



One with the Father

The Book of John chapters 12-17

“First and foremost life is about being...
in control and the alternative is scary.”

The next generation appears more purposive relational, discerning and comfortable with the power and authority necessary to create a new future. Christ talked about these issues in John 12-17.

In Genesis 3 Adam and Eve shattered their relationship with God when they decided to take control of their lives and “be like God.” Eating the apple was only a symptom of a decision to take control of their lives, not believing God had their best interests in mind. Theologians call this “original sin” in contrast to “sins” or bad behavior resulting from original sin.

In Genesis 1-3 God created mankind, dealt with

Christ begins His final conversation with the disciples by revisiting the fundamental issue of Genesis “who is in control?” In John 12: 23-26, Christ addresses “original sin” not “sins” (bad behavior) when He lays out the conditions for our restored and empowered relationship with the Father. The quality of our relationship with God is up-most in Christ’s thinking. Every thought and action must be grounded in a relationship with God. This is about being in a “oneness” type relationship that then leads to the sacrificed life of Romans 12:1-2 and the empowered life of Romans 8.

Christ’s final summary of His purposes in John 12-17 leads people to ask hard questions, face reality and challenges them to return to the Father. Even though God has your best interests in mind, being “out-of-control” and committing to the sacrificed life is more than a little scary. That’s why believing and trusting God is central but difficult.

Spiritual revivals are often based upon the revelation of a “neglected truth.” Now the Holy Spirit is focusing you on the power of Christ’s own words regarding our relationship with the Father. Is this a neglected truth for today?

Christ’s final conversation with His disciples takes them “outside the box” with radical statements and prayers for the disciples and future believers.

Early in chapters John 12-17, Christ describes His own relationship with the Father. Then He proceeds to state and later pray in John 17 that His disciples and the next generations will be “one.” That prayer is for you and me.

Do you think God will answer Christ’s prayer for you?

a major problem before the fall in Genesis 2:18, established work, maintained an empowering relationship with mankind and charged them before the “fall” to:

- “Be fruitful and increase in number,
- Fill the earth,
- Subdue it.
- Rule over...every living creature” (NIV)

In their haste to “be like God” or be in control Adam and Eve also lost access to the power and resources of God to accomplish the “original mission.” The original charge to Adam and Eve must have included the abilities and resources to complete the charge. There were no public schools or training facilities. Investment banks, The World Bank and governments were not available to finance global development. So who were Adam and Eve to rely upon to accomplish God’s purpose for mankind?

It’s called faith.

The goal of lesson #1 is to do the following:

- get an overview of John 12-17 and
- understand God’s powerful strategy.

In the second week we will go into the specifics of how Christ described His relationship with God and the implications for our lives. From Christ’s descriptions of His relationship with the Father, we will explore in Lesson #3 Christ’s choice of the “vine” in John 15. In Lesson #4, we delve into John 17 and Christ’s final prayer for Himself, His disciples and amazingly all future generations. Our final lesson will look at the benefits, results and the responsibilities that accompany being “one with the Father” from a variety of passages in John 12-17.

Lesson # 1

Day 1

John 12-17 is Christ's executive summary of the Bible. It is about restoration to a relationship with the Father that was impaired with the "decision" of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to take control of their lives.

God loved His creation to the point of sacrificing Christ, His Son, to restore us to an absolutely unique relationship with God the Father.

God designed and created mankind to be one with Himself. What was planned for mankind and thwarted in Genesis chapters 1-3 is fulfilled in Christ's prayer in John 17 and subsequent death & resurrection.

Please read John 12-17 in its entirety.

Who are the main characters in John 12-17?

Where are they having this discussion?

What events will transpire in the near future?

What is going on between Christ and His disciples in the upper room?

What are the main themes of this passage?

Who is Christ's prayer directed toward in John 17?

Does the reference to "future believers" in John 17 include the next generations in the 21st century? If yes, why?

Who is the most effective discipler of mankind that Christ refers to in these passages?

Notes & Questions

Lesson # 1

Day 2

Notes & Questions

Read John 12 in its entirety. There are three different events going on in these passages. Describe each one briefly.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Read John 12:23-36. What was Christ's state of mind after the Greeks asked to meet Christ? Was he preoccupied about emerging events? What were those events?

Christ is responding to the Greeks' request to see him. Describe the key principles from his comments.

There is a life style described in John 12:23-26, that I call God's "Contrarian Viewpoint." Put yourself in the disciples shoes at this stage. How would they have responded to these statements? Would they have been prepared at this time "to die to produce many seeds"? Or did they expect something different from their Messiah? If yes, what were they expecting based upon Jewish prophecy?

Students of Genesis have generally concluded that Eve's and Adam's decision to eat the fruit from the "tree of good and evil" was the "original sin" of wanting to "be like God." This is contrasted with the common use of the word "sins" which generally refers to our "bad behavior" not our "bad attitude." When Christ talks about loving, losing, hating and keeping in John 12:25-26, is he talking about "sin" or "sins"? Why?

John 12:25

"The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." How might this passage relate to the Fall in Genesis 1-3? Why is God so concerned about who controls your life? Do you love or hate your own life?

Lesson # 1

Day 3

Let's go back and take a closer look at John 12:23-26. Why in the world was the "kernel of wheat" analogy chosen as the most effective strategy to transform the world?

1. Does a "kernel of wheat" start small or large?
2. Was the "kernel of wheat" personal or impersonal?
3. Does the analogy require a little or a lot of the individual?
4. Does the analogy provide for exponential growth?

The only way a kernel of wheat can produce thousands if not millions of additional kernels is if it is planted in the ground and disappears as a kernel. If you start with 12 disciples and ask each one to disciple one person per year into a deep spiritual relationship with Christ and the Father for the next 30 years, how many disciples would be created after 30 years? Starting with 12 double the number 30 times. At this rate approximately how long until you would transform your world?

After you have calculated the number of disciples, see page 27.

Please read John chapters 12:23-26 to John 14:14. The disciples in this passage seem upset and even frustrated with Christ as the discussion proceeds. Why did the disciples get upset with Christ over the discussions on the "kernel of wheat" in John 12:23-26, "the servant is the greatest of all" in John 13:6-17 and finally "their relationship with God through Christ" in John 14:1-14? Describe briefly how you might have reacted if you were in their shoes for each passage below?

John 12:23-26

John 13:12-17

©
John 14:1-14

Read the summary on page 20 of Watchman Nee's book on "Overcomers" as well as the Bible passages in Joshua 3-4 and Revelation 2-3. Do you see any parallels between the "kernel of wheat" and overcomers in the Bible? If yes, please describe the similarities.

Lesson # 1

Day 4

Notes & Questions

In John 13 Christ orchestrates the "last supper" with his disciples. He informs them regarding the coming events and his death. Write out in Christ's own words from John 13:18-38 about the future events.

In John 13:12-17 Christ explains his thinking and charges the disciples.

