., 25]

The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves. [*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., 25]



Bill Wilson had such an experience. He describes it in detail in his autobiography. He sought "the Great Physician" (Jesus Christ) that Dr. Silkworth had recommended to him. Bill said:

I remember saying to myself, "I'll do anything, anything at all. If there be a Great Physician, I'll call on him." Then, with neither faith nor hope I cried out, "If there be a God, let him show himself." The effect was instant, electric. Suddenly my room blazed with an indescribably white light. I was seized with an ecstasy beyond description. I have no words for this. Every joy I had known was pale by comparison. The light, the ecstasy. I was conscious of nothing else for a time. Then, seen in mind's eye, there was a mountain. I stood upon its summit where a great wind blew. A wind, not of air, but of spirit. In great, clean strength it blew right through me. Then came the blazing thought, "You are a free man." [Bill W.: *My First Forty Years: An Autobiography by the Cofounder of Alcoholics Anonymous* (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 2000), 145]

In January of 1968, Bill wrote an article published by A.A. itself--an article that finished the account in this way:

I stood on a high mountain. I was taken there. I had not climbed it. And then the great thought burst upon me: "Bill, you are a free man! This is the God of the Scriptures." And then I was filled with a consciousness of a presence. . . . So I hung on, and then I knew there was a God and I knew there was a grace. And through it all, I continued to feel, if I presume to say it, that I do *know* these things. [*The Language of the Heart: Bill W.'s Grapevine Writings* (NY: The AA Grapevine, Inc., 1980), 284]

The Early Akron Fellowship Way Was Different. Simple. Effective

In Akron, when a newcomer was hospitalized at Akron City Hospital during the earliest days of his sobriety, A.A. cofounder Dr. Bob would ask the newcomer simply if he believed in God. [See, for example: *DR. BOB and the Good Oldtimers* (NY: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 1980), 144.] The question asked was whether he believed in God--not a god. God! This question was posed just before the newcomer was discharged from the hospital. And, if he replied, "Yes," he was asked to pray. He was given a Bible. And he was sent on his way to "fix" drunks "as an avocation." [See, for example: Mitchell K., *How It Worked: The Story of Clarence H. Snyder and the Early Days of Alcoholics Anonymous in Cleveland, Ohio* (Washingtonville, NY: Big Book Study Group, 1998), 58; and Dick B., *That Amazing Grace: The Role of Clarence and Grace S. in Alcoholics Anonymous* (San Rafael, CA: Paradise Research Publications, 1996), 26-28.]

But the newcomer was soon required to find or rediscover

God (or to "establish his relationship with God") by making a *full surrender*. He was taken upstairs out of a regular meeting. He was strongly encouraged to: (1) accept Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior; (2) ask God to take alcohol out of his life; and (3) "fix" drunks "as an avocation." The newcomer was then deemed ready to begin going out and helping others get well. (See, for example: Mitchell K., *How It Worked*, 70-71.)

There is a Solution

The Early AAs Fully Understood How to Establish Their Relationship with God

Bill Wilson--as quoted by A.A. Number Three (Bill Dotson)--was very clear about his having been

cured of alcoholism by God:

"Henrietta, the Lord has been so wonderful to me, curing me of this terrible disease, that I just want to keep talking about it and telling people." [*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., 191]

A.A. Number Three--Bill Dotson--was there when Bill W. made the statement above. Bill D. said:

That sentence, "The Lord has been so wonderful to me, curing me of this terrible disease, that I just want to keep telling people about it," has been a sort of a golden text for the A.A. program and for me. [*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., 191]

And then probably the most wonderful thing that I have learned from the program . . . is the statement: "I came into A.A. solely for the purpose of sobriety, but it has been through A.A. that I have found God.

