

# COMING OUT OF DARKNESS

## CHAPTER 7

### The Three Stages of Spiritual Growth

#### God's Timetable

We have been thrilled with the response we have received from these messages. The reports are coming in from all over the country that people are so excited and appreciate the love of God much more since realizing His heart as a Father. I must admit that I was somewhat surprised. The system of Christianity has given us many wrong concepts of God, which makes it very confusing and hard for some to realize that our Father will perfect *His plan and purpose* in our lives.

Jesus said to His disciples, ***"It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given"*** (Matt. 13:11). God is revealing to His seekers in these days the reality of walking in the Kingdom of God. This revelation is not given to the masses of Christianity, but to those who have a heart-cry to know the reality of His indwelling life. God has been restoring many things to the Church since the days of Martin Luther. I believe that one of the last revelations to be given before the complete manifestation of the "Sons of God" is that *the hearts of the children must be turned toward God to see him as their Father, who is perfecting them according to His plan and purpose.*

God has certain times and seasons in your life when He will bring to you that which you need for your spiritual growth and understanding. I will never forget when I was introduced to a book by E.W. Kenyon. I was going over my bookshelf one day looking for something to read when I found a book called *In His Presence* by Kenyon. I have no idea how that book was placed on my bookshelf. I was amazed at the revelation, and yet the simplicity that was in that writing. When I read *In His Presence*, I was so excited that I wrote to Kenyon's publishing company and ordered

every book he had written. I saturated myself in his writings for about three months and they literally changed my life. I had such a revelation of the living and abiding Word of God. After I read those books, I gave away hundreds of Kenyon's books, but not one person that I gave them to seemed to have their lives impacted the way I did.

I really believe that ***Jesus is the author and the finisher of our faith*** (Heb. 12:2). He brought me to a point where I could receive more light and understanding. My burden in ministry today is to bring people out of the darkness of religion, and human effort, into the glorious light of the gospel message proclaimed by the writers of the New Testament. I believe that God is beginning to remove the veil that has been cast over all nations (Isa. 25:7). He is beginning to reveal His heart toward His creation. No matter how much Bible knowledge we have, only God can open our understanding and our hearts to be able to receive that which He has. This is according to His timetable and not ours. As I have shared before, ***"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming"*** (1 Cor. 15:22-23). God has a specific plan and purpose for every person. For some, it takes much more time and dealings by God before they will submit to His will.

#### Three Stages of Spiritual Growth

There are basically three stages of spiritual growth in the Christian life, as revealed by the Apostle John, ***"I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked"***

***one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one"*** (1 John 2:12-14).

## **Little Children**

When we are first born again, we are newborn babies, and it takes some time for spiritual growth. We need the liberty to be babies and little children until we grow up. John says in 1 John 2:1, ***"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."***

The ideal is that once you come to know Jesus, "I would that you sin not." But if you do sin, remember you have an advocate with the Father. John is saying here that right from the very beginning we need to realize that God is our Savior. If you are saved, you have a heart for God and you do not want to sin. When you have a heart for God, deep inside you want to be conformed in His image. So John says, "Little children, I would that you sin not, but if you do, remember that you have an advocate, *Jesus Christ the righteous.*" Little children do not know a whole lot. They need, more than anything, to be properly fed. You do not teach a baby how to be a full-grown man. As parents, we do not expect a whole lot from our little children. One of the great problems in the system of Christianity that hinders spiritual growth is that after we are born again they will not allow us the time to be little children. They expect us to be born again and then start being a spiritual man. Religion condemns all the little children because they are not grown up. Little children are still worldly. They still do many things that a mature person wouldn't do. The one thing a little child has is confidence in their Father. They never feel like they cannot go to their Father, regardless of what they do. A child always knows that they can go to their Father and receive love and forgiveness. We Christians have a hard time believing that God is good enough to receive us just the way we

are. He knows our habits and sins, yet He loves and forgives us anyway. When God called you, you may have been a prostitute or a king. When He called you, He knew exactly what you were and what it would take to transform you. He looks way beyond where you are today and He sees you in eternity fully transformed and walking in the realm of the Kingdom. Romans chapter 8 says that we have been called, predestinated, justified and glorified, all in the past tense. God looks at the finished work.

