

V&B

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“Jesus Walks on the Water” by Paul Gustave Doré (1832-1883)

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Inside This Issue

“Examine me, O LORD, and prove me,” says Psalm 26:2, “try my reins and my heart.” 2 Corinthians 13:5 says, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.” The four articles in this edition of *The VINE & BRANCHES* prompt us to explore the inner workings of our heart and soul in order to align our lives with the Word and will of God. It is not always a pleasant process – we will not seek to change until we take responsibility for our lives and stop accommodating our weaknesses and flaws. But those who are willing to see it to the end will be cleansed and renewed.

My contribution is a chapter from the second edition of my book, *If Ye Do These Things, Ye Shall Never Fall*, which I expect to publish shortly.

A new year is upon us! Let us strive to end this year not just older, but also better in our service to God.

God bless you. I hope you enjoy this edition.

In the service of His Majesty, the King of kings,





WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?

by Rev. Tim Sullivan
President, WTWB



In 2 Peter 1:5-8, eight biblical precepts hold the key to a vital Christian walk. “If these things be in you, and abound,” wrote Peter, “they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 8). First on the list is our precious faith.

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: (2 Peter 1:1)

It is faith that defines Christians as *believers*. Faith is fundamental to the Christian experience. God has purified our hearts by faith (Acts 15:9). We are sanctified by faith (Acts 26:18), justified by faith (Rom. 3:28), and made righteous by faith (Rom. 3:22). We stand by faith (2 Cor. 1:24), walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7), and live by faith (Heb. 10:38). We are all the children of God by faith (Gal. 3:26).

It is faith that makes each Christian experience unique. “God hath dealt to every man the measure of

faith” says Romans 12:3, but it is still required of each man to exercise that faith. God has constrained himself to intervene in the lives of his people only so much as their faith allows. In that way, God is limited by our faith.

Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. They remembered not his hand, *nor* the day when he delivered them from the enemy. (Psalm 78:41–42)

No man will walk with God beyond the confines of his faith. These boundaries are self-imposed, conditioned by our assessment of God. Faith is personal. It is not governed by *THE* truth but rather by *your* truth. We exercise our faith in proportion to our *acknowledgement* and *expectation* of God.

But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

In order to have faith, you must first believe that God is. Yes, the Bible says that “God is not a man, that he should lie” (Num. 23:19), but this truth does you no good unless you *believe* that God does not lie. Do you believe that God is indeed the great I AM, “able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20), and that “with God nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:37)? Do you believe that God is truly “full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth” (Ps. 86:15)? When you believe in your heart that God *is*, then you are well on your way to having faith in him.

It is one thing to know that God is great; it is quite another to know he will exercise his greatness on your behalf. Equally important to your acknowledgment of God is your *expectation* of him, “that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Psalm 46:1 says that “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” But whether that truth is personally beneficial to you depends upon if you believe it in *your* day of trouble. Psalm 86 was written by a man who lived in acknowledgment and expectation of his heavenly Father. These verses demonstrate the kind of faith we all need.

In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me. Among the gods *there is* none like unto thee, O Lord; neither *are there any works* like unto thy works. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name. For thou *art* great, and doest wondrous things: thou *art* God alone. (Psalm 86:7–10)

Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal in order to confront the unbelief among the people of God. “How long halt ye between two opinions?” he demanded (1 Kings 18:21). Many times we Christians seem divided

by two opinions about our heavenly Father. It is as if we have two gods, one whom we worship on Sunday and the other whom we deal with the rest of the week. Our *Sunday* god is the God of the Scriptures, all-powerful and ever-present, full of love and mercy. Our *Monday to Saturday* god leaves us to resolve our own problems and manage our own affairs.

It is our opinion of God from Monday to Saturday that makes our Sunday worship either authentic or feigned. Songs of praise effervesce from deep within us when we witness in our spirit that God is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Let the God we acknowledge be the same God we put our trust in.

WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?