I feel that is about the most wonderful thing that a person can do. [*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., 192]

Gloria Deo

~ * ~

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Dick B. is a writer, historian, retired attorney, Bible student, CDAAC, and an active and recovered member of the A.A. fellowship. He has published 42 titles and over 500 articles on the history of Alcoholics Anonymous and on the Christian recovery movement. Contact:

[Dick B.](#)

PO Box 837

Kihei, HI 96753-0837

[More articles by Dick Burns and other Christian Recovery authors may be found on the CIR Archives.](#)

Creation Space

From our CIR Admin:

Hello God, I called tonight
To talk a little while
I need a friend who'll listen
To my anxiety and trial.

You see, I can't quite make it
Through a day just on my own...
I need Your love to guide me,
So I'll never feel alone.

I want to ask You please to keep,
My family safe and sound.
Come and fill their lives with
confidence
For whatever fate they're bound.

Give me faith, dear God, to face
Each hour throughout the day,
And not to worry over things
I can't change in any way.

I thank You God, for being home
And listening to my call,
For giving me such good advice
When I stumble and fall.. !!!!!!!

Your number, God, is the only one
That answers every time.
I never get a busy signal,
Never had to pay a dime.
So thank You, God, for listening
To my troubles and my sorrow.
Good night, God, I love You, too,
And I'll call again tomorrow!

P.S. Please bless all my friends
and family too.

Poems From RoadRunnerz

Asking

"Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full." John 16:24

How do we ask?

Like a child in a candy shop, for everything that's seen?

Like a man 'fore a firing squad, plying one last plea?

A parent, for a job, in economy that's slumped?

Teen girls at the mall, for newest, awesome pumps?

Like a junkie at the bottom, for one more chance at life?

A prodigal in Sodom impaled on Satan's knife?

A mother for her child, for years of holding close?

Or elder at the end, begging Charon's boat?

On deeper thought we might request a single drop of wine,
A vintage brought to light by a river crossing Vine,
Who came across to bear our cross, God's gift to all who seek,
Established back in Glory, He waits now our entreat.

Do You Recall?

do you recall
when your heart first leapt
first wept
first swept into heavenly swirls?

do you remember the day
finding beauty ablaze
amazed as you gazed on a luminous world?

is there membrance now
of the day of the call
the voice so small
was it there at all?

a moment fleeting
a meeting of mind and vapor
a caper of a capricious imagination?

or...perhaps...an invitation
heaven sent
for transformation



Feel free to take a break and smell the roses at <http://furtherreaches.com/>

I am so glad that our Father in Heav'n
Tells of His love in the Book He has giv'n;
Wonderful things in the Bible I see,
This is the dearest, that Jesus loves me.
Refrain

I am so glad that Jesus loves me,
Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me.
I am so glad that Jesus loves me,
Jesus loves even me.

Though I forget Him, and wander away,
Still He doth love me wherever I stray;
Back to His dear loving arms I do flee,
When I remember that Jesus loves me.
Refrain

Oh, if there's only one song I can sing,
When in His beauty I see the great King,
This shall my song through eternity be,
"Oh, what a wonder that Jesus loves me!
Refrain

Jesus loves me, and I know I love Him;
Love brought Him down my poor soul to redeem;
Yes, it was love made Him die on the tree;
Oh, I am certain that Jesus loves me!
Refrain

If one should ask of me, how can I tell?
Glory to Jesus, I know very well!
God's Holy Spirit with mine doth agree,
Constantly witnessing Jesus loves me.
Refrain

In this assurance I find sweetest rest,
Trusting in Jesus, I know I am blessed;
Satan, dismayed, from my soul now doth flee,
When I just tell him that Jesus loves me.
Refrain

Words & Music: Philip P. Bliss, 1870

"I think it was in June, 1870, that 'Jesus Loves Even Me' was written," writes Major Whittle. ... The idea of Bliss, in writing the hymn, was to bring out the truth that the peace and comfort of a Christian are not founded so much upon his love to Christ as upon Christ's love to him, and that to occupy the mind with Christ's love would produce love and consecration...