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you," he asked them? 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. (NIV)

Who should we serve?

How did Christ alter the relationship between himself and the disciples in John 13:16? What are some of the implications for your daily life?

Do Christ's disciples have a choice as to whether they should obey Christ's charge in John 13. If we obey Christ's charge, what can we expect from John 13:17?

In John 13:34 Christ gives the disciples a new command. What is the command?

In John 13:35 "all men" will know who we are as disciples if we...! What must we do if we want the world to know that we are Christ's disciples?

Lesson # 2

Day 1

In John 14:10-11, Christ describes his relationship to the Father. Write down some key words or phrases that describe this relationship. Do you agree with Christ's description?

Read John 14:20. What will you realize on the day described here?

What is Christ implying about His relationship with the Father and the implications for the disciples to the Father?

List some of the phrases from the Bible that you are aware of which describe the different relationships that we have to Christ and the Father. Examples include: savior, shepherd, etc.

In John 14:12-14, Christ makes some quite dramatic statements in these passages, for example, "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." Is Christ really serious? What do you think he means? Make a list of greater things that you might do.

Did you notice that this challenge by Christ to do "greater things" is conditional? It is not for everyone. Who is this promise limited to in John 14:12-14? Who is this promise extended to in John 17?

Lesson # 2

Day 2

Notes & Questions

The Jewish law was a system that imposed external rules on people and their behavior. Christ talked about God changing the heart as well.

Read each verse below and answer each question: _____

Jeremiah 31:33--"Where will he put His law?" _____

Ezekiel 36:26-27--"Where does he put his Spirit?" _____

Colossians 1:27--"Where will they put Christ?" _____

In conversations and in songs, we use words like "with", "close to", "let me see", "I want to touch", "be in His presence," etc. These words often reflect our need for intimacy. These phrases describe external relationships that parallel our relationship with people. Christ tends to use words like "in", "one", "branch", "grafted to a vine", etc. What kind of intimacy is Christ describing? How does this compare with the words we use?

What type of relationship did Moses have with God? Did Moses actually see God? What part of God did Moses see?

Was Moses' relationship with God external or internal?

Moses had a personal relationship to God including seeing his backside. How does being one or having God/Christ in us differ from the relationship that Moses had with God?

Would Moses be jealous of our relationship with God? Why?

An Old Testament theologian friend of mine carefully read through the John 12-17 passages and had one surprising revelation. He concluded that Moses would be jealous of our relationship with God and Christ. God lives in us and is available twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. This, plus the fact that we as ordinary people can have Christ's mind and God's intuition is a powerful reminder of what God intended in Genesis when he created mankind.

Lesson # 2

Day 3

We talk about the "Old Covenant" and the "New Covenant." In the Bible's Old Testament we have a complete description of God's Covenant with the people of Israel. In the Bible's New Testament, Christ describes the mystery of the "New Covenant" that God established with both the Jews and gentiles through Christ's death and resurrection.

Covenant relationships are not prevalent in American society. We tend to establish contractual relationships, not covenant relationships. Covenant is a means, just like a contract is a means, for establishing the terms of a relationship. As a result, this study has focused on the nature and benefits of this covenant relationship with God himself that Christ describes as being "one."

For further study of the "Covenant," you can read Kay Arthur's book entitled God's Covenant or get Kay Arthur's Bible Study on Covenant from Precept Ministries at www.precept.org or call 800.763.8280.

Go to your dictionary and write down the definition of "one" and "oneness."

In John 14:10-14 Christ for the first time describes his relationship with the Father. Who is "in" who in this passage?

Read the following passages and record what you learn about being "in God" or "in Christ?"

Colossians 1:25-27

Colossians 3:1-3

II Corinthians 5:17-21

Ephesians 2:8-10

I John 3:21-24

©

I John 4:13-16 "Who lives in us?"

From these scriptures, what do you think it means to be "in the Father?"

Lesson # 2

Day 4

Read John 15:1-8 and Christ's analogy of the vine.

The gardener is _____

The vine is _____

The branch is _____

What does the branch share with the vine?

What will the branch produce if it remains in the vine?

If the branch remains in the vine, what is promised in John 15:7-8?

If the branch does not remain in the vine, what happens?

In one of our workshops, a college student asked, "I know how to remain in my house but I do not know how to remain in the vine. How does a person remain in the vine?" Find two people who you would consider spiritually mature. Ask them one simple question, "How do you remain in the vine?" List the various ways that they and you might remain in the vine. See page 26 after you have completed your list.

A study of vineyards produces some interesting observations about our life with Christ and the Father. From your personal knowledge:

How long does it take a Gardener to prepare a new vineyard?

What is the role of the branch that is attached to a healthy vine?

Where does the sap originate?

Is it the DNA of the vine or branch that determines the character of the fruit?

Pruning is always done by the Gardener. Why?

Pruning involves cutting off and cutting back the branches annually.

How far back are the branches cut each year?

How many branches are left on the vine after pruning?

What happens to a new branch that does not have buds?

Analogies are effective ways to communicate a complex idea. However, all analogies have limitations. They are never a perfect representation of an idea. Therefore, learn from the analogy that Christ uses to describe being one but be careful not to carry the analogy too far.

Notes & Questions

Lesson # 3

Day 1

What kind of persecution can we expect from a reading of John 15:18-25?

Today we are going to look at some serious implications of establishing an in-depth relationship with Christ and the Father. Christ draws some very direct conclusions about what may happen to you as a disciple.

Who will do the persecuting in this case?

Why do they persecute disciples of Christ?

Does this surprise you at all? If yes, why?

The previous persecutions described in these passages do not surprise most people who have been associated with a church and know some of its history. However, the John 16:1-4 passage is much more shocking and controversial. We don't expect this type of behavior from our "so called" peers.

What kind of persecution can we expect from a reading of John 16:1-4?

How far will it lead?

Who will do the persecuting in this case?

©

Why do they persecute disciples of Christ?

Does this surprise you at all? If yes, why?

How do these passages make you feel about committing your entire life to the Father and his contrarian strategy?

Notes & Questions

Lesson # 3

Day 2

Notes & Questions

The last set of passages should have had a sobering influence. However, these passages are followed immediately with John 16:5-33. Read them.

Who will come to replace Christ from John 15:26-27 & John 16:13-15?

How is it good for the disciples good that Christ goes away?

In John 16:8-11 Christ describes one of the Counselor's roles. Outline it below.

In John 16 we have very encouraging words that complement those about persecution and adversity. From John 16:13-15, what will he tell or do for us?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

What are the implications of Christ using the phrase "all truth" rather than just truth in John 16:13-15?

Under whose authority does this Spirit speak in John 16:13-15?

From John 16:33 you should conclude that:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Lesson # 3

Day 3

Christ is the central figure in restoring our relationship with the Father. He continues to be our intercessor. Could we ever be so preoccupied with our relationship with Christ that it sometimes overshadows our relationship with God the Father?

