

# Stand Tall

take your position

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Title

Stand Tall – take your position

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### **In all humility**

This is the starting place – in Adam we all died (1 Corinthians 15 : 22). His flesh was only able to bring forth flesh – only the Spirit of God can bring forth spirit. All\* humans that have or will come into being after Adam suffer Adam's fate – 'dying you will die.' We come into the world with our spirit living in a realm called death whilst our bodies live on until physical death. (\* Except Enoch, Elijah and believers who will be raptured in the future do not suffer physical death.)

Without being born of the Spirit we are nothing – even worse than nothing because unredeemed mankind is described by Jesus as being children of the devil. (John 8 : 44) [There is a logical path here – Satan deceived mankind leading to immediate spiritual death. Mankind has followed Satan instead of the Lord God. Man has then become flesh tainted by sin and can only pass on flesh of the same type. ]

We all come into the world as flesh tainted by sin with the need to be restored into fellowship with God.

## Chapter 2

### Abundant grace.

The Lord God absolutely loves mankind – undoubtedly way beyond our understanding! A way of dealing with sin and of restoration has to be found. The Lord God is also perfect judgement and the penalty of sin must be paid.

So abundant grace comes into play. First the Father's grace in sending (even allowing) His only Son to pay that penalty of sin. The Son's grace in accepting the role of Saviour and being willing to suffer in our place. The Spirit's grace in being willing to come and dwell inside our human spirit – even though that human spirit is carried around in a body and soul, which together the bible calls flesh.

It's a magnificent plan - Jesus comes, born of a virgin, and thus without the taint of sin passed down through Adam. He comes ready and prepared to be a sin offering, to pay the penalty required by perfect justice, even though He had no sin of His own.

#### Abundant grace is available

Believe it, it's true! 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned, but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.' (John 3 : 16-18)

God has prepared a way that perfect justice is done and satisfied, the price is paid by the sinless Son of God. Believe it - you are born again – your human spirit comes back from death to life. Fail to believe it and you remain only flesh with your human spirit dwelling in death.

Its pure grace. We do not deserve it and cannot earn it. We face the choice –to believe, understanding in all humility, it is the only way to enter the kingdom of heaven.

#### More and more

Born again – the human spirit is back to life and the Holy Spirit has come to reside therein. There is then a further deepening of the experience available as we seek to be filled and filled with the Holy Spirit. This continual filling of the Spirit is seen clearly in Acts. In chapter 2 we see the disciples receiving the Spirit with signs following – that is speaking in other languages. Then in Chapter 4 : 31 they are filled again. Paul in writing to the Ephesians (5 : 18) uses the continuous present when saying 'but be filled with the Spirit.' (That is keep on being filled – continuous)

There are some key points in being more and more filled with the Holy Spirit.

He, the Holy Spirit, is the Spirit of Truth - so He is most comfortable where there is an increasing knowledge and love of the truth. One of my favourite prayers - 'Holy Spirit lead me into all the truth, more and more.' Jesus said He, the Holy Spirit, would do this - so this prayer is directly in agreement with Jesus words and desires.

The Holy Spirit is Holy. So, again, He is most comfortable where holiness abounds. This is where we have to develop. Our bodies and our soul are living in the overlap of kingdoms. We have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light - that is totally complete for our human spirit but a work in progress for our body and soul. Hence Paul continually urging in his letters – 'put off the old, put on the new.' We have to make the choice to live in the new kingdom on a continuous basis. However, we need to understand that this is not totally straight forward as

the flesh (body and soul together) lust against the Spirit (Galatians 5 : 17). The antidote - Jesus said, 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.' That's another prayer opportunity! The plantation is described as being clean and pure – we can co-operate with the Holy Spirit as He changes us from one degree of glory to another.