Jesus devoted much time to teaching his disciples about faith. He led his disciples to enlarge the borders of their faith in God by placing them in situations that confounded their natural minds.

Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish... (Luke 8:22–24a)

Four of the disciples were professional fisherman. Undoubtedly they had ridden out many storms at sea before, but this one was so terrible that they feared for their lives. Picture the lashing of the waves and the sheets of rain pelting their faces as the ship rose and fell like a piece of cork. Hear the howling of the wind and the crackling of the wood bending and breaking while the men frantically shouted instructions one to another. How long did they fight the storm before they decided to wake up Jesus?

...Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. (v. 24b)

In an instant, the wind and rain ceased. The dark clouds vanished and the boat rocked in gentle waves like a baby nestled in his mother's arms. The disciples stared at each another in astonishment.

And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him. (v. 25)

"Where is your faith?" Jesus asked his disciples. They had set sail in obedience to his command. The Lord was with them on the boat. Would God now abandon them to drown like rats aboard a sinking ship? Would he not be with them through any obstacles they might encounter along the way? Is this not what he has

promised?

And the LORD, he *it is* that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed. (Deuteronomy 31:8)

"Where is your faith?" this same Jesus asks his disciples today. At what point does *your* faith quit? At what point do the problems you see eclipse the God you cannot see? How big can your problems grow before they are bigger than your God?

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:18)

The disciples were amazed when Jesus calmed the wind and sea with his word. But their instruction on faith was not complete. He again sent his disciples to sea but this time he remained ashore.

And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. (Mark 6:46–47)

Another storm threatened their lives but this time Jesus was not on board to save them. Would this be their end? Imagine their amazement when Jesus walked out on water to help them!

And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. (vv. 48–51)

Jesus did not bother to disperse the storm; he walked right through it. He did not eliminate the obstacle; he triumphed over it, demonstrating that faith prevails in the face of tumultuous opposition.

Still the lesson was not over. Jesus pushed the boundaries of Peter's faith even further by inviting him to walk out on the water to join him.

And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. (Matthew 14:28–30)

As far as I know, Peter is the only mortal man who

ever walked on water. But did Jesus congratulate Peter for the few steps he took? No, he chastised him for losing his faith along the way!

And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. (vv. 31–32)

“Little faith indeed!” one might be tempted to say! Who among us has ever taken one step on water? But the Master’s lesson to his disciple was plain. The waves did not sink Peter – it was his doubt! It is our doubt – not our circumstance – that sinks us. God never fails us, but our faith surely can. “I have prayed for thee,” said Jesus to Peter, “that thy faith fail not” (Luke 22:32).

When their ship was floundering in a raging sea, Jesus caused the storm to disperse immediately at his command. Later, his disciples watched in amazement as Jesus walked on water in the midst of strong winds. Finally, the Lord challenged Peter to leave the security of the ship and tear down the preconditioned boundaries of his faith by walking out to join him on the water. Jesus lifted his disciples to higher levels of faith as he set greater and greater challenges before them. So long as they did not quit, the disciples continued to grow.

In our dull-mindedness, we pray for a life so comfortable that we do not *need* faith. We think that the answer to our problems is for God to improve our circumstances. We don’t see that God is using our circumstances to improve us!

The muscles in our physical body develop as they encounter greater and greater resistance. Faith, too, needs resistance to grow. We will never see God’s power in us and that we are “more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Rom. 8:37) until we stand up to those things that need conquering!

For those who seek spiritual development, the trial of your faith is more precious than gold. Each challenge you complete, each “manifold temptation” you endure, lifts you to a higher level in your Christian walk.

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: (1 Peter 1:6–7)

What is greater to you – your troubles or your God? Peter looked at the things that were seen, and “when he saw the wind boisterous,” he lost his faith. For those who desire to stand and not fall, our faith must not be in the things we see but in the invisible God who is, and is a rewarder of all who diligently seek him. Where is *your* faith?