How can we live a balanced relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

Have you seen that balance in your life?

What are the consequences of not having a relationship with the Father that equals in time and thought our relationship with Christ?

What about the Holy Spirit? What kind of time and attention does the Holy Spirit get in your life?

Who does Christ pray for in John 17?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Is the order significant to you? Why?

In John 17:1-5 what does Christ pray for himself?

Why did God grant Christ authority in John 17:2?

How does Christ define eternal life in John 17:3?

A controversial question arises from John 17:3, "If you only have a relationship with Christ as savior and have never developed your relationship with God, will you have eternal life?" What do you think?

Read John 17:6-19. Who is Christ praying for in these passages?

In John 17:9 Christ makes a startling revelation about who He is not praying for at this time. Who is Christ not praying for in this prayer? Why would he make such a statement?

©

Compare John 17:10 with John 16:13-15. Is Christ talking about the same thing? How does this increase your confidence and ability to trust God?

Notes & Questions

Lesson # 3

Day 4

Notes & Questions

After reaffirming who Christ is praying for in John 17:11-12, Christ surprises us with a pivotal request of the Father. Christ asks for the disciples' protection as they remain in the world so that...! The disciples needed special protection so that they could become what?

Who protected the disciples up to this point in time in John 17:12?

In John 17:13-14 Christ explains why he is telling them this in His prayer. What is the reason for telling them now? And how much of it will they have?

As if to reinforce the critical nature of this prayer request for protection Christ in John 17:15-19 tells us what He is not asking for at this time. Please describe what Christ says he is not praying for at this time. Does this surprise you and if so why?

In John 17:15 who is Christ asking the Father to protect His disciples from?

In John 17:16-19 what is the process that follows after their protection?

Look up the definition of "sanctify" and write it in the space below.

What confidence do you gain personally because of what Christ did for the disciples? Does this all apply to you?

There is a tendency among new converts in the body of believers to separate oneself physically and emotionally from the world. Christ is not only asking but He is praying that His disciples not be separated. Christ needs them to be in the world but also protected from the evil one in this world.

According to Christ's view we are to be in the world but not of the world. This radical view reinforces the fact that the "original charge" in Genesis to mankind must be carried out in the world.

Lesson # 4

Day 1

Now in John 17:20-27 we have a surprising leap by Christ in His prayer from His disciples to whom?

Christ implies that His prayer for protection of His disciples in the world should be extended to "future believers" for a specific purpose. What is the purpose described in John 17:21?

In John 17:21 Christ also redefines what it means to be "one." Write out Christ's definition.

A critical question is whether being one with Christ and the Father is for today or for heaven? (See note on Romans at the left) Look at John 17:21 again because Christ explains why He wants future believers to be "one" today. Outline Christ's reasoning.

What has Christ given future believers so that they can be one with Christ and the Father in John 17:22-23?



Read the summary of Hannah Whithall Smith's chapter on page 21. What are her four stages of spiritual maturity? What is her test of oneness?

Some people conclude from reading Romans chapters 7:14-25 and 8:1-17 that all Christ talks about in John 12-17 from the type of relationship to the benefits are for heaven and not for this world. They see this life as a sort of "training ground" for heaven. They rationalize their own thoughts and behavior by identifying with Romans 7:14-24. But let's go on to Romans 8 to find victory in Christ. Explore Hebrews 11 and our call to persevere and win the race.

There are many other sections of the Bible that call us to an effective, mature life as an end in itself, not just a means to an end. Certainly, life is a process of growth but all of life's experiences are real and not just preparation for an after life.

Lesson # 4

Day 2

Notes & Questions

John 17:23 also stirs some controversy over the phrase in the New International Version of "complete unity." If you have a Strong's dictionary, please look up this phrase under the number 5048.

If you do not have a Strong's, examine the verses below from John 17:22-23 in the New King James version of the Bible.

John 17:22-24

22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. NKJV

Notice that instead of "complete unity" from the NIV, the NKJV uses the phrase "made perfect in one." Is Christ saying that the Holy Spirit helps us mature in our oneness with God the Father or with one another for unity? Look at the full context of John 12-17 as well as this chapter. See pages 24-25 for some additional thinking on this subject.

Are your prayers always answered positively? Or does the Father sometimes say NO to you?

What does it mean that Christ prayed this prayer for future believers (next generations) or more specifically you and me? Must the Father answer Christ's prayer affirmatively? Why?

If God the Father is obligated to answer Christ's prayer in John 17 positively, how does this help you trust the Father and Christ in terms of their promise and prayer for your future spiritual development?

All of history leads up to this final conversation in John 12-17 and the crucifixion. Christ restores mankind to the highest quality relationship possible. Christ himself describes this relationship as being "one with the Father." This relationship is now possible for His disciples but also for future believers according to John 17:20-23.

Look up the definition of "atone" and "atonement" in Webster's dictionary. The word should be pronounced as

at-one-ment

or being made one or reconciled to someone.

Lesson # 4

Day 3

Read John 12-17 again. This time keep this page on hand. Review each of the passages below. Write down a few words that describe the benefits or results of this relationship. You can find my responses on page 28 in the Appendix.

Christ has established in John 12 the criteria for being a disciple. He then describes his relationship with God and draws a parallel to the disciples' relationship to God. Christ elaborates on his description and makes it tangible by giving us the analogy of the vine in John 15. Notice that this analogy is of the vine not the vineyard.

After talking about the negative implications of this relationship with God, Christ focuses our attention on the positive and powerful role of the Counselor as well as making four affirmative statements on answered prayer.

Finally, Christ extends these benefits to all future generations that meet his screening criteria for a restored relationship with the Father.

Personal/Pleasant Benefits

(14:7; 17:3)
(14:10)
(14:12)
(14:15)
(14:16-17; 15:26)
(14:21; 15:10)
(14:22)
(14:23; 15:4)
(14:26)
(14:27)
(15:2,5,8,16)
(15:11; 16:22-24)
(15:14-15)
(15:15)
(16:13)
(16:33)
(17:2)
(17:10)
(17:15)
(17:18)
(17:23)
(16:1)

Unpleasant Results

(15:2)
(15:18-20; 17:14)
(16:2-4)

Benefits to Others

(15:8)

(14:13-14; 15:7;
15:16-17; 16:23-24)
(17:21 & 17:23)

Benefits to God

(14:13; 15:8)

Responsibilities

(13:12-17)
(13:34)
(15:27)

Lesson # 4

Day 4

List the top three benefits that you identify with on the left? Why?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What benefits surprise you the most?

Why do you think Christ in this final conversation talked about so many benefits and results of being one with the Father in one place?

Christ makes radical claims about prayer four times in John 12-17.

Read Luke 11:1-13 and pay particular attention to Christ's discussion after the Lord's prayer. What is Christ's message through these two examples of a friend and a father?

Below are four passages from John 12-17 where Christ explains His view of prayer for the disciples and future believers. Describe in your own words what he is saying in each set of verses.