My favourite prayer is 'Holy Spirit fill me with more love for Jesus.' As the first command is to love the Lord your God with all your heart (human spirit and human soul), all your soul and all your mind.' He, the Holy Spirit, is very happy to answer. It's also good to note here that the scripture zooms in on the mind. It starts with the big picture, heart, then focuses to the soul, which scripturally is part of the heart, and then focuses in closer still to the mind (which is part of the human soul.) Why focus on the mind - because 'agape' love is 'love by choice,' God so loved the world He (chose) to send His Son. So too we choose to love the Lord and that choice is made in the mind. Hence the way Paul urges to renew our minds and to take thoughts captive unto Jesus. (Romans 12 : 1-2 and 2 Corinthians 10 : 5) Here the scripture is giving us one of the tools to be able to fulfil all holiness.

So we have established God's abundant grace has saved us and filled us with the Holy Spirit. At the same time we are shown we have a part to play that could be summed as 'Co-operate with the Holy Spirit who is in the process of changing you from one degree of glory to another.' (2 Corinthians 3 : 18)

## **Chapter 3**

## **Stand Tall.**

### **So know who you are!**

A precious, loved and wonderfully created son of the Living God, deemed worthy through the saving work of Jesus Christ to receive an inheritance - a place prepared for you in heaven. (John 14 : 1-3 and 1 Peter 1 : 3-5)

### **Guaranteed**

Your eternal reward is guaranteed - Ephesians 1 : 4-11, 2 Corinthians 1 : 22, and 5 : 5. Who gives the guarantee – why God Himself . How do we know? - He has sealed us with the Holy Spirit.

Can anything break the guarantee He has given? Absolutely not. Paul makes this very clear in the letter to the Romans 8 : 35-9. No created thing (that would include ourselves) can overpower the guarantee God has given.

It is necessary to remember our three parts - body, soul and spirit ( 1 Thessalonians 5 : 23). Our human spirit is indwelt by the Holy Spirit – with the promise ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So even though our body and our souls may dwell in sin or even in unbelief, once born again we are born again and our eternal spiritual destiny assured. Hence the very frequent teaching in the New testament in particular – be holy for I am holy, put off the old way and put on the new, run the race with perseverance, because in this earthbound life there are tribulations and temptations. We are exhorted to have our body and soul live in accordance with a high standard of righteousness. None of us will completely succeed this side of heaven itself, but repentance sets us right again to carry on.

### **Do not grieve the Holy Spirit.**

Who are you? A wonderful spirit filled creation of God housed in an earthly container. So it is possible for you to live in two dimensions - the earthbound dimension and the spiritual dimension. Not that we should try to separate them because for our life on earth they are entwined. However, we are called to recognise and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in this earthbound existence. Taking no notice of His guidance and living in and following the leading of our own desires and thinking, however good they may appear, will grieve the Holy Spirit because that is sin (sin defined as ‘missing the mark.’)

### **Stand Tall**

To be able to ‘stand tall’ means being able to look Jesus in the eye with all humility, knowing He has paid the price for us and that we are not just acceptable to Him but we are being prepared as His beloved bride. It means being able to speak to the Lord freely because we know His great love for us. Unlike Adam and Eve, we have no reason to hide away.

However, we won’t be able to come boldly to Him if we are following our own desires, living our lives without reference to Him and missing His unique place for each one of us.

Ceasing from our own works is one essential element in being able to stand tall. We will never get credit from God for our works, done in our own strength, however good they seem to be. It is essential to cease from our own works. The letter to the Hebrews makes this clear in chapter 4 : 11-16 followed by an exciting conclusion -

'Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.' There is more .....

'For if by one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.'  
Romans 5 : 17

### **Called to reign in life.**

In this life we can reign over our circumstances. It will mean being led by the Holy Spirit with words of wisdom, discernment and words of knowledge. It will mean being strengthened to persevere whilst His purposes are being worked out. It will mean taking authority over the works of the enemy to change circumstances for ourselves and for others. It will mean our human body being quickened by the Holy Spirit. It will mean being strengthened in our inner man.

### **Fall down - stand up.**

We are human, in weak vessels. We are likely to fall from time to time. We can think we are rejected because of our failure and the enemy of our souls would like us to think that in order to render us useless in the Kingdom. But God does not think like that at all.