ARE WE BETTER THAN THEY?

by Rev. Evan Pyle
Pastor and Vice-President, WTWH



“What then? Are we better than they?”

Do you think Christians are better than unbelievers? Do you think Christians are better people than Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews or atheists? When asked such a direct question I imagine most of us would answer with a “no.” Yet I have observed, first in me, as well as in other Christian believers, the contrary attitude, that we are better than they. “Of course I am better than that (insert your false religion of choice)! He is lost.”

I know how it feels to be treated as a “poor lost soul.” Although the person treating me this way is usually well-intentioned, I still feel very put down. The attitude that I am a “poor lost soul” makes me feel that I am worse than nothing to this person. Yet, how many times have we observed fellow Christians doing this very thing? How many times have we acted this way ourselves? When I reflect on how I have acted towards others at times, I understand how arrogant and smug I appeared to the “poor lost soul” I was trying to rescue.

What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; (Romans 3:9)

The truth is that we are *not* better than they. “No, in no wise” means “no, not in any way.” In *no way* are we better than the unbelievers. Why? Because all of us, Jew or Gentile, Christian or not, have sinned. Man’s fallen condition is the great equalizer. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23)

The apostle Peter was a Jew. The tradition of his fathers taught him that he must remain separated from the Gentiles. In fact, it was unlawful for a Jew to keep company with one of another nation. (Acts 10:28) It took a dramatic vision from the Lord to change Peter’s way of thinking. “God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” (Acts 10:28) To that group of Gentiles gathered with Cornelius to hear the gospel message, he said, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” (Acts 10:34–35)

The question of Jews and Gentiles belonging to different categories became a burning issue for the early church. A council of church leaders was convened in Jerusalem to consider the matter. During the deliberations Peter referred to his experience with Cornelius and his household.

And when there had been much disputing, Peter

rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And put **no difference** between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. (Acts 15:7, 9 emphasis added)

If God puts no difference between people, why must we? Perhaps it is man's insecurity about his fallen state. He wants to establish his own righteousness, his own sense of importance in the world. Too often, he does this by imagining that his group, religion, race, nation, community, team, denomination, or club, is better than all the others and makes him a better person than those outside his group. When Christians adopt this attitude, they fail to live by the admonition: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." (Philippians 2:3) Rather than seeing a humble, loving saint of God, others see a haughty, proud, "better-than-you" person. No wonder people react badly to those professing Christianity. God Himself hates a proud, haughty attitude.

These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: **A proud look...** (Proverbs 6:16–17a, emphasis added)

The truth is, we are not Christians because we are better people; we are Christians because we are *chosen*. We were chosen in Christ long before we could make our own choice. In fact, God chose us before the world was created.

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (Ephesians 1:4)

We did not receive new life in Christ because we are somehow better people than those who are not made alive in Him. We received new life in Christ when we were yet dead in sins. Dead people are not better people. Dead people are *dead*, incapable of doing anything to better themselves.

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) (Ephesians 2:5)

We are indeed saved by grace, chosen in Christ before the world began and made alive in Him while we were yet dead in our sins. If salvation is by grace alone, then it is a gift given at God's discretion. We are unable to *boast* that we are somehow better, because we had nothing to do with the giving of God's gift. We received the gift by grace through faith in Christ. Salvation by grace eliminates any possibility of proud boasting.

And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against

another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? (1 Corinthians 4:6, 7)

The worst "us versus them" attitudes are on display among Christian brothers and sisters. Some disdain all who think differently or are from a different denomination as if they are the enemy. Some boast endlessly about their group and pastor. When our attitudes are aligned with truth, the only boasting that remains is to glory in the Lord:

Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. (Romans 3:27)

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 1:27–31)

We are to esteem others better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3), and we are to treat others without partiality, not preferring one above another (1 Timothy 5:21).