Mr. Bliss said that this song was suggested to him by hearing the chorus of the hymn "Oh, how I love Jesus," repeated very frequently in a meeting which he attended. After joining in the chorus a number of times the thought came to him, "Have I not been singing enough about my poor love for Jesus, and shall I not rather sing of his great love for me?" Under the impulse of this thought he went home and composed this, one of his most popular children's hymns.

POSTED BY ALAN H



CIR has many talented members. Here is some music played by Rayann and his wife. Enjoy and be blessed by these brought to us by Nadine

[02_Dubliner.mp3](#) (5 downloads)

[17_Romanca í G.mp3](#) (5 downloads)

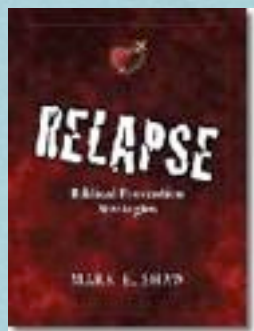
[18_Sicilienne.mp3](#) (4 downloads)

Another great video and song: "Healer of the Broken" by Gwen Smith. You can listen to it on YouTube:

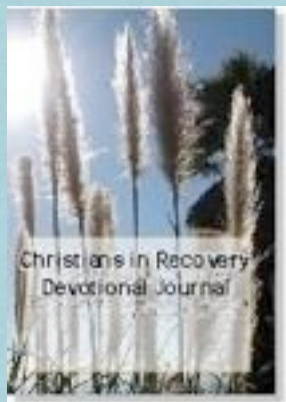
<http://www.godtube.com/watch?v=KZDYPGNX>

TOOLS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

[How to Start a
Recovery Group](#)



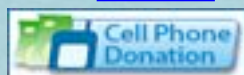
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[Christians in Recovery
Devotional Journal](#)

365 Thoughts, Scitpures
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CIR Bible Study: The Power of the Blood

*The following study in the
Word was submitted by one
of our CIR members, aaevan.*



Without a doubt, the blood of Jesus Christ is the most precious gift our heavenly Father has given to His church - yet so few Christians understand its value and virtue. Christians often sing about the power of the blood. Indeed, the anthem of the Pentecostal church is, "*There is power, power, wonder working power in the precious blood of the Lamb.*" But most believers seldom enter into the power of that blood.

I've never seen any power comparable to that of the Blood of Jesus, including the power contained within the 12 steps--but when we COMBINE those two!

Let's start unlocking the Power of the Blood a little bit more. As I wrote previously, the Blood of Jesus is an unprecedented EXTREME power source, the likes of which I could not imagine when my Christian walk began 32 yrs. ago.

For this reason, it is my assertion that our faith must have had all the proper nutrition to grow AND time to mature before we can truly know this Jesus and the Power of His Blood. Four conditions must be met for the Power of the Blood to become operational in our lives. We must:

1. **Know** what the bible says about the Blood.
2. **Believe** what the bible says about the Blood
3. **Appropriate** the power of the Blood and,
4. **Expect Miracles!!!!**

That's really all we have to do! Jesus already did the hard part, in Gethsemane and on the Cross.

Matthew 26:27-28

27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

Acts 20:28

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Romans 3:23-25a

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,

Ephesians 1:7

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace

Hebrews 9:22

22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission

1Peter 1:2

2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied

1John 1:7

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin

1John 5:6-8

6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

Revelation 1:5

5 And from Jesus Christ, who is

the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood

Revelation 5:9

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation

Revelation 12:11

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

That is only a PORTION of what the New Testament has to say about the blood. The doctrine really starts in the 4th chapter of Genesis, with the sacrifices of Cain and of Abel. Then throughout the pages of the Old Testament this doctrine is established and underlined, emphasized and re-emphasized! But for now, I'm only going to list one OT scripture,

Leviticus 17:11:

11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.