'For if we died with Him we shall also live with Him. If we endure (literally - stay in place) we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him He will also deny us. If we are faithless He remains faithful because He cannot deny Himself. ( 2 Timothy 2 : 11-13) There is always the way back because He remains faithful. Ultimately He cannot cast us off even if we are faithless because He cannot deny Himself - and His Holy Spirit now dwells within. So if we fall down, and we all do sometimes, then we repent (turn away from sin), know we are forgiven, know the price has been paid, and thankfully come again to the throne of grace.

### **Then stand tall**

Know this - He is for you and not against you. He has good plans for you, to give you a future and a hope. His love abounds towards you and He invites you to come to Him as His beloved son.

Let's pray with Paul ...

'For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height – to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations.' Ephesians 3 : 14-21

Exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think! According to the power that works in us?

Yes - Paul has already described His power towards us earlier, Paul prays .....

'that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power towards us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him

at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.' 1 : 17-21

### **Extremes**

God's provision is not just enough – it's extreme. God's love for you is extreme. His power toward you is extreme. This is a wonderful inheritance to come into and experience more and more as we set our heart towards Him - so, yes, STAND TALL!

## **Chapter 4**

### **Take your position**

Each and every one has a calling from God for His purposes for them. This concept is seen in Ephesians 2 : 10 where the word of God says, 'For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in Him.'

We see many business people fall short because they want to be church pastors, as if that is a higher calling and that they would then feel more justified. This is a grievous error. The calling to be in business is just as valid as any other calling in God. What is vitally important is that we, each one, understand from Him what He has prepared for me – and then to walk in that calling.

#### **Not always easy**

Finding our calling is not always easy or straight forward. However, there is some clear guidance in scripture. Romans 7 puts forward a principle – 'Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.' When I first believed, I was a trainee accountant. All my working life (apart from a couple of side tracks) I have been an accountant. At work, I have seen people saved, I have seen people healed, I have seen businesses receive miracle funding – because these are part of the good works God had prepared for me to walk in.

So the basic 'rule' is stay as you are when you first believed. Let the Holy Spirit guide you – not circumstances, not opportunities, not other people – but Him because His plans are the best.

For some people, the basic 'rule' won't apply – for example, someone born again whilst at school or college cannot remain a student for the rest of life. So here we should seek the Lord for guidance. That is spiritual guidance – one of the promises of Jesus is that the Holy Spirit will take His words and reveal them to us.

#### **Right place**

Being in the right place is essential for the body to function properly. In 1 Corinthians 12 : 18 we see that God sets the members in the body as He pleases – that is calling. In the same passage, the argument is expanded - 'if the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be?' Every member is vital to the proper function of the whole. Maybe God has designed you to be a foot – a vital function. It would be no good then positioning yourself and trying to act like an eye! It would clearly look stupid and be stupid.

#### **Have the heart of a servant**

Calling is where we serve God. He has prepared everything and wants His purposes worked out amongst us - so he appoints, calls, each one individually to serve in a particular way. Being a servant means doing the will of the Master – nothing more and nothing less. It is submission to the will of God. The wonderful thing is that God knows all about it and has plans to give us a future and a hope - His plans for us are good. So we can conclude, 'I want the very best out of life, God has prepared the very best for me, therefore I will happily serve Him in the calling He has allotted to me.'