John 14: 12-14

John 15:7

John 15:9-17

John 16:23-24

What commitment does Christ seem to make regarding prayer in these passages? Does this sound a little extreme to you?

What are the conditions for getting answered prayer from each passage?

John 14:12-14

John 15:7

John 15:9-17

John 16:23-24

Read the following beliefs some Christians have regarding prayer. What do you know from Scripture that contradicts these beliefs?

- *In order to keep you humble, we will only answer prayer positively 50% of the time or less.*
- *Always pray "thy will be done" at the end of every prayer because no one can ever know God's will or discern the mind of Christ.*
- *Never use Christ's name at the end of your prayers since we don't want Christ to be blamed for negatively answered prayer.*
- *Don't spend too much time in prayer discerning God's will since it can never be found.*
- *Prayer should be drudgery, frustrating and never be joyful.*
- *Spend as little time in prayer as possible since the Holy Spirit will intercede on your behalf when you don't know how to pray.*
- *Prayer does not change things; it just makes you feel better.*

But what about James 4:3? "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."

Lesson # 4

Day 5

As a contributing member of the next generation, you must ask whether Christ was an explorer or a creator?

If Christ and the Father are in us, do they expect their disciples of the 21st century to analyze what someone else has created and react? Or do they expect each generation to create their own future?

Most of you have watched young entrepreneurs of the late 20th century in companies such as Microsoft, Apple Computer, and Dell Computer create a new future. Using Christ's words, "they have transformed their world." How much more can Christ and the Father working through restored disciples create a new landscape, a radically altered future? In Genesis 1-3, the world was turned upside-down. The next generation has the opportunity to turn the 21st century right-side-up.

Historically, followers of Christ have transformed societies and created new futures, better futures, for people. How? Again and again often disenfranchised generations working from the bottom up have transformed nations over a one hundred to three hundred year period.

Christ challenges you to worship God by offering your life as a living sacrifice and becoming a creator of God's future in the 21st and 22nd centuries.

Read John 12-17 again at one sitting.

What is the primary theme?

How do you achieve the relationship that Christ describes with God?

What are some results of that relationship? How might you be different?

What kind of prayer life should you have with this relationship?

In John 14:12, what does Christ mean when he implies that we could do "greater things than Christ?"

Do you believe that you could do "greater things than Christ?" Why? What might Christ have you do?

If you are one with the Father, how will you fulfill:

- God's original purpose for mankind in Genesis 1:28
- The Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20
- Christ's Greatest Commandment and second greatest in Matthew 22:37-39

Are you prepared to become "one" by applying the "kernel of wheat" of John 12:23-28 or the "sacrificed life" principle of Romans 12:1-2 to your life? If yes, why? If not, what would it take for you to make that decision?

W h a t

Supplemental Materials

"The danger is always that we stop short at certain points such as forgiveness and assurance without realizing that we are really called to share this life of God."

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

"Christianity is the life of God in the soul of man."

Henry Scougal

“God’s Plan and the Overcomers”

By Watchman Nee

“The principle of the overcomers is God’s calling a few to do the work for the blessing of the many.”
p. 61

Notes & Questions

Could it be in our up-side-down world that the true leaders are overcomers as defined by Watchman Nee on the left side bar? Read Joshua 3-4 and Revelation 2-3 for background.

Watchman Nee says on p. 60, “In examining the principle of the overcomers we must notice two things:

1. Whenever the whole body fails, God will choose relatively few to stand for the whole body and
2. God calls these few to carry out His command so that through them He may later reach the many.”

“Spiritual ends must be reached by spiritual means. God dealt with both Moses and David to such a degree that they would not at all use the flesh to help God in accomplishing His purpose.”

What does it mean to not use the flesh to help God?

Gideon’s army was reduced to 350 and then instructed to sit on the hill and watch. Judges 7

Today, can you think of examples where Christians have inappropriately taken secular means and used them in the church?

Have you read about George Mueller? He ran two large 1000 bed orphanages in England in the 19th century. His only form of fund raising was to believe that God wanted him to build these large buildings or tell God what the orphans needed. He was an intercessor for orphans with God who always delivered. In fact, George Mueller hoped to demonstrate to the English people that God heard and answered prayers; therefore, he never fund raised. Even when people approached him about giving his first response was that they should talk to God about how much to give.

George Mueller was an overcomer who sacrificed his life and did God’s work so that many could be blessed.

What are spiritual means?

Nee says, “God put the priests in the place of death so that the children of Israel might have a way to life.” “Oh, let each of us ask ourselves: Do I work for fame, for prosperity, for sympathy from others? Or do I seek for life in the church of God? May we be able to pray thus:

‘O’ Lord, let me die
that others may live.’

“God causes His overcomers to see a truth and to prove it in their lives first so that they in turn may bring many to the obedience of this truth. Truth must be organized in us and become a part of our being. Before we can ever tell others about faith, prayer and consecration, we ourselves must first have the experience of faith, prayer and consecration. Otherwise, these will merely be terminologies with no substance. God leads us through death so that other people may have life. We are required to go through sufferings and pain before there can be life in others.” p. 64

What is an OVERCOMER today?

“If a truth has been deeply organized in me, it will draw others to seek the same. Many of the truths of God are waiting to be organized within men. As we let truth be worked into and organized in us, we allow the stature of Christ to grow an inch. The overcomers receive life from above to supply the body.” p. 64

Are you prepared to sacrifice your life so that God may bless others through you? Are you interested in becoming an overcomer as described in the Bible? What role do you want to play in heaven with Christ?

God needs and uses people who have become one with the Father. The Bible calls them

Overcomers.

A Summary of “The Christian’s Secret to a Happy Life” by Hannah Whithall Smith

Author Hannah Whithall Smith—Quaker, rebel, realist—faced life as she found it. She took the Bible’s promises literally, tested them and found them true. In this chapter on “Oneness with Christ” she describes a relationship with Christ that she experienced first hand. She talks about a process of growing into this relationship with Christ that every ordinary Follower of Christ can experience as well.

God’s call to Oneness

Hannah opens with God’s purpose, “All the dealings of God with the soul of the believer are in order to bring him into oneness with Himself, that the prayer of our Lord in John 17:20-21 may be fulfilled: ‘That they all may be one; as thou, Father, are in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.’”

Spiritual Growth

Hannah Smith examined the spiritual development of the disciples after their first encounter with Christ. She concluded that there were four stages in their growth. She also understood that the final stage could only be accomplished after Pentecost or the coming of the Holy Spirit.

We have the Holy Spirit from the day that we repent from Adam’s “original sin” or give up control of our life. Then we will let Christ live through us. It is feasible to reach the final stage of being one with Christ immediately. However, the reality is that this is usually a process that can take several years.

We must realize also that the promises talked about in John 12-17 may not be available to us until we are a trusted associate of Christ and have reached the stage of being one with Christ.