The full power of the Blood of Jesus Christ for redemption; for cleansing, for protection, for sanctification AND for deliverance can become 'operational,' or active in our lives and the lives of those with whom we pray and fellowship. Hence, it would greatly behoove us to find out what the Word of God has to say about this

miraculous substance. Such a bible study would take much time and effort. But I'm assured that it's a necessity I'm certainly glad I've done this and continue to do so...it's really changing me!

As I mentioned at a recent step meeting, 'the purifying power of the blood is a perfect complement to Step 6:

"Became entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character." Hallelujah!

It is my fervent prayer that the Body of Christ might receive IN ALL FULLNESS the revelation of the Power of the Blood of Jesus Christ!

-ed



Hot Topics On the Forums:

The True Nature of Prayer

[Link to Discussion Forum](#)

Recovery Thought:

Prayer is not intended to change God's purpose, nor is it to move Him to form fresh purposes. God has decreed that certain events shall come to pass through the means He has appointed for their accomplishment. ~ A. W. Pink

Isaiah 58:9

Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.

Recovery Prayer

Almighty God, Forgive me when I try to use prayer to change Your mind. Who am I to change the mind of God? Prayer is a means for us to commune together, for me to pour my heart and troubles out before You. It is a time for me to listen intently and to worship You. Amen.

GLEANINGS



Noreen's Puppets

I found this sermon very encouraging, even "a man after God's own heart" could struggle with emotions in dark cave times. I especially like the line..."to feel abandoned means... once you were not"

[when david felt abandoned by God](#)

Heard at a meeting:

In the BB on page 68 it says that "It is the verdict of the ages that faith means courage." It takes faith once you give something over to HP to have the courage to know it will be all right... you don't have to stick up for your imagined rights.

Expectations are resentments waiting to happen



ANTI SERENITY PRAYER
 "God (and I hold you responsible if you even exist),
 I am angry and resentful things I cannot change
 while in despair at changing anything else,
 though I don't think I even know the difference."

~ Friendship is born at that moment
 when one person says to another: "What!
 You, too? Thought I was the only one."
 ~C.S. Lewis

REMEMBER IN PRAYER



- BJ & Andy
- Fran's Nephew, Zack
- aaevan
- Shirley's grandson, Jack
- Tracy's health
- Debbie's friend, Julie
- Dale M. who has leukemia
- Julie's sister in law, Mollie
- Leighanne and her brother, Lyle
- Christianlight
- Ruth who is grieving right now
- Lynn, Clara's friend who has bladder cancer
- Cindy's Father and whole family in his illness
- That the transition for Alcoholics Victorious
would go smoothly and the way be made clear
- For the financial well-being of the CIR ministry
- For the Volunteers and Workers at CIR

Keep in mind Three Keys to
 experiencing sustained peace.

1. Focus on God
2. Trust Him
3. Meditate on His Word

SURRENDER

by Ashton Smith

Driving down the freeway your left rear tire explodes. You gently pull to the side of the road to exit and see what happened. You begin to check to see why it popped. STOP.

The problem with most of humanity is that reason right there. In the end, it doesn't matter what popped the tire. It doesn't matter that if you were in the other lane, and you could of avoided it. It doesn't matter that you will now be late. And it doesn't matter when you say, "I knew I should have called in". Why? Because none of those things actually happened.

Work on the solution. Take it off, and fix it. There is nothing in this world that is good, nor bad that you can prevent. For there are only rules one can live by, which when done, make you accept when the unpreventable happens. How many of you would go back and change an event in your life? Let's say one would change their academic career—for which the only reason I can think of would be to have a better job, and obtain more money. They are not living by the rules given.

•Money is absolutely nothing. It buys fake rules which leads people to think it is something. Money leads man to believe you can prevent. Money can not make one go back and prevent your flat tire. It can only buy you a new one. It can not make you sober, only get you into places that try to help get you sober.

False: money controls people places and things.

Fact: people places and things allow money to control them.

Other examples are:

Hello.

I found God two weeks ago. Amen! I have been in the program for almost a year, and have done open talks. I run meetings. I work it hard. I wrote this the other day. I hope you can share it with people in hopes to help them. God bless!!