#### **In an imperfect world**

It all sounds wonderful and it is. However, in this world there are three enemies trying to rob and to kill and to destroy. First our own flesh lusts against the Spirit, then the unbelieving world is set against us and finally we do have an enemy who prowls around seeking who he can devour. (1 Peter 5 : 8)

Our own flesh - When the scripture uses the word flesh it is describing the state into which we were born - that is a functioning physical body and soul (mind, will and emotions.) These components come into the world already pre-disposed to sin because of Adam. There are many references to flesh - it cannot justify even by keeping the law - it is weak and is aroused by sinful passions - in our flesh nothing good dwells. If we live according to the flesh we will set our minds on the things of the flesh. Paul puts it like this 'O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Then I thank God - through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

The world - 'Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ' Colossians 2 : 8. We are not of this world once we are born again - Jesus said that in John 17 : 16 and so we should not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God. (Romans 12 : 2)

The enemy - 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.' 1 Peter 5 : 8

### **Overcomers**

It can seem that the odds are stacked against us and no one should think it's all easy going in this life. However, we are assured that we win out - 'For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.'" 1 John 5 : 4-5

Our human spirit is brought to birth by God when we believe in Jesus we are born again, born of God. We know also that the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our born again human spirit. Even when and if we fail in the flesh, and make the wrong choices, nevertheless we are still overcomers - we are still eternally secure.

### **Be prepared - take your position**

God has designed you for His specific purpose. It's time to follow Him in the good works He has prepared beforehand for you. Be prepared - know you are His, wonderfully saved, wonderfully indwelt by the Spirit of God. Stand tall in the knowledge of the truth. Hunger and thirst for personal righteousness - you will be filled. Be ready - Jesus said we would do greater works than He did - it's the very same Holy Spirit dwelling in us as led Jesus through His earthly life, works and miracles.

Take your position in the plantation, ready to stand tall, ready to serve, ready to overcome.

## Chapter 5

### Accept responsibility

Accept the mantle God gives you. He knows you through and through. He knows what is best for you. When God calls you to something specific it may seem daunting and even impossible but to Him nothing is impossible. If He calls He will equip.

This is the point - God does not expect us to be able to do the things He calls us to. He expects us to be obedient to the call and to rely on His abundant grace to fulfil things through us as we rely on the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Our first part is to accept the call. In the Old Testament we have the example of Moses, called by God to play his part in the release of God's people from Egypt. Moses was full of doubts and uncertainty so the Lord put Aaron alongside him in a speaking and prophetic role.

It's all right to be strengthened by those around us. It's alright to feel small in relation to the calling and the tasks. Moses was like that, nevertheless he obeyed and went, utterly reliant on God to show up with signs and wonders, and He did, of course! ..... and He will of course.

So just as Moses, maybe reluctantly and warily, accepted the mantle God gave him, so we are to accept the mantle He gives us. It may seem small or of no consequence, it may seem huge and impossible, it may seem dangerous. Whatever, our role is obedience because God is our Master and He is working out His plans and we are privileged to be used in His plans however big or small the role He allots to us.

#### Accepting responsibility – marriage as an example

Christian marriage is under much attack from the enemy and from the philosophy of the world. So it's an important area for us to accept responsibility and therefore a good example of what accepting responsibility can mean.

For the husband – you are the head of the wife and the family. Take your position. Accept the responsibility of headship, lead and guide, protect and provide. At the same time, your position is worked out by laying down your life for your bride. This is actually very important - your marriage is a picture of Jesus and His bride. He laid down His life for His bride - you must do the same - not in the same way, of course, but in continual expression of the same love. Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church. You have a role to 'wash your bride with the water of the word.' This is the 'rhema' word, that word which the Holy Spirit quickens to you coming from Jesus for your wife.

For the wife – submit to your husband. ('Submit' here is a military term meaning 'rank under.' This is in terms of role, not in terms of being in any way inferior – you are not. Just a different job.) It's important because it pictures Christ and His church – the church submits to Jesus, wives submit to your husband.

Because Christian marriage pictures Jesus and His bride, it comes under so much pressure and attack. The pressure comes from within when either party does not wholeheartedly fulfil their role and from the world that wants to destroy it because it is a sweet aroma to Jesus but the stink of death to the world. The attack also comes from our enemy who hates Christians. His onslaught can come through temptation, through financial failure, through philosophy and through people.

Husbands and wives accept responsibility - don't 'kick against the goads.' (See Acts 9:5 this phrase is used of Saul persecuting Jesus as he was on the road to Damascus.)