If Christians are "no better than they," what is the point of being a Christian and living as a believer? Is there no advantage to being in Christ? Is there no blessing to drinking from the fountain of living waters? There is something better! Though we are not better, *Christ* is better. We have a better Savior (Hebrews 1:4; 7:7), a better covenant (Hebrews 7:22) which was established on better promises (Hebrews 8:6), and a better hope in heaven (Hebrews 7:19), where we have a better and enduring substance (Hebrews 10:34).

When I was an atheist, without Christ, and as lost as last year's Easter eggs, I encountered a friend who captured my attention because of her countenance and manner. I could see that she had undergone a radical change and I couldn't begin to imagine what had caused such a change. When she preached Christ to me, it was not to "fix that poor, lost soul," but because the love of Christ alive in her heart compelled her to do so. A child of God exhibiting a humble and charitable spirit is attractive and winsome to others. No self-righteous effort, no matter how strenuous, can successfully mimic the simple beauty of Christ glowing in the life of a humble, submitted believer.



One Soldier Speaks

THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR CHOICES

by F. Jay Pearson
Director, WTWH



Life's journey would be a whole lot smoother if we would consider the consequence of our choices before we act. Our life's maintenance has always been a matter of choice since God created and placed man in the Garden of Eden and gave him this commandment.

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 2:16–17)

The consequence of Adam's choice is with us today. Consequence is the result of a choice. It is not a variable, it is a constant. The wages of sin is death. This is the Word of God. God warned man of the consequence of sin before man sinned. God is just.

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (Romans 5:12)

Thankfully, God is also merciful and gracious. God did not negate the consequence. God's Word is truth. But God did however provide a savior for mankind, Jesus Christ the righteous. God gave us another choice. By Jesus Christ, the one and only savior, man could be saved.

But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:15–17)

The consequence of Adam's choice in Genesis 2:16–17 has not changed. Unless man chooses to accept Jesus Christ as Lord, he is dead.

The consequences of our choices live far beyond the moment. Consequences affect not only the one making the choice, but also families, friends, acquaintances, and the Body of Christ. You can't change a consequence by saying "I'm sorry." This is why it is so important to consider our ways. Consider before you choose.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Consider your ways.** (Haggai 1:7, emphasis added)

The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's

crib: *but* Israel doth not know, **my people doth not consider.** (Isaiah 1:3, emphasis added)

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; **considering himself**, lest thou also be tempted. (Galatians 6:1, emphasis added)

You need to consider the consequence of your choice before you choose. How will it affect your life and the life of others? Ask yourself, "Is this what the Lord is leading me to do?"

We have an internal resource library. We have a conscience, God's Word, the Holy Spirit, angels, faith, trust, and direct communication with the Father and the Son. We need only to ask and actually LISTEN for the answer with a heart to obey.

Our environment offers many different choices. Where we choose to spend our time will offer us more or less temptations.

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (Ephesians 5:15–16)

A prudent *man* foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished. (Proverbs 22:3)

The devil is an opportunist, waiting to maneuver and manipulate whoever he can. He is poised at the door of our vulnerability to steal, kill, and destroy our fellowship with the Lord and ultimately, our lives.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (1 Peter 5:8)

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (Ephesians 6:13)

Many things influence our choices: desire to please others, deception, falsehood, truth, compassion, righteousness, zeal, honor, dishonor, and one's own lust. Consider the source of the influence and the outcome of the choice. In the end, you are responsible.

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. (James 1:14)

Moses left us a good example of considering one's ways and making a good choice.

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. (Hebrews 11:24–26)

The consequence of Adam's choice is with us today. The consequence of Jesus Christ's choice is also with

us.

And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. (Matthew 26:39)

He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. (v. 42)

And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. (v. 44)

The first Adam left all men with a consequence of his choice. Praise God the second Adam, Jesus Christ the righteous, left us with the consequence of his choice. The consequence of his choice offers salvation to mankind.

Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. (Romans 5:18)

We must consider our ways and the effect they will have on our lives now and when we stand before the Lord. We must consider the consequences of our choices that affect not only us but our spouses, our children, the Body of Christ and those who will come to the Lord through his call and our example. May we all stand before the Lord with great joy and expectation and hear, "Well done good and faithful servant."



THE HEART OF THE MATTER

By Rev. Todd Pekel
Thessaloniki, Greece



The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*,
and desperately wicked: who can know it?
(Jeremiah 17:9)

It has been said that the Scriptures basically make known two people, or beings, if you prefer. First, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ and the second is the person whose reflection we see in the mirror when we dare to really look him or her in the eye.

When you read the verse above were you glad that the deceitful and wicked heart belonged to someone else and not to you? If you were, might I suggest you take a moment to pray before reading what follows?

The question remains: who can know that which is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things?

The short answer, of course, is... 'The Lord.' Yes, the Lord certainly knows our hearts, but it's when the heart is *revealed* to the one who possess it that real

change can begin and true freedom can be, at long last, experienced.

Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all *men* shall be offended because of thee, *yet* will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples. (Matthew 26:31–35)

The account above is familiar to most Christians, I'm sure. Peter and all of the disciples assured the Lord that they would *not* be offended in him and that they would *not* deny Him. Little did they know that only hours from that very moment would the Lord's words come to pass and their denial of him be unequivocal.

And after a while came unto *him* they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly. (vv. 73-75)

In the gospel of Luke we see this incident recorded with additional information worthy of note.

And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly. (Luke 22:60–62)

It wasn't the cock crow that caused Peter to weep those bitter tears of denial and betrayal. It was the look from the Lord. When Jesus turned and looked upon Peter, "he remembered the word of the Lord... and went out and wept bitterly."

Indeed, bitter tears are what await all of us when our heart is revealed showing the deceitfulness and wickedness that dwells within. But *seeing* the depth of our depravity is only a portion of the work that is done by the Spirit of God... albeit an important portion of the work.

And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. (2 Samuel 12:1)

Again, a familiar portion of Scripture to most Chris-

tians; but what happens when David's anger and indignation are kindled against the rich man in the ensuing story told by Nathan?

And Nathan said to David, Thou *art* the man... (v. 7a)

When we experience the "thou art the man" moment, it will cause us to weep bitter tears *and* experience a godly sorrow for our sin. This, also, is part of the Spirit's work. The following words express the heart of David *after* the conversation he had with Nathan.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest. (Psalm 51:1-4)

Such words can only come from a heart that has been touched by the Holy Spirit of God. Without the *revelation* that comes from the "look of the Lord", we are blind to the denial and ignorant of the betrayal that lies in wait to usurp the Lord's throne in our hearts.

David continues in the 51st Psalm to pour out his soul unto the Lord and comes to the realization of his need for a pure, or clean, heart. This, again, is part of

the Spirit's work.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. (v. 10)

Yes, "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." God not only knows the hearts of men, he reveals those hearts to the owners thereof, bringing them to repentance. He then can - and will - create *clean* hearts in them.

Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

"All things are become new" means all things *including* our hearts! The heart of the matter is that our hearts are clean. This, too, is a work of the Spirit.

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WORKERS TOGETHER WITH HIM

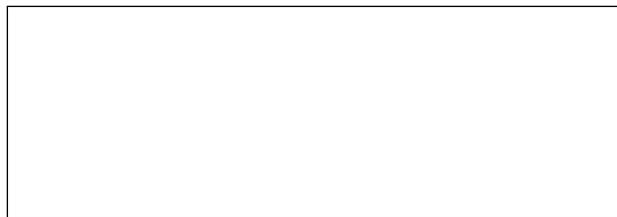
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WORKERS TOGETHER WITH HIM is an international Christian ministry dedicated to the furtherance of the message of salvation and the education of Christians to the end that they be a living testimony of God's love, power and glory. Teachings are distributed via congregational meetings, seminars and various publications. This ministry is financed entirely by the tithes and offerings of its supporters.

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