Ashton

I would not have married that person, I would have said bye to my father before he died. I would have never used. I would have answered the phone. I would have been kinder.

Would, should, could.

Words I will never understand. How about "will", "shall", and "couldn't be more delighted". And not "WILL", as in, "I will be at practice tomorrow". But "WILL" as in not willing to waiver on one's ideas or principles, unbending to the pressure of others, only abiding by the rules of surrender.

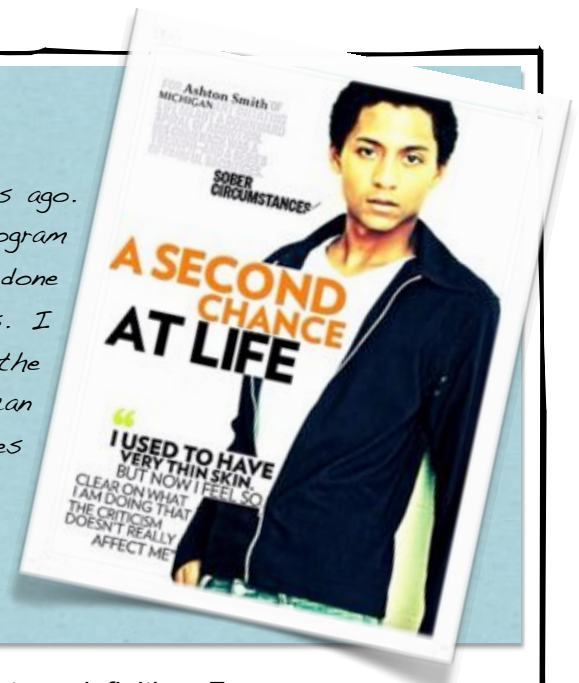
This perspective is that of a test; Let's say person 1 who got the flat tire, was on their way to save someones life. Person 2, was on their way to commit a heinous murder. If you thought to yourself you were glad it happened to person 2, you failed. Either one's destination is relevant. It would be like looking to see what popped the tire. All I know, is nothing at all. For having nothing at all with surrender, is far greater than having all with anger, remorse, sadness, regret, wishing, narrowness, and unrepented sin.

Remember, that no word in any dictionary really has any definition. We are giving the word it's

definition. For example the word 'happiness'. When you think of that, you think positive thoughts. Well you're wrong. I know of many drug users, murderers, shop lifters, and racists that are happy. And on the other hand, I know of people that followed these steps of surrender and are happy. It is not any word, but the motive behind it.

Think of GOD as the seed to a huge oak tree. All of the branches will not be perfect. Some will fall and perish below, others will have one leaf, others will have four, and others fifty. It is only the seed that knows. For the seed itself can no longer be seen, leaving some branches to believe other theories of how they became to be. Fact is, that seed had perished for the sake of that tree. The seed is now the wind, the rain, the snow, the lightning, and any other act that will determine the branches, leaves, and base of that oak tree's destination. Remember that a beautiful branch alone can not be seen when covered by leaves. But it is the leaf-covered branch that stays warmer in the cool nights.

My life you ask? Drug-abusing father, divorced parents, racist family, grandmother's death, 6



MIPS, loss of job, rehab trip, mental ward visit, grandfather's death, adopted by the father I have today, lived in Howell as a black kid, alcoholic, drug addict, DUI, and death of biological father after only knowing him for 3 months. My view now as a surrendered step follower? Drug abusing father? He's a picture to look at of how not to live my life. Racist family? At least I have one. They came around. 6 MIPS? Better than 6 felonies. Howell? First African American to be on homecoming court. Addict? I know of addicts who are blind, deaf, severely obese, have lost every material and physical possession,

homeless, no family, addicts who are constrained to wheelchairs, and addicts who can not speak. I myself am none of those. The beauty of living these steps is seeing addicts that struggle with these "unfortunates", and still live in surrender. For it is the blind man that continues to serve these steps, who is stronger than any seeing man who serves these steps. Because he has surrendered. The blind man now knows that without his blindness, he would never have surrendered.