## **God's Unlimited Forgiveness**

You cannot sin more than God's ability and willingness to forgive. In fact, He has already forgiven you. On the cross, every sin ever committed, past, present, and future, was forgiven. At the cross, sin, the world, the flesh and the devil were taken into death and did not come out of the grave. In God's eyes, sin is no more. He fully dealt with the sin problem. This cannot be just a doctrine. We need the revelation to see the full redemption that was purchased at Calvary. When we have the light and revelation of God concerning redemption, we will never be condemned again for the areas in our lives that need transformation. There will come a day when the veils will be fully removed from our eyes and we will see that sin is no more and we will be free from it. The fear of sin is what keeps many in bondage to it. I am no longer afraid of sin. I know I still experience it in certain areas, but I no longer fear it. I know sin is a product of the carnal realm. As long as I am not fully transformed, the carnal man will affect me at times. However I no longer fear this, I just continue to seek God and know that as I seek Him, as I touch Him, He will flow into those areas and bring transformation. When you no longer fear sin, it loses power in your life.

One of the greatest problems today is that we do not feel good enough to partake of the riches of Christ. We do not see the power of God operating in our lives because we feel that we are not worthy. We do not believe in the simplicity of the gospel. *Jesus bore the penalty for our sin* and we should not feel condemned, but rather forgiven. We are God's children,

born from above. We have a new nature, but we are still for the most part little children. Because we are still more natural than spiritual, we condemn ourselves for what we do in the flesh. We feel we deserve condemnation rather than God's forgiveness. We feel, because of our sin and our carnal nature that from time to time rises up in us, that we are not worthy.

It would be wonderful if, when we come to God, we could be born a fully mature Son of God, but that just does not happen. God wants to transform us into what He is, and that is a long process. The religious ones look at the little babies and say, "*Look at them, they call themselves Christians and they do all kinds of things that they shouldn't. They must not be born again.*" To them, being a Christian is a matter of conduct, of being right and doing right. They do not realize that they need to feed the babies, not condemn them. So precious few ever realize that to change the outward conduct only makes them a better person in the natural. No matter how good you are, it does not give you an entrance into the Kingdom of God. I have witnessed, time and time again, that it is much harder for a good person to enter into the realm of the Kingdom than a bad person. A good person has a hard time recognizing their need for God. If you have followed these messages on *Coming Out of Darkness* from the beginning, you know it doesn't matter how good or how bad you are, you still need God to be able to live the Kingdom life. God takes natural men both, good and bad, and transforms them into Sons of God. This is *the good news of the gospel*. Living in the Kingdom of God has absolutely nothing to do with the natural man.

We are not fully transformed yet. There are times when our flesh will get the best of us. There are still times when we say no to the prompting of the Spirit. If you are 95% transformed in the spirit and still have 5% carnality, that 5% will rise up and get the best of you at times. If you do not understand that, you will always be condemned. If you think that because you have been a Christian for 20 years you should not have any carnality, you will always condemn yourself, rather than

recognizing it as the flesh and looking away to the sin offering and accepting forgiveness. Again, the penalty for our sin was paid at Calvary. That is why Jesus died and that *offering was for all* of humanity. He died so that you could find your way back to God. This is according to God's plan and purpose, which is "**every man in his own order**". God **will** bring you into the fullness of His plan for your life.

Even though God will bring you fully into His purpose for your life, you still have a part to play in it. That is why it is "**every man in his own order**". Our actions and responses to God affect our lives, whether for good or bad. The more that we hunger and seek after God, the quicker He can work His will in our lives. If we are not willing, we need to ask Him to make us willing. It is going to take ages for some to submit fully to God's working in their lives. The choices that we make do play a part in God's working in our lives. However, we must also understand that it is not a matter of the flesh. We know that the things we do in the flesh do not please God, but we cannot just lay back and do nothing, thinking that God will do it all. The key is that we must seek God. Don't try to perfect yourself in the flesh, but every day of your life, seek after God. Learn to worship Him and fall in love with Him.

There have been periods in my life when I would get so discouraged and downcast that I would lose hunger for God. I have gone for periods when I wouldn't read the Bible and I wouldn't pray much, but I never quit being honest with God. I used to drive to a place in my car or find a place in my home every day where I would just talk to God. I have said to God many times, "I do not have the hunger anymore, please help me." I believe that is how I found the strength to keep going on. Most Christians never get beyond the stage of a little child because of condemnation. It is OK to be a child, and you will always be a spiritual child until you realize that it is OK to be where you are today. It does not matter what your problems or hang-ups are. What matters is that you have your eyes unveiled to the fact that the price for your redemption was fully paid. You need to go to God and ask Him to reveal the

depths of Calvary to you. You need your understanding opened to the fact that there will come a day when you will fully reveal and manifest His glory to the world, because that is why you were created. You do have a part to play in this. Your choices can deter His will but they will not stop it. Don't let anyone tell you that you are a puppet on a string. God does have it all worked out, but how long will you wait before going to Him and trusting Him to do in you what you cannot do in the flesh? I have been saying for years that Christians will do everything except take the time to sit quietly in His presence, because they are so busy. If you do not spend time with God, no matter how many good works you do, it does not matter. People may benefit from your good works, but you won't. You must begin to spend time with God. That is when the veils and the darkness begin to lift off of you. Only God can reveal to you the depths of His love. His love is not a doctrine; it must be experienced.

