

# GRACE MESSENGER

## THE WAY OF CHRIST

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[www.wayofchrist.org](http://www.wayofchrist.org)

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### The Power that Works Within

Perhaps, the most influential person in the mystical thought of the Eastern mind was a young man who witnessed the self-inflicted starvation of his parents. They believed that the spirit, the essence of life, was trapped within their bodies. For them to experience ultimate goodness, the spirit must be set free from the evilness of the body. They were willing to torture the body by depriving it of necessary nutrition to end its restriction upon the spirit.

The child of these parents went on to impact greatly the thinking of much of Eastern mysticism. It has also been suggested that his thoughts on life greatly affected Plato, one of the architect in the development of thinking in the Western world. The writings of Plato, in turn, became influential in shaping Christian thought in the middle ages. The belief that the physical body is in some way evil serving only to entrap the spirit of which the spirit will be eventually set free from the body has its roots in the mysticism of the Eastern world.

Plato recorded a revealing story of the death of his teacher, Socrates. Being sentenced to die for the corruption of the minds of the Athenian youth, Socrates' friends had gathered around him to offer advice and comfort him before his life would be taken. Socrates was puzzled over their reaction to his death. His comments were, in essence, that they should not be mourning his death. He would tell them that after he took his last breath, his spirit would depart. What his friends would then see would only be the worthless shell of his former presence.

They should not mourn him because the essence of his real self was in a better place. His spirit would have been set free from the body that had been a continual encumbrance to his quest for the true life. Socrates, as with Plato, understood that the physical body served only to entrap the spirit that eventually would be set free from the body.

On the other hand, the early writings of Christianity declare that the body is not evil. It was created by God and declared to be good (Gen. 1:31). God, in His wisdom, constructed a physical body for man in which the Spirit of God could be experienced. He also prepared a physical world in which man was to spend the days of his life. Without the physical body and the physical world, the Spirit of God could not be experienced by the created world.

For example, plant a tomato seed in the ground. The outer casing or husk of the seed must rot or decay before the essence of life within the seed can come forth with tender sprouts of life. One pushes up through the ground seeking the light of the sun. Another one pushes into the soil seeking water and nutrients. Eventually, the essence of the seed comes forth from the earth into the heaven producing a full-grown tomato plant. Hanging on the branches of the plant are fully developed tomatoes.

Within each tomato are many seeds. Within each seed is the same life that was in the seed that was planted in the ground to start the cycle of life. The spirit of life is eternal but for it to be experienced in the world there is a need for a physical body. Although individual tomato plants with their tomatoes live and die, the essence of life within the seed is eternal and will continue to produce a new body in each cycle of life for the tomato plant.

Although the body is temporal and prone to decay, it nevertheless is the vehicle in which creation experiences the Creator. The uniqueness of this arrangement is the mystery that “. . . *though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed . . .*” (2 Cor. 4:16). Ultimately, it is to experience the mystery of mysteries, the resurrection of the body. Every time a seed (an external body in which the essence of life is enclosed) falls to the ground and dies, the essence of life within brings forth a new body.

It is not the elimination of the body, the spirit set free from the body, which enables the essence of all that is life to be experienced; it is the continual dying of the body to be raised in newness of life that is the crowning moment of experiencing the glory of life. One of the early followers of Jesus said, “*Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh*” (2 Cor. 4:10,11). The experiencing of life is always in death and resurrection of the outward body.

The experiencing of this life that is eternal can be seen in the original creation of man. *After God formed the first man out of the dust of the earth, he “breathed into his nostrils the*

*breath of life.*” Man became a living soul, a breathing creature (Gen. 2:7). Man experiences life because he experiences the breath of life, the Power that is within. It is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that enables all men to live.

The writers of both the Old and New Testaments knew what was the quickening essence of life for all men. In perhaps the oldest book in the Bible, Job said, “. . . *my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils . . .*” (27:3). He also stated, “*The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life*” (33:4). Daniel proclaimed, “*God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways*” (5:23). (Also see Isaiah 42:5, John 1:4, 9, Acts 17:25, 28.)

The indwelling Holy Spirit is the quickening essence of life that enables man, in his flesh and blood body, to live. Although this life is the gift of God, man often finds himself struggling to experience the peace and joy of life given to him. A closer look at the essentials of the creation of man will help understand why man often fails to let the Power within produce the good life.