No glass is half full nor empty. There is no level of anything. For we know no such thing as even ground. Be thankful for the glass

itself. It is the man with the "full glass" that pours his water into his fellow neighbor so he to can drink, whose glass is truly full.

You will never receive full adherence to a perfect life. Only the peacefulness of knowing it won't be perfect. May GOD grace you through this journey, and you grace Him with but one thing, and one thing only, and that is to begin living in surrender.

Remember, surrender isn't a bad thing. You surrendered to your drug. Now surrender to these steps. It is a life of contentment, selflessness, understanding, and peace. We would really like to have you with us.

A personal note from the author:

DRUG ADDICT

Yes me. Ashton, you should take this personally. I am writing myself here because everything I could tell myself out loud I won't hear. Everything anyone says won't help. All advice, admonishment, promises and pleas will fall on my deaf ears, and frankly, I don't believe I even deserve the energy that all of that would take. I know from this moment on that I will only call myself drug addict. I will not use my name because I have relinquished it. My name belongs to the person I no longer am. I am now...just drug addict. I have surrendered my human identity, by which was no one's choice but my own. I have lost all personality, individuality, and any ounce of integrity. I have lost all the things that made me a special human being and I have gained the notoriety of generalization. I am nothing more than drug addict; one of millions who are all the same. All the lies are the same. All the false promises are the same. All the paths lead to the same hell. I know that I no longer hold the power of influence over those I love because I no longer have any power over myself. I need to realize that my self-hatred and destruction will not be bought into by anyone. I need to acknowledge that the drugs and my need for them have replaced all love, truth, respect, loyalty and, most importantly, all faith in god. The drugs are my obsession, my mistress, my preoccupation, my reason for living, my higher power. There is no space for anyone else. I am tired of watching myself hurt whom to which I'm closest. I am sick of witnessing myself manipulate them. I am repulsed by my ample broken promises, my lies, my lack of accountability, I place the blame everywhere but with myself. I am tired of waiting for me to fail, relapse, go back on my own word, disappear, and steal. I am horrified by how stupid I think I am, and how I have no respect for myself or those who still care about me. I am so close now to reaching the end of the line. I might come out of it alive and clean. That is my wish but I need to acknowledge how unlikely that is. My track record is not good. I know that it is possible that I will die, or end up in jail, or some institution. Honestly, I am on my own now, and it is only me who can make all those choices. Even though it all starts with that one. I can't watch. I need to walk away. None of it is up to anyone but me. Maybe, if I survive, I will see the pain I have caused to those who I've loved the most. Maybe, if I survive, I will ask them for forgiveness for the abuse, lies and sordid situations I put them into. Maybe, if I survive, I will have this conversation with me, to earn my name once more. Maybe if I surface, I will finally be one with God.

Sister Deena had just returned home from Sunday evening service when she was startled by a burglar. With great biblical authority she yelled, " stop! Acts 2: 38, which implies " Turn from your sin"

The thief stopped dead in his tracks. Then the woman calmly called the police and explained what she had done.

As the officer cuffed the man, he asked the burglar, " Why did you stop you burgling? All the old lady did was yell a Bible verse at you."

" Bible verse?" replied the crook. " She said she had an axe and two .38s!"

Submitted by Kathy

Yeah we're
funny!

FROM Oswin:

There was a Scottish painter named Smokey MacGregor who was very interested in making a penny where he could, so he often thinned down his paint to make it go a wee bit further.

As it happened, he got away with this for some time, but eventually the local church decided to do a big restoration job on the outside of one of their biggest buildings.

Smokey put in a bid, and, because his price was so low, he got the job.

So he set about erecting the scaffolding and setting up the planks, and buying the paint and, yes, I am sorry to say, thinning it down with turpentine.....