As Christians, we should not know one another according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. There are Christians who have been Christians for many years and are still babies because they have not known these truths. Let's not condemn the babies, let's feed them the riches of redemption to release them from condemnation so they can grow.

### Young Men

***"I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one"*** (1 Jn. 2:13-14).

The Word of God abiding in you is much more than just memorizing the words of the Bible. Years ago, I had entire chapters of the Bible committed to memory without much experience of the Word operating in my life. When the Word of God abides in you, it becomes a part of your being. It becomes the Word again made flesh. It is the *living* and *abiding* Word working in you that enables you to live godly and overcome the wicked one. As the Word begins to operate in you, you begin, in small

ways at first, to think and speak according to the principles of the Word and begin to see change take place in your life. Whenever we speak from our spirit the words of God that abide in us, those words have just as much value as the words spoken from the lips of Jesus. *This is not the name it and claim it doctrine.* Many people try to use positive confession and thinking, trying to manipulate God to do what they want. Most of them do not realize what they are doing, but this is the case. Whenever you take the written Word of God that He spoke to someone else long ago and use that as positive confession you are not abiding in the Word. However, if you are reading the Bible and God speaks it again to you and it becomes a living thing to you, then you can speak it in true faith and assurance that what you speak will come to pass. The key to speaking the Word is to *only speak what God has spoken to you.*

### An Example of Acting on the Spoken Word

I will never forget a few years ago a former pastor of ours rose one Sunday morning and in his prayer time God spoke to Him and said, "Joe is going to walk today." Joe had been in a wheelchair for quite awhile unable to walk. In church that morning, the pastor went up to Joe and said, "God spoke to me today and said you were going to walk, so **get up.**" Joe just looked at him and said "I can't do it" but the pastor said, "God said you were going to walk, so get up." Still Joe just shook his head no and said he could not get up. Then the pastor spoke to two ushers and said, "Get Joe out of his chair." They pulled Joe out of his chair and the pastor said, "Make him walk." The ushers dragged him back and forth across the front of the church with the pastor saying, "**In the name of Jesus you will walk,**" over and over for about ten minutes. By this time everyone in the church was thinking the pastor had missed God, but he just kept on saying "**Walk.**" All at once, as the ushers were dragging this man across the church, strength came into his legs and he began to stand on his feet and walk alone. Well, you can imagine the praises that ascended to God that morning. This is the only way true miracles happen in ministry. You cannot just read in the Bible that God heals

people and then start speaking the Word to everyone you see that is sick. Don't misunderstand me, I am **not** saying you shouldn't pray for the sick, you should. If God doesn't give you a Word for a miracle, pray for them but don't make a fool of yourself and do disgrace to the Spirit of God by speaking a word of healing to someone and it not happening. You won't have to make excuses why the person did not get healed like, "You just didn't have enough faith. I spoke the Word but you did not believe." There is so much of that kind of trash in the church which just brings condemnation on people because *you* were not acting out of faith. Joe did not have faith to be healed, but God had spoken to the pastor, and what God speaks to you, **HE** will do.

### **An Example of Speaking a Word You Haven't Heard**

A few years ago, I saw one of the leading "Word of Faith" teachers line up about 15 wheelchair patients and begin to speak the "Word of Faith" to them to rise up and walk. When nothing happened, he began to exhort them to try to move their legs and he began to pull them from their chairs. They began to fall on the floor, still being exhorted to put their faith to work and begin to walk. They were squirming around on the floor desperately trying to believe and be healed. I will never forget that pitiful sight as long as I live. Not a one of them received the ability to walk. This took place on nationwide television. What a disgrace to the miracle-working power of God. People of God are doing the same thing across the world today, speaking a word that was given to someone else two thousand years ago, and nothing is happening. They are speaking for healing, cars, lands and prosperity, thinking they are rich in the Word and faith, not knowing they are miserable, blind, wretched, poor and naked. Jesus said, "***I do only those things I see my Father do,***" not those things I read in the Old Testament. Jesus told his disciples to heal the sick and cast out devils and they had a marvelous ministry. If He says to you to do the same, then when you speak a Word of healing, healing is what will take place. I know I can be

misunderstood here, but you must hear the spirit in these words. If we will take the time to sit in God's presence, He will begin to speak to us, and then when we do speak the Word it will come to pass. I am not against the "Word of Faith" teaching. It is just that you must hear God yourself and then live, act, speak, and do that which He speaks. When I become full of the Word of God as a living reality, as I begin to hear God speak to me in my daily life, then I take that which He has spoken to me and I speak, and I live, and I center everything around that which God has spoken to me. I become that which I speak. Again, this is the experience of the Word becoming flesh.