Two wills, two interests, two lives

“You may have left much to follow Christ, dear reader; you may have believed on him, worked for Him, and loved Him, and yet you may not be like Him. Allegiance you know, and confidence you know, but not yet union. There are still two wills, two interests, two lives. You have not yet lost your own life that you may live only His. Once it was I and not Christ; then it was I and Christ; perhaps now it is even Christ and I. But has it come yet to be Christ only, and not I at all?”

Oneness Described

“We speak of two people being one, and we mean that their purposes, and actions, and thought, and desires are alike. A friend may pour out upon us enthusiastic expressions of love, and unity and oneness, but if that friend’s aims, and actions, and ways of looking at things are exactly opposite to ours, we cannot feel there is any real oneness between

us, notwithstanding all our affection for one another. To be truly one with another, we must have the same likes and dislikes, the same joys and sorrows, the same hopes and fears. As someone says, we must look through one

another’s eyes, and think with one another’s brains. This is, as I said above, only plain common-sense.”

Test of Oneness

According to Hannah Smith, “The test of oneness then (for the disciples), was the doing of the same works. And it is the test of oneness now.” The vine produces grapes and not apples. Likewise, when we are one with Christ, we produce Christ-like results.

Stages of Christian Maturity

Common Phrase	Hannah Smith
Unsaved	I Alone
Saved	I and Christ
Lordship	Christ and I
One with Christ	Christ Only

“The Christian’s Secret
To a Happy Life”
Hannah Whithall Smith
Chapter 17

A Summary of Norman Grubb's "Rees Howells: Intercessor"

Rees Howells, one of the most effective intercessors known to the 20th century, and his student intercessors in Wales were even called upon to intercede with God for the well-being of Britain during the Second World War. On pages 231-257 Norman Grubb's biography reveals that there were important spiritual truths (see next page) that Howells discovered regarding the ministry of an "intercessor" from the Holy Spirit and George Mueller's life in 19th century England interceding on behalf of orphans.

God's Call to Intercession

"And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none..." Ezekiel 22:30

A Model of Intercession

God identified with mankind to the extent that He became man. If we are one with the God Head or if the Holy Spirit is doing his work through us, then we will also manifest this pattern in our life. Christ also was willing to die to His own desires and interests for the benefit of mankind. His death on the cross represented the ultimate sacrifice.

20th Century Intercession

On March 29, 1936 Rees Howells came to the Bible College he had established in Wales and was called forth in regard to Hitler's threat to Britain: "Prayer has failed. We are on slippery ground. Only intercession will avail. God is calling for intercessors — men and women who will lay their lives on the altar to fight the devil, as really they would have to fight the enemy on the western front." It was made clear that a soldier at the front has no say in where he goes and what he does; he cannot take holidays or attend to the claims of the home and loved ones as other people can; and the Lord was telling them that if, as readily as that, some would become bond slaves to the Holy Spirit

for every creature, and would throw their lives into the gap (Ezekiel 22:30), He would give the victory and avert war. A large number of staff and students made the surrender. "We came right through" said Mr. Howells, "and I knew from that time on, Hitler was no more than a rod in the hands of the Holy Ghost."

Surrender and Intercession

"We had thought that there was some virtue in our surrender: that we, with thousands of others, would be the people to evangelize the world in this generation. But now He (Holy Spirit) had come, and we were out of it—except in so far as our bodies would become the temples in which He would dwell and through which He would work. He said, 'I have

Warrior or Intercessor

"A prayer warrior can pray for a thing to be done without necessarily being willing for the answer to come through himself; and he is not bound to continue in the prayer until it is answered. But an intercessor is responsible to gain his objective, and he can never be free till he has gained it. He will go to any lengths for the prayer to be answered through himself. But once a position of intercession has been gained, tested and proved, the intercessor can claim all the blessings on that grade, whenever it is God's will for him to do so."

not come to give you joy, or peace, or victory. I have not come to give you any blessing at all. You will find all that you need in Jesus. But I have come to put you to the cross, so that I may live in your body for the sake of a lost world; (Col 3:3; 2Cor 4:10; Gal 2:20)."

Pray for laborers, a remnant of powerful intercessors right now. May they lay down their lives on the altar day after day... willing to die for the sake of the Truth! May they be closed into God Himself... calling for His desires... pleading for His purposes, crying for His attention! Dead to themselves... alive unto Christ! Separate. Hidden. Cleansed, Holy vessels of warfare, armed for the battle ahead, filled with the Holy Ghost. God, call forth your intercessors for this generation!

Bondsslave or Living Martyr

"It even came into his mind momentarily whether it was possible to turn back from 'this life of surrender, this bondsslave life, this daily dying, and just live an ordinary Christian life, and preach the gospel and help the poor,' as many of his friends did." p.108

"There was some questioning, as there always was until he actually came up to becoming one with the Holy Ghost in what He was doing..." p. 108. Madame Guyon's writings had a profound effect at this time, "I ask no more, in good or ill, but union with Thy holy will." p. 105

Place of Abiding

Rees Howells understood the necessity of daily maintaining his "place of abiding" in Christ taken from his study of John 15. His discernment, power, authority and faith all were the result of meeting the initial conditions of abiding which for him were: (1)...fasting two meals a day, (2) living in the attitude of prayer—being hatless, (3) giving up all outward work at the mission, not going to one service and (4) three hours each evening to be spent on his knees—two hours in reading the Word and the last one in waiting before God. Rees knew there were to be other places of abiding, but they were not yet given." p. 114

Guided Prayer

By maintaining his place of abiding, Rees Howells was guided by the Holy Spirit regarding intercessory prayer. This was usually a specific and intense call to intercede.

Gaining a Position: Categories

"Gaining a position" was an identification process that would last weeks or months until Rees had gained the faith to believe that God would deliver categories of people from an adverse situation. Once a position was gained, God could use Rees Howells at any future time to intercede in parallel situations without having to go through a position of gain. Once a position was gained, Rees would cease praying to avoid prayer resulting from his doubt.

Hidden Away

A call to intercession is usually the first step away from public ministry. Howells shared that the Holy Spirit trained him, to care more about what God thought, than what man

thought; nevertheless, "... he was going to be turned aside from his work among men to deal only with God." page 113 He had to die to self before God could use him as an intercessor. Romans 12:1-2 was a critical passage.

Stands in the Gap for Strangers

Early on in Howells' training, he was allowed to intercede on behalf of people whom he was personally ministered to... but later, he was to intercede for specific people whom he had never met. "There was a soul whom he had never met, whom he had no possible means of influencing except by way of the Throne..." The Lord said, "This will be the test case of your intercession." "...for this he was going to be turned aside from his work among men to deal only with God."

Prays What God Calls Forth

An intercessor is given over to the ministry of the Holy Ghost, through whom spiritual warfare is waged. God has a remnant of intercessors, filled with the Holy Spirit and with only one purpose in life... to do that which the Holy Spirit commands! To stand in the gap and bring the victory to reality. Hidden away, living by faith... standing on the promises of God... praying what God calls forth by His Word.