Life began very simply. God formed man, as a potter shapes a vessel of clay, out of the elements of that which he had already created and then breathed into the inanimate form the breath of life. The vessel of flesh and blood, lifeless in itself, became a breathing creature when quickened by the breath of life, the Spirit of God. The listless structure of the human body became a living, breathing entity because it had been energized by the essence of all life—God. The flesh of created man and the Spirit of Creator God met together in perfect union to constitute a living, breathing creature.

Newly formed man lived his life in simplicity. As a child experiences life within the warmth and safety of an earthly father, the first of mankind experienced his life in the embrace of the love of his heavenly Father. Experiencing the greatest possible expression of life, the original man and the original woman encountered the days of their lives in the providential care of God Himself. The Power that was within them provided all that was needed to experience the glory of paradise -- peace, joy and justice.

It would not be long, however, until all would not be well in paradise. Man desired not to live in the simplicity of the innocence of a child enjoying the continual expression of God’s love. Using the God-given freedom of his intellect, he began to think that it would be better for him if he could make decisions on what was good or evil for him. He began to believe that he himself, making God-like decisions, could direct the course of his life. With the now-perceived ability of the freedom of choice, he would attempt to control his own experiences. He now believed that the power of the times and the seasons of life were within his jurisdiction.

Although man would now continually struggle to solve moral issues, he unknowingly had created a greater impediment in his life. For the perverted struggle of good and evil only became a problem when the intricacies of the mind began to perceive it could produce the essence of life by its own activity. The fruit of the forbidden “*tree of the knowledge of good and evil*” (Gen. 2:16–3:24) brought man into an endless maze.

Desperately searching, yet never able to fulfill his dreams, aspirations, or longing for the unadulterated joy of living, man became lost in his own thinking.

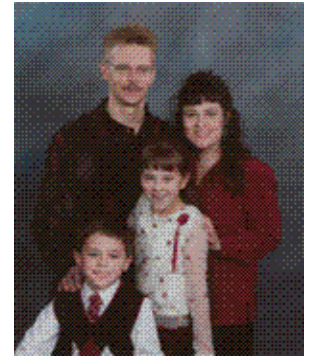
The curse of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is that the mind can only attempt to live within its own thinking. In turn, it will only be able to think on that which it has encountered. It becomes trapped in its own limitations to get outside of itself. He may search the world over but he will always be bound by the limits of his habitation. He just does not have the power to get beyond what he can think.

It was the consumption of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that brought Jesus Christ into the physical world. He said, “*For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees that were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth*” (John 9:39–41). Jesus came to undo the seeing of man, bringing man back to the innocence of his mind that the Power within can take him outside of himself.

When this deliverance occurs, when Jesus conquers the misguided mind, man is restored to a state of innocence (freedom from guile or cunning: simplicity). The Power within flows throughout his life enabling the believer to experience the seed-times of his life in ultimate victory. The germinating process for man, as with the created world, will always bring forth a resurrection of the physical the body (the current manifestation of the physical existence of His life.)  
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### Weekly CD:

Christian Ministries offers a [Weekly CD](#) of Bible study for those who desire to participate. [Contact Barry Shepherd](#) for details. We encourage you to share these CD’s with others in your community to increase discussion of what the Lord is revealing in your lives.



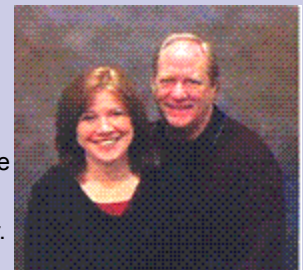
**Barry and Jennifer with their children, Kaitlyn Grace & Gabriel James**

### Meet the Editors:

#### [Dale and Joy Simpson](#)

Our prayer for you is that the life of the Spirit would enable you to hear the mystery of the Word in this newsletter.

We believe the Lord is revealing how the gospel of Jesus Christ is setting us free from the world, from religion that has entrapped so many of us, and from ourselves.



## My Place in the Body of Christ

by Elizabeth Schnell

In recent days, some insight has come to me that has taken me by surprise. I can go through days and endless struggles only to find that nothing changes because I try to control the outcome of my current circumstances. My cry to heaven is, 'Where are you Lord?' How is faith made manifest in spite of my own "grave circumstances"?

Beholding myself speaking without knowledge is one of the worst predicaments to be in. And yet only afterwards can I see the Unseen Hand taking me through these mountain and valley experiences. Can I let go and fall into the Everlasting Arms of Jesus or will I continue to usurp His love and trample on my brother or sister? To step out of Jesus' provision is certainly death! But, death does not have to hold me or cause the sting it does.....*Greater is He Who is within me.....*

How many times have I, rather than turning to my Lord and saying, "please work on me", turned to my brother or sister and pointed out something in them, only to find out later they recoiled in rejection.