***"As a man thinks in his heart so is he"*** (Prov. 23:7). Jesus said, ***"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks"*** (Luke 6:45). Whatever you think in your heart, you will speak out of your mouth, and the creative words that you speak bring to you your experience of tomorrow. The words that you speak can be very powerful. They can work for you either positively or negatively. We must, by the grace of God, have revealed to us the heart that we were given at the new birth.

### **You Have Overcome the Wicked One**

When we hear a word like this, we can immediately interpret it with the natural mind and think of the devil *out there somewhere*. The devil outside of you is not the problem. Jesus took care of him at the cross. The Word says, ***"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross"*** (Col. 2:15, NIV). One who has realized the power of the cross and has had their mind renewed to see that the devil is not the problem is on the way to a great spiritual awakening. The devil on the outside of us has been defeated. We have been taught so much the power of the devil that we believe in it and that is what gives it the power. The devil we need to overcome is that carnal mind that was received by the Fall. The wicked one is that rebellion, that consciousness we received at the Fall. It is that consciousness we have of being separate and alienated from God. The flesh, the carnal man, is the wicked one we

need to overcome. If the Word abides in you, and you become the Word, then you have overcome the wicked one.

This, of course, is a matter of transformation. Your growth from a little child to a young man is a long process. I believe God is speeding up the process in these days, because we are very close to God bringing **"many sons into glory"** (Heb 2:10). We are very close to God removing the veil cast over all nations (Isa 25:7). The covering cast over America is most deceiving. We are in the darkness and covering of religion disguising itself as Christianity. The system of Christianity is included in that **"wicked one"** that we must overcome. How many people realize that this beautiful, full of good works, system is a part of **BABYLON** the mother of HARLOTS spoken of in The Revelation chapter 17? Larry & Betty Hodges, in their publication, *The Shofar Letters*, issue 2, 1997, say:

Some are loathe to leave the stain-glassed cathedrals, the pews and pulpits, the hirelings and hierarchies, the Sunday morning *meeting* at 10:00 A.M., three songs, an offering and 30 minutes of freeze-dried prepackaged pabulum, and have therefore, in many cases, chosen these very things over the Lord Himself. They do so because they have been made drunk with the wine of the fornication of harlotries. Although espoused to the Lord, their hearts have gone after other lovers. Men who would never be caught dead in a real brothel think nothing of frequenting spiritual houses of ill-repute for the same reasons, though spiritual.

Before I continue further, let me make it clear that I am not referring here to those who are still in need of keeping the feast of Pentecost; who still very much need to gather together with others of like precious faith, or of those who come together *in the Spirit*. I am referring to those who remain in *Babylon* and refuse to leave it, or its ways, customs, rituals, or ceremonies.

Lest you misunderstand who Babylon is, it is all the religious systems, groups, denominations and non-denominational denominations, including Charismatic, Pentecostal, *and some home-meetings*. It is that which bears the stamp and spirit of the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth! It

is *Things, men, movements, institutions, organizations, etc. which draw the multitudes after themselves and attach the crowds to themselves. It is the principle of Anti-christ; that which definitely supplants, or intends to supplant Christ. It is an alternative to the whole Christ in man-made Christianity; an imitation life borne and carried on by it's own momentum.* ([\*The Shofar Letters\*](#), Larry and Betty Hodges, P.O. Box 728, Linwood, NC 27299)

## We Must Overcome Bigotry

Someone asked me a short time ago, "Why is it that most of God's people get angry when they are told about the possibility of God saving everyone?" In the Old Testament, the Jews thought that they were the only people of God on the earth. The Jews were very bigoted. When Jesus came they were so sure that the gospel He brought was only for them. They would never have gone to the Gentiles with the gospel. Peter had to have a vision from God to convince him to take the gospel to the Gentiles. Acts tells us, ***"On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour. And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common"*** (Acts 10:9-15).