Spiritual Truths

- ◆ Bondsslave or Living Martyr
- ◆ Place of Abiding
- ◆ Guided Prayer
- ◆ Gaining a Position of Faith
- ◆ Hidden Away
- ◆ Stands in the Gap for Strangers
- ◆ Prays What God Calls Forth
- ◆ Every Creature Commission
- ◆ Company of Intercessors Set Apart

Intercessors Set Apart

In the latter stages of Rees's ministry, God placed him at the Bible College of Wales among a group of faculty, students, and staff. They were to be raised up as a company of intercessors prepared to deal with Rees's visionary "every creature commission" in the context of World War II. This is an extraordinary description of God's use of intercessors in history.

Every Creature Commission

The driving force behind Rees Howells at the Bible College of Wales was Rees's vision that everyone would be reached by the Gospel in his generation. It was the precipitating factor in their intercession during World War II. They were concerned about keeping countries open to missionaries and the Gospel. They accomplished God's purpose through themselves during this horrible war. Some people, including Norman Grubb, believe their intercession eventually defeated Hitler.

Notes & Questions

Oneness or Unity?

Do not believe that the primary theme of John 17:22-23 is unity among the disciples or future believers. If the passage is taken in the context of John 12-17, then it is clearly a discussion about oneness, not unity, among believers.

Unity is an important theme in the Bible and an obvious by-product of our relationship with the Father. However, sustainable unity can only be assured as a result of all members being "one with the Father."

The beginning of John 12 is the turning point in the Book of John (NIV). Prior to this chapter, Christ avoided talking about his destiny. Matthew, Mark and Luke's Gospels are the actions of Christ; however, John's Gospel is about Christ's thoughts on the reason for the incarnation. These six chapters clarify the highest value added relationship that is available to mankind.

However, there is a debate about whether John 17:22-23 is about being one with the Father as individuals or about unity among believers. We believe these two verses need to be read in the context of all six chapters. The following texts and comments will attempt to show that the theme of John 12-17 is about our individual relationship with Christ and the Father, knowing full well that unity among believers is a powerful Biblical theme and a primary outcome of being one with the Father.

All of history leads up to this final conversation in John 12-17 and the crucifixion. Christ restores mankind to the highest quality relationship possible. Christ himself describes this relationship as being "one with the Father." This is now possible for His disciples but also for future believers according to John 17:20-23.

John 12:23-24

"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."

Christ begins His final conversation with the directions and procedures for His disciples and future believers to become "one with the Father" as Christ was "one with the Father." It is not a communal decision. Each of us is a "kernel of wheat." It is an individual decision that you and I must make "...alone and in the presence of God himself."

John 12: 25-26

"The man who loves his life will lose it: while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me."

This is an elaboration on the effects of an individual's willingness to "die to self." John 12:23-24 and John 12:24-25 set the context for the entire final conversation of John 12-17. What is the greatest honor that God the Father could bestow on an individual? I believe that it is to be one as Christ was one with the Father. There is no greater honor.

John 12:36

"Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of lights."

We put our trust in the light as individuals not as a group.

John 12: 44-46

"I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness." Each of us must decide.

John 13:20

"I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me: and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."

This is the key to a relationship with God.

John 13:34-35

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another."

The love that Christ asks the disciples to share can only be exhibited if they each die as the "kernel of

wheat" and manifest the love of God through each of them individually. This love and the unity that the world sees is a by-product of a high quality relationship with God the Father.

John 14:6

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

This is a description of our individual relationship, not a community activity.

John 14: 10-11

"Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me..."

Notes & Questions

Here we have Christ's revelation of what man's relationship with God was intended to be. It is modeled by Christ. After you become one with the Father, "...it is the Father, living in me (you), who is doing his work."

John 14:15

"If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth."

Does Christ give the Counselor to the group of disciples or does he give the Holy Spirit to each individual based upon their decision to die and be one with the Father?

John 14:20

"On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you."

Five verses later but in the same thought pattern, Christ actually describes what it means to be one. It is Christ and the Father in each of us. It is God in us. It is God manifesting himself through us and us in Him.

John 14:23

Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."

This is one of the most beautiful descriptions of what the Father and Son will do for any person who loves Christ. God and Christ will make their home with me personally. That is an amazing statement regarding God's intent.

John 15:1-8

"I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener...Remain in me, and I will remain in you...I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit;... This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

An individual man is the entity that must remain in Christ, "the true vine." If unity were the theme, then Christ might have chosen the "vineyard" as the analogy.

John 16:13-16

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come..."

I personally interpret this passage to mean that the Holy Spirit will speak to us as individuals not as a group.

John 17:11

"I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world,...so that they may be one as we are one."

The comparison that Christ is using is "so that they may be one as we are one." Christ and the Father are individuals. Oneness is not a group activity except as it may involve the entire Trinity of the Father, Christ and the Holy Spirit.

John 17:20-21

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you."

"All of them" is another way of saying "each of them as individuals" or "each one of you." They are not in Christ as a group but only as a product of their individual decisions. This is particularly true for future believers who will live in a different history.

John 17:23

"...I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

Most commentaries believe that the statement "brought to complete unity" should be interpreted as "completeness" "complete oneness" or "perfected oneness."

John 17:26

"I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

This is Christ's concluding prayer. Christ will continue to make God and his design/purpose in creation known to us so that "I myself may be in them." This is a description of oneness, not unity among the disciples or future believers.

I believe that the evidence is overwhelming that Christ's final conversation with his disciples is about being "one with the Father" as individuals.

However, we are commanded in John 13:34-35 to love one another and as a result experience unity among believers.

Abiding In The Vine

Christ in his final conversation with the disciples and particularly in his analogy of the vine talks about "remaining in the vine" as an important condition of being one with the Father. In every workshop that we conduct there is an extensive discussion of "how do you remain in the vine?" As one participant observed, "I know how to remain in my house but how do I remain in the vine?" Beyond the obvious things such as daily Bible study, prayer and fasting, we have looked at the John 12-17 passage and tried to glean some additional insights. The list below is intended to be suggestive not absolute.

- Worshiping = offering a life-long commitment.
- Resting in the fact that I am connected to the vine.
- Letting God take his time.
- Being more than doing.
- Believing God will transform me.
- Reading and studying God's word.
- Being alone with God periodically.
- Listening for God's word or RHEMA.
- Waiting on circumstances.
- Obeying God's commands.
- Trusting God's intuition in me.
- Interceding for others.
- By doing "...greater things."
- Loving one another.
- Experiencing complete joy.
- Letting God prune me.
- Reproducing oneness in others.
- Letting God be as original with others as he has been with me.

Biblical Principle

Reproductivity or Exponential Growth

The last half of the twentieth century has been driven by mass advertising, mass media, mass production, mass higher education. In a word we have been conditioned to believe that the most effective way to transform is by reaching large numbers of people with a simple message.