Well, Smokey was up on the scaffolding, painting away, the job nearly completed, when suddenly there was a horrendous clap of thunder, the sky opened, and the rain poured down washing the thinned paint from all over the church and knocking Smokey clear off the scaffold to land on the lawn among the gravestones, surrounded by telltale puddles of the thinned and useless paint.

Smokey was no fool. He knew this was a judgment from the Almighty, so he got down on his knees and cried:

"Oh, God, Oh God, forgive me; what should I do?"

And from the thunder, a mighty voice spoke.. (you're going to love this)

"Repaint! Repaint! And thin no more!"

Q: what did the mother
tomato say to the baby tomato
when he lagged behind?
A: "ketchup"
from iLOVEsoccer

Teacher's Best
from Samuel

TEACHER: Why are you late?
STUDENT: Class started before I got here.

TEACHER: John, why are you doing your math multiplication on the floor?

JOHN: You told me to do it without using tables.

TEACHER: Glenn, how do you spell 'crocodile'?

GLENN: K-R-O-K-O-D-I-A-L'

TEACHER: No, that's wrong

GLENN: Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it. (I Love this child)

TEACHER: Donald, what is the chemical formula for water?

DONALD: H I J K L M N O.

TEACHER: What are you talking about?

DONALD: Yesterday you said it's H to O.

TEACHER: Winnie, name one important thing we have today that we didn't have ten years ago.

WINNIE: Me!

TEACHER: Glen, why do you always get so dirty?

GLEN: Well, I'm a lot closer to the ground than you are.

TEACHER: Millie, give me a sentence starting with ' I. '

MILLIE: I is..

TEACHER: No, Millie..... Always say, 'I am.'

MILLIE: All right... 'I am the ninth letter of the alphabet.'

TEACHER: George Washington not only chopped down his father's cherry tree, but also admitted it.

Now, Louie, do you know why his father didn't punish him?

LOUIS: Because George still had the axe in his hand.....

TEACHER: Now, Simon , tell me frankly, do you say prayers before eating?

SIMON: No sir, I don't have to, my Mom is a good cook.

TEACHER: Clyde , your composition on 'My Dog' is exactly the same as your brother's.. Did you copy his?

CLYDE : No, sir. It's the same dog.

STEP NINE: Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others



STEP NINE: TOPIC:
"Unburdened by the Past"

STEP NINE SCRIPTURE: Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift [Matthew 5:23-24].

The engineer in the recording booth was helping me make a religiously oriented radio spot. When I was done she said, "You know, I could never be religious. My mother forever ruined me."

She spoke with rigid defiance, and she snarled her lip when she said, "My mother." When I asked why, she explained how her mother belonged to a particular religious sect that didn't allow birthday celebrations, Christmas observations, and even flag salutes. She hissed in anger as she remembered the humiliation of being told to leave the classroom during the morning pledge of allegiance. Then she quieted her voice as she recalled her mother's absence at her wedding and her absence at the birth of her daughter. "She punished me," she said, "because I had rejected her faith. I haven't seen her in seven years."

Many of us who are in recovery find it hard to approach God because of past offenses. We can never feel free so long as there are things that need to be made right. We may go back to people we have hurt and find that they are unwilling to accept our

amends, but that's okay. Before God, we have tried. The radio engineer may one day seek to make things right with her mother, and her mother may still reject her. But I know that God will honour her attempt. In fact, I told her that. I also asked her not to judge God because of her mother.

God, I want to approach You freely without the burden of unfinished business. Please help me. In Jesus' holy name. Amen.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION:

- 1) What does this Scripture mean to you: "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift [Matthew 5:23-24]." ? How do you relate it to the ninth step? Your recovery walk?
- 2) Is there something in your past that is keeping you from receiving the fullness of all God has for you? How can you surrender your pain to Jesus? What is the process of beginning to trust?
- 3) Please share your thoughts on the following statement: "We can never feel free so long as there are things that need to be made right." Do you agree or disagree? Please explain.

THE LAST WORD & WALKING THE STEPS

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