We can see by these verses that God no longer calls any man unclean. In this vision, He was telling Peter that God has cleansed everyone and **He is not a bigot**. His love and His redemption are for the world, not just a select group of people. He *does call* a select group out of the world to dispense Himself into them so that they can go to the world and bring

them the word of reconciliation. Christians are the most bigoted group of people on the earth today. Christians get upset with me when they hear me talk about God being the Father of all and redeeming all and being able to save someone who does not know about Jesus. Even those who claim to know Jesus fight among themselves. Even within their own denominations they argue over doctrinal differences. The Baptists are divided over baptism. The Lutherans are divided amongst themselves. The Pentecostals are divided. These religions are all divided because of man's carnal interpretation of the Bible. Anyone who sees the oneness of Christ and the Church could never be a part of that HARLOT system. Revelation 17:3 says that she is **"full of names of blasphemy"**. We should not call ourselves anything. Not Baptist, Catholic, Pentecostal or anything else. Paul told the Corinthians, **"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"** (1 Cor. 3:1-4). How could the Word be more plain? Jesus Himself said in Matthew 12:25, **"A house divided against itself cannot stand."** The Institutional Church could never be a testimony to God because of the division among her. We must drop all bigotry and division. God is our Father and we are one family. You may be a Catholic or Pentecostal, but regardless of your affiliation, you are my brother and I love you and will minister to you.

### **Our Oneness Is in His Life**

Our oneness is in *His life*, not in our doctrines or carnal knowledge. A doctrine, no matter how good or correct it is, should never be used to divide the people of God. The Apostle Paul said, **"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That**

**we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive"** (Eph. 4:13-14). A doctrine held in esteem above fellowship with another person is a wind that will carry you away from Christ. There is a people on the earth today who are coming into the unity of the faith, and they see the futility of the organized church with its forms, programs and rituals. They are not, as some suppose, *"forsaking the assembling of themselves together"*. They are coming out of Babylon and becoming a chaste virgin unto Christ. These are not sectarian or exclusive. They realize there are precious saints of God in all denominations and groups, but they themselves cannot any longer partake of the HARLOT system that keeps people in bondage. God's people are beginning to realize that they have *one life and one nature*. Jesus prayed, in John, chapter 17, verses 11,20-23, **"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me. And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."**

This, very simply stated by Jesus, is the basis of our oneness. It is not what we intellectually believe, it is not the church you go to or the physical ground you meet on. Our oneness is *His life in each of us*. The Christ in me is the same Christ that is in you and *Christ is not divided*. The Christ in me loves and ministers to the world regardless of their condition in life. If I will not fellowship with you because you have different beliefs than mine, then my doctrines are IDOLS that need to be torn down.

The Protestants talk about the Catholics bowing down to idols and images of saints, but *they bow down and worship their own doctrines*. They are, as Paul said, "*Little children, tossed about with the winds of doctrine*." Jesus is calling out a people and teaching them by His Spirit and they will one day stand on the earth as *one new man*. The world will then know that Jesus was sent of God and that He loves them. The sons of God will minister to the world the love of the Father and all bigotry will be put down. **Hallelujah!**

## Fathers

***"I write unto you, Fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning"*** (1 Jn. 2:13).

John repeats the above sentence twice. The Fathers know Him that is from the beginning. Their understanding of God goes way beyond the comprehension of Christianity. When you know God as Father, you realize that you came out of His substance. Adam is your Father according to the flesh, but God is your Father according to the spirit.

*"Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the **Father of spirits**, and live?"* (Heb. 12:9).

*"And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of **the spirits of all flesh**, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?"* (Num. 16:22).

*"Let the LORD, **the God of the spirits of all flesh**, set a man over the congregation"* (Num. 27:16).

***"The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him"*** (Zech. 12:1).

God is spirit and He is our Father. All mankind have a spirit. ***"He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit"*** (1 Cor. 6:17).

*God is the God of your spirit, not your flesh*. This is one reason that all men are included in redemption. Your spirit was brought forth from the very substance of God. In your spirit, you and God are one. If you learn how to live and function from your spirit, then God is once again manifested in humanity.

There will come a day in your spiritual growth when you will become a spiritual Father. A Father is one who is a mature believer who carries the presence of God within him. He will reproduce God's life, God's will, and His glory in others. *A Father in the natural is one who reproduces human life. A Father in the spirit reproduces spiritual life*. Jesus said, ***"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life"*** (John 6:63). When we learn to speak from our spirit the words of God, then our words also become spirit and life. We can impart life to others by our speaking. True ministry imparts life and builds up the saints. ***"Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart"*** (2 Cor. 3:2-3).