Christ understood that this would lead to mass or large institutions that would be very visible and subject to direct attack and persecution. That is why Christ chose a more effective alternative. He describes this alternative in John 12 where he discusses the "kernel of wheat" strategy that illustrates God's reproductive principle.

For those of us who have been indoctrinated in twentieth century thinking, we need to understand that a far more invisible yet equally effective way to reach large numbers in a relatively short thirty year period is the kernel of wheat or reproductive strategy. Below you will see an example of the number of disciples that one person can create if they only disciple one person a year into an abiding reproductive relationship with the Father. You will create a disciple who is expected to then reproduce one disciple a year for the next thirty years. Many Followers of Christ think they could do this but

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>
1	1	16	3 2 , 7 6 8
2	2	17	6 5 , 5 3 6
3	4	18	1 3 1 , 0 7 2
4	8	19	2 6 2 , 1 4 4
5	16	20	5 2 4 , 2 8 8
6	32	21	1 , 0 4 8 , 5 7 6
7	64	22	2 , 0 9 7 , 1 5 2
8	128	23	4 , 1 9 4 , 3 0 4
9	256	24	8 , 3 8 8 , 6 0 8
10	512	25	1 6 , 7 7 7 , 2 1 6
11	1,024	26	3 3 , 5 5 4 , 4 3 2
12	2,048	27	6 7 , 1 0 8 , 8 6 4
13	4,096	28	1 3 4 , 2 1 7 , 7 2 8
14	8,192	29	2 6 8 , 4 3 5 , 4 5 6
15	16,384	30	5 3 6 , 8 7 0 , 9 1 2

Normal Life with Christ

Personal/Pleasant Benefits

- Know the Father (14:7; 17:3)
- See God work (14:10)
- Do greater works (14:12)
- Obedience (14:15)
- Holy Spirit in-dwells (14:16-17; 15:26)
- Loved by Father & Son (14:21; 15:10)
- Christ is revealed to us (14:22)
- Godhead in us (14:23; 15:4)
- Peace (14:27)
- Bear Fruit (15:2,5,8,16)
- Joy (15:11; 16:22-24)
- Servant to friend (15:14-15)
- Insider information (15:15)
- Guide to all Truth (16:13)
- Trust & Confidence (16:33)
- Eternal Life (17:2)
- "All I have is yours." (17:10)
- Protect from Evil one (17:15)
- Sanctification guaranteed (17:17)
- Completed in oneness (17:23)
- Holy Spirit teaches ((14:26)
- Holy Spirit reminds (14:26)
- Will not stray (16:1)



Unpleasant Results

- Pruned (15:2)
- Hated by the world (15:18-20; 17:14)
- Persecution by the "church" (16:2-4)

Benefits to Others

- Others know the Father (15:8)
- Positively Answered Prayer (14:13-14; 15:7; 15:16-17; 16:23-24)
- Others come to God (17:21; 17:23)

Benefits to God

- Glory to God (14:13; 15:8)

Responsibilities

- Serve one another (13:12-17)
- Love one another (13:34)
- Testify (15:27)
- Be in the world (17:18)

"The Two Covenants"

Andrew Murray

"One would think that nothing could be made plainer than the meaning of the New Covenant--that everything is to be done by God Himself. And yet believers and even teachers frequently do not take it in. And even those who do, find it hard to live it out. It is as though our whole being is blind to the true working of God. It is so far beyond human conception that our little hearts cannot rise to the reality of His infinite love making itself one with us, and delighting to dwell in us and work in us all that has to be done there. We find that when we think we have accepted the truth, we treat it as only an abstract idea. We are such strangers to a true knowledge of God.

Not long ago I had occasion to make a study of the Gospel of John and the life of our Lord as set forth there. I cannot say how deeply I was impressed once again with what I cannot but regard as the deepest secret of Christ's life on earth, His dependence on the Father. It has come to me like a new revelation. Some twelve or more times He uses the words "not" and "nothing" about Himself: Not My will, not My words, not My honor, not My own glory, I can do nothing of Myself; I speak not of Myself; I came not of Myself; I do nothing of Myself.

Just think a moment what this means in connection with what He tells us of His life in the Father. "Just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself" (John 5:26). "So that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father (5:23). And yet this Son, who has life in Himself even as the Father has, immediately adds (5:30): "I can do nothing on My own initiative." We would have thought that with this life in Himself He would have the right of independent action as the Father has. But no. "The Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it

is something He sees the Father doing" (5:19). The chief mark of the life of Christ was, evidently, unceasing dependence--receiving from the Father, by the moment, what He had to speak or do.

Nothing of Myself is manifestly as true of Him as it ever could be of the weakest man. The more closely we study this truth, and Christ's life in the light of it, the more we are compelled to say that the deepest root of Christ's relationship to the Father--the true reason why He was so well-pleasing, the secret of His glorifying the Father--was this: *He allowed the Father to do all in Him*. His whole attitude was that of the open ear, the servant spirit, the child-like dependence that waited for all on the Father.

The infinite importance of this truth in the Christian life is easily felt. The life of Christ lived in the Father is the life He imports to us. We are to abide in Him and He in us, even as He abides in the Father and the Father in Him. And if the secret of His abiding in the Father be this unceasing self-denial--"I can do nothing on My own initiative"--then absolute dependence and waiting upon

God must surely be the most marked feature of our Christian life and the all-pervading disposition we seek to maintain. We must die to self to sink down in humility, meekness, patience, and resignation to God, in order to have the birth of divine love in our souls. Entire self-renunciation was not merely one of many virtues in the character of Christ; indeed, it was the essential one, without which the Father could have accomplished nothing through Him.

Let us make Christ's own words our own; "By myself I can accomplish nothing--I can do nothing on my own." Take it as the keynote of a single day. Look up and see the infinite God waiting to do everything as soon as we are ready to give up all to Him and receive all from Him. Bow down in lowly worship, and wait for the Holy Spirit to work some measure of the mind of Christ in you. Do not be disconcerted if you do not learn the lesson at once; the God of love is waiting to do everything in the one who is willing to be nothing. At moments the

"He allowed the Father to do all in Him"

Notes & Questions

teaching appears dangerous, at other times terribly difficult. The Blessed Son of God teaches it to us--this was His whole life: I can do nothing on my own. He is our life; He will work it in us. And when, as the Lamb of God, He shapes His disposition in us, we shall be prepared for Him to rise on us and shine in us in His heavenly glory.

"Nothing on My own initiative"--that word spoken eighteen hundred years ago, coming out of the inmost depths of the heart of the Son of God--is a seed in which the power of eternal life is hidden. Take it straight from the heart of Christ and hide it in your heart. Meditate on it until it reveals the beauty of His divine meekness and humility and explains how all the power and glory of God could work in Him. Believe in this truth as containing the very life and disposition which you need, and believe in Christ whose Spirit dwells in the seed to make it true in you. Begin, in single acts of self-emptying, to offer these words to God as the one desire of your heart. Count upon God accepting them and meeting them with His grace, to make the acts into habits and the habits into dispositions. And you may depend upon it--there is nothing that will lift you so near to God, nothing that will unite you closer to Christ, nothing that will prepare you for the abiding presence and power of God working in you, as will the death to self which is found in the simple concept: *Nothing on my own*.