Recently, after years of my own finger pointing, I'm finding that Someone else's Hand is beginning to cover my mouth or guard my heart. Only Jesus can do this. It's nothing more than waiting on the 'moving of the waters until He stills them'.

The truth is, we simply cannot move ourselves. It takes another (Jesus) to show us our complete inadequacy! Job himself said (*Job 40:4*) "Behold I am vile, what shall I answer Thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth", and also (*Job 42: 2-3*), "I know that Thou canst do every thing and that no thought can be withholding from Thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have uttered that I understood not, things too wonderful for me which I knew not." Vs 5, "I have heard thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

If my brother or sister has a viewpoint (different from my point of view), then let them hold to it. *They* believe it is the truth. Wait for the moving of the waters. A sea is not parted unless God parts it. Certainly, it is a process. If I continue to try to hold on to my perceived control, I die. But the Lord is faithful with me in those dark places, and through my death His life is made manifest. Just as Job came to abhor his way of perceived control (and thankfully Jesus took him where he needed to go) so it is with me. The "grave circumstances" **are** what changes me. It is the deep, dark trials I go through that bring the needed change. It is then that I need a Savior. And in the process of needing my Savior, I find hope!

This is explained in Peter 4:12, "*Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*"

My words mean nothing unless I've experienced the dying off of self! I can't share with someone unless I've been brought to the point of struggle that they have. There is no connection unless I've partaken of the same 'cup'. When I share the same cup as my brother or sister, and God has brought that person to the same place, it is then and only then that I have something to give. Can I wait for my brother or sister to be brought there by the Spirit of Christ? Can I allow them the same respect and journey that I have taken with Him?

Love covers a multitude of sins! Can I allow the love of God to move me where I need to go? Galatians 5 :13-15 '*For Brethren, ye have been called into liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love they neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*'

May God answer this word, spoken by Paul, in my own life and in the lives of all of us in the Body of Christ! It is good news!! He is faithful and just to take us where we need to go, and to complete the work within us! Amen!

In Jesus, Elizabeth Schnell  
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Have **you** ever thought of sharing in the newsletter?



It could be a few sentences or paragraphs of something that the Lord did in your life or revealed to you in a circumstance you were going through. We are all part of the body of Christ and it is good to encourage one another in our walk with Jesus.

Let me share an encouragement that happened in my own life for the Lord to impress on me that there are NO coincidences in our walk with Him. I had just spent about a month working hard to get a big project finished at work (our school Course Calendar) before the Christmas holiday. It was finally done and handed in to the main office. About ten minutes later I was back at my desk and my phone rang. A teacher called me saying he had a student with him *right now* and he needed to double-check a course prerequisite for next year and *thought* he should check with me. So I pulled it up on my computer, found the page he wanted me to check (of the 74 pages) and my eye caught *something missing* on that very page! I was able to get it corrected and sent off to the printer in time. It's an insignificant thing to the rest of the world, but I was thankful to the Lord for that "amazing coincidence!"

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*You are always welcome, at any time, to fellowship with the saints that James visits. Please check James' current schedule at [wayofchrist.org](http://wayofchrist.org) AND contact the host as there could be last minute changes to the schedule.*

### Continued from page 2.

Paul expressed the mystery of God's will to the Corinthians as: *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. (2 Cor. 5:1-5)*

With dissolved being translated from the root of a word meaning, "to loose," the body is not eliminated but the control of it over the spirit is loosened. The building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens is, in essence, Jesus. Man often desires that the current struggle of the dying process would be over and that Jesus would come bringing the newness of the resurrected life. The true believer does not want to leave the life of the physical world. He just wants it to be swallowed up by the life of God.

Or, as Paul had earlier told the Corinthians, *"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. 4:10-11).*

When the earthly house that is corruptible is overwhelmed by the Power of the life of God that is incorruptible (the manifestation of Jesus coming through the mortal body), the true believer can say, *"Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory" (1 Cor. 15:54-55).* The physical world of man's existence has just been taking to it death to be raised to newness of life. The Power within the casing of the seed has brought forth the glory of the resurrected life.

## Christian Ministries

We at Christian Ministries, James and Louise, Barry and Jennifer, and everyone involved with us trust that you have had a great holiday season. It is a time we set aside to celebrate that God has come into our world and that each time we experience the manifestation of His presence we can experience a new beginning. God bless you as you experience Him and the freshness of a new beginning in the coming year.