To become a Father means that God's life has swallowed up the carnal life and you are now a representative of Him on the earth. *It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me*.

Another way to share the three stages of spiritual growth is:

1. God To You
2. God In You
3. God As you

**As God to you**, you understand that God came to man. He came *to you* to redeem you and restore you back to fellowship with your Father. He came not just to the Jews, not just to the Christians, but he came to the world. God to you is the first revelation in the mystery of God. Every man has a spirit, the substance of God. And God came to you to quicken and

regenerate your spirit, so that you could once again have fellowship and commune with Him. As we have seen, Adam sold the human race into sin and death and Christ came to us with redemption. **"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"**(1 Cor. 15:21-22).

God **to** you means that God is **for** you. No matter how much sin I am in, no matter how many times I fall and fail God, He comes to me every day with the offer of pardon and redemption. I must state again that it is not our fault that we are in Adam. Has anybody ever told you that when you sin it is not your fault? The nature of Adam is to sin, That is why *God is to you*. You need to understand that God paid the price for every act of disobedience and transgression so that He could reconcile you to Himself. **"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation"**(2 Cor. 5:19). These verses tell us that God in Christ comes to you realizing that you are not responsible for the condition you are in, so it is not your fault. You are a product of Adam's fall. God, willing to show His love, sacrificed Himself on the cross so you would understand that He knows that you can't in your fallen condition help yourself, so He came to help you. He came to be the reconciler that would reconcile you back to God. When Adam and Eve fell, God wasn't mad at them; He had already made provision for their redemption. Their redemption was based on God's choice, not on their choice. There are people who have never heard the gospel, but that does not stop God's provision from working for their good. Eventually God's redemption will be realized fully **in** them. *That is God to you*.

## God In You

When you realize that God is to you and you begin to seek Him and come into a deeper understanding, and begin to hunger and thirst after Him, you then begin to realize God is in you. Paul told us that our hope is "CHRIST IN

YOU" (Col. 1:27). Our hope is not in a "rapture" that will automatically change us into Christ's likeness. *That is a fairy tale and a fallacy*. The only hope we have is Christ in us. Because He is in us, that is our hope of glory. If Christ is truly in you and you are not experiencing Him, even though He is in you, it is, at least in this present time, doing you no good. Knowing it intellectually is not enough. All Christians know God came to them to save them, but most never experience God in them to deliver them from a life of self. We have people in churches around the world who say they are born again but never experience God in them to deliver them. God wants not only to come to you with redemption, but He wants you to realize that *He can live in you, instead of you*. I was a Christian for years before I experienced Christ in me. I knew intellectually and was taught that Jesus was in me, but I had no experience of His living through me. I experienced God's love and forgiveness, but I didn't know He could live His life in me. God in me is a marvelous revelation. That's the "young man" that John talks about. God in us with His ability and creative Word to change us and the very atmosphere in which we live. That is God in us and that is wonderful. However, when you experience God in you, you still have the flesh to deal with. So yes, God is in me, but the self-life still raises up so there is a certain amount of warfare we must do, *not with the devil*, but with self. There are Christians who have spent years fighting the devil and trying to pull down strongholds, when they themselves are still little children in the spirit.

What we need to deal with is not the devil outside of us, but the spirit of antichrist that is in our flesh. Some get upset when I say that Christians have a spirit of antichrist, but nevertheless, that is the case. Has God ever asked you to do something and your flesh said NO? That is antichrist. Anything in you that is against the workings of God is antichrist. In the mass of humanity, both Christian and non-Christian, *the antichrist is at this present time ruling and reigning in a people*. Christianity is looking for this man to come in an outward way, when all the time he is working and growing in their flesh and they do not recognize it. Our carnal nature is permeated with the

antichrist spirit. Most Christians are in the darkness and do not understand the very basic things of God because of the antichrist nature that is in their flesh.

The experience of God in you is the first step in learning how to deal with that antichrist nature that is in us. *You should never be condemned for this.* You have inherited the antichrist spirit. You did not do *anything* to cause you to be this way. Everyone is born with this nature.