This principle is one of the keys to the New Covenant life. As I believe that God is actually to work all in me, I shall see that the one thing that is hindering me is my doing something by myself. As I am willing to learn from Christ by the Holy Spirit to say truly, *Nothing on my own*, I shall have the true preparation to receive all God has engaged to work, and the power confidently to expect it. I shall learn that the whole secret of the New Covenant is just one thing: God works all! The seal of the Covenant stands sure: "I the Lord, have spoken it, and I will do it."

"Nothing
on my own
initiative."

"I, the Lord, have spoken it,
and I will do it."

The Two Covenants

Andrew Murray

Christian Literature

Crusade, 1974,

pages 171-174

Bibliography

[My Utmost for His Highest](#), Oswald Chambers, Barbour & Co, 1988.

Chambers encourages us to give up the right to ourselves, “My Utmost,” in return for God’s “highest” gift of oneness. Chamber’s challenge to be “one with Christ” weaves its way through this well used devotional. Check out the index on topics like oneness and abiding.

[Teach Me How To Live](#), Kay Arthur, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1984, pages 135-192. The physical world, circumstances and three relationships are God’s crucible for helping me become one with the Godhead as described in Christ’s final conversation with His disciples in John 12-17. “God’s ultimate goal for His children is oneness with Himself.”

[How to have Oneness in Your Relationships, Part I & II](#), Kay Arthur, Volume II Issue VI & VII, 1988. Precept Ministries published a devotional study guide in 1988 and reprinted the devotionals on oneness published in the 1984 devotional book described above as a free booklet.

[The Christian’s Secret to a Happy Life](#), Oneness with Christ (chapter 17), Hannah Whithall Smith, Books for the Ages, Ages Software, Albany, Oregon, 1997.

God’s dealings with man are all designed to bring man into oneness with Himself that Christ’s prayer in John 17:20-21 may be fulfilled. She describes four stages to Christian maturity:

1. “I alone,”
2. “I and Christ,”
3. “Christ and I” and
4. “Christ only.”

[One with the Father](#), William Wilkie, 1998, 2nd edition 2001, free copies available at 989.539.9950 or wilkie@netscope.com. This is a 35 page monograph on William Wilkie’s own personal experience and analysis of John 12-17. People seem to react either negatively or positively to this monograph; however, it makes for lively discussions.

[The Two Covenants](#), Andrew Murray, Christian Literature Crusade, 1974. See page 29-30 of this document.

[The True Vine](#), Andrew Murray, Moody Press, 1997 (new edition).

Jesus used the grapevine as a picture of the Christian’s relationship to Him and the Father. Andrew Murray looks closely at this metaphor described in John 15 in this classic work. He explores the vine analogy in thirty-one gripping chapters. Remember, analogies and metaphors are always imperfect descriptions of a relationship that Christ described as being one with the Him.

[Union With God](#), Madame Guyon, Christian Books Publishing House, 1981.

It is a simple explanation of her progressive spiritual growth 300 years ago in France. She was imprisoned for nine years because of her beliefs. This book reflects the spiritual progression principles the Catholic Church developed from 500 A.D., but in a wonderfully personal way.

[Rees Howells: Intercessor](#), Norman P. Grubb, Christian Literature Crusade, 1988.

This is remarkable biography of God directed spiritual development seen first hand through Rees Howells’ personal experience as an ordinary miner who was transformed by God over several decades. The concluding chapters are an astounding account of God’s work in global events not just individual lives.

[One with Christ](#), Hudson Taylor, Whitaker House, 1997.

Passionately pursued by God, Hudson Taylor, the founder of China Inland Missions in the 19th century, was a controversial figure because of his identification with the Chinese people. This monograph is an analysis of the Song of Solomon and the metaphor of the bride and the bridegroom. It includes a description of six stages of spiritual development.

The "vine" of John 15 and the "covenant" relationship with the Father that Christ describes as "one with the Father" in John 12-17 represent the

From 1987 to 1997 he owned an executive recruiting firm in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He and his wife Carolyn now own and operate Still Waters

Wolf, Senior Pastor of the Church on Brady in Los Angeles, California, from 1969-1994 is now President of Global Spectrum and University Institute headquartered in Delhi, India.

Spiritual Benchmarks Series

second of three benchmarking guides. This study guide has been prepared by Dr. William Wilkie. Bill was a faculty member and Special Assistant to the President at Michigan State University before joining the W. K. Kellogg Foundation staff and later entering the automotive industry world as Executive Vice President of Multifastener Corporation.

B&B on Long Lake in Michigan as a ministry center.

The first benchmarking guide is "Work on the Wild Side" taken from Genesis 1-3. It deals with God's purpose for mankind, the world of work and ministry.

The third benchmarking guide is the "Universal Disciple" taken from Colossians and written by Thom

- Armed with an accurate view of Genesis and God's original charge to mankind,
- Restored to a relationship with God of power and authority to fulfill the Great Commission as well as the "original commission" and
- Guided by the tangible principles for daily living that the Apostle Paul taught the early church

ordinary believers can be empowered to turn their world right-side-up.

www.spiritual-benchmarks.com

The Spiritual Benchmarks Series is sponsored by a network who focus their time and energy on the identification and nurturing of the next generation.

The Editorial Board under the guidance of Acey Martin, Sarae Martin, Jason Wilkie, Bill Wilkie, Thom Wolf,

Carol Davis and Debbie Woolery, publishes materials and also conducts workshops on the use of these materials.

If you have or know of people with unique materials that should be made available to a broader audience, please contact us. If you would like to be part of the network that uses

these materials for the benefit of the next generation, we would like to talk with you at your convenience.

Although free, all materials are copyrighted and cannot be copied for resale. If you would like to order materials or a CD, please go to our web site.

The four "Spiritual Benchmarks" guides cost \$3 each. When you print a copy or make multiple copies from a PDF file, please send us \$1 for each copy in cash or check to the address on the right. You can also use a credit card on our web sites: www.spiritual-benchmarks.com. If you cannot afford the \$4, please download the files and share them with a friend who is interested in spiritual growth as a substitute. Teens, college students, young family members or anyone who is looking for answers about God's purpose in their lives are candidates.

Ordinary people are looking for real personal transformation that includes the intercessory power and authority for their world that Christ promised in the John 12-17. If "Spiritual Benchmarks" has value and you use any of the four benchmarking exercises, please share the CD or our web site with others.

Spiritual Benchmarks
471 W. Long Lake Dr.
Harrison, MI 48625
989.539.1928

wwilkie@netscope.com
www.spiritual-benchmarks.com