There are only two men growing on the earth today: Adam and Christ. (We will deal with this more in another chapter of *Coming Out of Darkness*.) These two men are growing on the earth at the same time. There is a mass of humanity that is growing within them the antichrist spirit. I know this is hard for some to accept, but you can be a Christian, go to church, read your Bible, give a tithe to the church, be full of good works, and still be growing the antichrist within you. This antichrist is not always easy to identify. The Revelation calls this spirit **"MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH"** (Rev. 17:5). A mystery is not always easy to figure out. Babylon means confusion. I do not know of a more confused group of people of the earth today than the people of Christianity. This is not the fault of the people. Our leaders have taught us confusion for years. We have some of the most popular ministries of our day winning people to Jesus, telling them after they are saved to "Go to the church of your choice. If you want to be a Catholic go to the Catholic Church. If you want to be a Lutheran go to the Lutheran Church." *This is confusion!* God is redeeming people and calling them **out** of confusion, not bringing them to Him and putting them in it. Christians need to realize that antichrist can and is growing in the Christian system.

I am not against the Catholics, Lutherans, or any other people. I will go to a Catholic or any other church to minister to the people, but I will not and cannot support that ungodly antichrist system. That system is absolutely robbing God's people of their heritage. There are two mysteries in the book of The Revelation and

they are both growing at the same time. They are both growing within us, and one of them is going to overcome the other. This is why I say that the choices you make are very important. The choices that you make will either feed the antichrist carnal nature within you or will feed the spirit of the living God that is within you. People quote scriptures like **"I can do all things through Christ"** (Phi. 4:13). No you can't, if you are a carnal Christian. But if the Spirit of God begins to grow in you and begins to swallow up that carnal nature, then you can be like the Apostle Paul and say, "I can do all things through Christ." Please don't take a spiritual baby and put that burden on them when you yourself can't do it.

There are two men coming into maturity: Adam and Christ; the antichrist spirit and the Bride. We can be a part of the Bride. God is calling out a people in this present time for His end-time purpose. I understand the strong pull of the flesh. The flesh cannot perfect the flesh, but we can choose to seek the Lord for grace to help in overcoming the antichrist spirit. If you choose to do something, it doesn't mean that you necessarily have the ability to do it. You are just going to make the right choice. *Just start making the right choices.* If your flesh rises up and overcomes that choice, don't fall under condemnation. When a baby is learning how to walk and he falls, he doesn't just lay there and get discouraged and say, "I'm never going to try again." He just gets up and tries it again and again. This is what I call exercising your spirit. A natural baby keeps exercising his legs until he is able to stand and walk alone. If you will continue to make the right choices, looking away unto Jesus for your help, and keep exercising your spirit, eventually your spirit will become strong and you will grow into that "young man". **"I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one."**

We need Christians who understand these principles and can minister them to the Body and help them grow. It doesn't matter how many times we fall and miss the mark. Just keep making the right choices and keep seeking God until He grows in you. **"For he that cometh to God must believe that he is,**

***and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"*** (Heb. 11:6).

Anything in you that is saying no to God is antichrist. That could be anger, resentment, bitterness or anything else that is not godly. Some people think they have been good Christians all their lives, and then something happens that they don't understand, and they get mad at God. When you get angry with God, you have a serious problem and do not know the heart of your Father. You get angry with Him because of circumstances beyond your control. That is an antichrist spirit. We need Christians who will be honest with God and take responsibility for their actions. Just be honest and come to the light, don't run away from it.

### **God As You**

As little children, we realize that God is **to** us. As young men, we realize God is **in** us. Then we begin to experience God **as** us. All three of these stages are progressive. The Spirit of the Lord changes us from glory to glory. As a little child, we can experience something of the Father's reproducing life. Unlike natural babies, spiritual babies can reproduce spiritual babies. In fact, you can and will reproduce what you are. However, when you begin to mature and become a Father, you will be able to impart life to the babies that will help them grow into children, and then young men, and eventually, Fathers.

I can't tell you a whole lot about being a Father because I haven't experienced a lot, but I can tell you what it is. It is no longer just God to you or God in you, but it is God as you. This does not mean that your human carnal nature is God. This does not mean that Gary Sigler is God. What it means is that God's Spirit in my spirit has totally swallowed my carnal nature. I am now as He is. I and my Father are one. The Apostle Paul experienced this, he said, ***"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"*** (Gal. 2:20). This is what will produce the glorious Church. A group of

people who no longer live in themselves. Their carnal life has been swallowed up in the victorious, transcendent, resurrected life of Jesus Christ. It is no longer just God **in** His people but God **as** His people. I have experienced at times being so caught up in the Spirit of God that I have known that it was God appearing **as** me. That is what tabernacles is all about. ***"For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people"*** (2 Cor. 6:16). What a wonderful revelation, God **to** you, God **in** you and then God **as** you.

I feel I must clarify again that I am not speaking according to the natural. This natural person that I am, Gary Sigler, and the natural person that you are, is only good for one thing. He must decrease and go into death until he no longer rises up to take control. Whenever self rises up and says, "I am God," that is an abomination. You hear this in the New Age movement, people saying, "I am God." That is "THE ABOMINATION" spoken of by the prophet Daniel. Whenever self sits in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God, that is the abomination of desolation ***and that is the antichrist***. However, whenever the self is totally consumed by the Spirit of God, you can say it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. It is no longer just God **in** me but God **as** me, that is God's revelation and mystery revealed.

The antichrist spirit that controls your carnal nature has the ability to reproduce in your soul a counterfeit of what God wants to do through His Spirit in your spirit. Declaring yourself to be God is a counterfeit. We know there has to be a reality for that to be a counterfeit. The antichrist is not some man that is going to someday go sit in a temple in Jerusalem and declare himself as God. ***We are the temples of God***. Listen again, whenever your self, your carnal nature, sits in the temple of God and is ruling your life, that is the abomination of desolation that is saying no to God. That is the antichrist spirit sitting in the temple of God.

About ten years ago I was studying the antichrist and rapture doctrines. I was seeking

God about how we were to know this man called antichrist. God very clearly spoke to me and said, "YOU ARE THE ANTICHRIST." There may come a man someday who claims to be Christ. That has happened many times already. There are multitudes of Christians sitting around waiting for a man to come, thinking that the antichrist is all outside of themselves. This is a great deception. Paul warned the believers that in the last days (and according to the Word, we have been in the last days ever since the crucifixion of Jesus), **"some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils"** (1 Tim. 4:1). We have been seduced for years by Christianity. We have been taught that our problem is the devil, when all the time the devil was not our problem. We have been taught to fight spirits in the airwaves. We think the problem is with the government, or the coming antichrist, or any number of things. We were never taught that the problem was *not outside of us, but in us*. The real problem lies hidden within us. Our problem is not the environment, it's not who your parents are, the problem is *the heart of man*. The Word says, **"whenever the heart shall turn to the Lord the veils shall be taken away"** (2 Cor. 3:16). Why are the veils so dark and thick in America? Because most in Christianity are not seeking God and turning their hearts to Him. They are being religious and going to church and doing lots of activities, but very little seeking of His will for their lives. Don't deceive yourself into thinking you have a heart for God if you don't want to be conformed into His image, if you won't take some time out of your day to seek Him and to know Him. A lot of the condition of Christians is due to the confusion that is taught. If you have a heart for God and you don't understand that you need only to seek Him, that heart will get you into a lot of religious activity. You will be hungry for fellowship, so you may go to church and be taught ignorance. In the pulpits across America, you can go to church and learn ignorance.

### **An Example of Ignorance Being Taught**

I was listening to Christian radio the other day, and there was a pastor teaching ignorance. If I

mentioned his name, almost everyone would recognize him. He is one of the most listened to preachers on the radio today. He has a church of several thousand members in California. This man was saying that in the beginning the church was in so much darkness and sin was so prevailing that they needed Apostles and Prophets and the miracle-working power of God to get the church started. However, after John penned the last words in The Revelation, God's revelation was complete, the book was shut, and God no longer needed to perform miracles. He said, "Miracles passed away with the apostolic age." He said that the Apostles, Prophets and the gifts of the Spirit were no longer needed and they had passed away. This man is teaching his people ignorance and sowing darkness and blindness over their eyes so that they cannot experience the reality of God for themselves. There is no way those people, if they believe what their pastor is saying, could receive a message from God. He has cast a veil over them, so they cannot see the truth. This is why I say that Christianity is the deception, and the seducing spirits and doctrines of devils that keep people in darkness and bondage. You can go into Catholic churches, Pentecostal, Nazarene, Lutheran, Baptist or any other church and be taught ignorance that will keep you in darkness. WAKE UP, CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, AND SHAKE YOURSELF! **"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light"** (Eph. 5:14).

If you have a heart that only hungers after God, He said, **"Anyone who comes to me"** (not to the system of Christianity), **"I will in no wise cast out"** (John 6:37). All you have to do is say "God I want you and I want to know the truth." Ask Him to grant you a heart that seeks only Him. We need to drop all of religion and turn to Him for a fresh revelation that will give us hope and inspiration.

God to me—*little children*, God in me—*young men*, God as me—a *Father*. When we have these realities revealed in us we will be able to bring reconciliation and restoration to all of God's creation. When God fills us and saturates us and we become a Father, we

won't have to wonder what His will is, because we will become His perfect will on the earth.