God will be with you in your marriage because it is important to Him. In particular husbands apply one of my frequent prayers, 'Lord fill me with love for Marion, more and more and more.' (Marion being my wife – enter your spouse's name.)

### **Apply to you role**

We have seen that taking responsibility is vital in marriage. It's just as vital in our calling and in everything God calls us to do. This is why it is so important to understand the will of God for us individually. God wants us to stand. He wants us to take responsibility. He will be there for us, with angelic assistance, with signs and wonders, with wisdom, with everything we need as we walk by the Spirit.

You are the only one who can take responsibility for the role God has given you – it is important. As you do so and follow the leading and guidance of the Spirit, it will also be fulfilling.

Accept responsibility for your role in the plantation. Seek the Holy Spirit's guidance to know your position and for continual help to fulfil it.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Working it out.**

In the world people are expected to be big and brave and strong – making their way by their strength and effort, having great influence and power.

In the Kingdom it is very different. Our King, the Lord Jesus Christ, has the name above every name – He is mighty beyond our understanding. However we are urged, ‘work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.’  
Philippians 2 : 12-3.

Paul, amongst the Corinthian church, in his first letter (chapter 2 : 1-5) describes how he came to them – not with excellence of speech or wisdom, but in weakness and fear and trembling. His words were not persuasive words of human wisdom but they were in demonstration of the Spirit of power so that the Corinthians faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Equally, Paul reports that the Corinthian church received Titus with fear and trembling. (2 Corinthians 7 : 15)

### **The awe of God**

What then can we conclude? Where the Spirit of the Lord is at work there is the awe of God. That is the way it should be. Before the Lord our God we are mere humans, with nothing to offer Him except love and obedience. It seems a small thing, nevertheless it is exactly what He wants of us. He does not want our good ideas, our strength in any type of performance. The Lord Jesus Christ wants us to be co-workers with Him.

Again Paul reports, ‘He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the gentiles.’ (Galatians 2 : 8.) Who is doing the work - the Holy Spirit does the work - our role is obedience and He will use us as His co-workers.

### **Ceasing from our own works.**

So we come to the main principle we are expected to adopt, it is found in Hebrews 4. The writer establishes the principle that God rested on the seventh day and expected His people to enter into rest with Him. The Israelites failed to enter into that rest, but rather they sought justification by their own works, which the writer describes as disobedience. The writer continues - ‘there remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has ceased from his own works as God did from His.’

### **So there it is - there is a rest for us.**

‘Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest less anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.’ It’s not just a rest – it is the provision of God Almighty for His people. It is a place of safety. It is not something to take lightly - the Lord God wants us to enter His rest – if we fail to enter we are falling short – it is sin!

### **Soul and spirit, joints and marrow.**

Here the scripture gives an example of what rest means. It is not an easy example - it needs some explaining to be able to understand it.

‘The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword.’ Word here is ‘logos’ which has the meaning of the full revelation of truth, as seen in Jesus who is called the word in John 1.

So the whole truth is a very sharp instrument indeed. It divides between soul and spirit and joints and marrow. So let's unwrap the meaning –

Soul is being likened to joints and spirit is being likened to marrow. The human soul we know to be the mind, the will and the emotions. The human spirit we know to be that part of us, made in the image of God that entered the world dwelling in death and was born again when we first believed in Jesus as our Saviour and is since then indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

The human soul is likened to joints - joints are where we see activity, we see movement. It can look very impressive. It can look like achievement.

The human spirit is where the Holy Spirit dwells. The human spirit is filled with all truth in the person of the Holy Spirit. Real life, real achievement, flows from there as we are led by the Holy Spirit.

The spirit is likened to marrow - marrow is where the main constituents of blood are manufactured. The new red and white blood cells and the platelets are fed into the back of the joints through haversian canals. The scripture states that 'the life is in the blood.'

So the picture is that of human based activity – joints only, compared to spirit based activity where the life has been made in the marrow and from there activated the joints. Spirit filled and Spirit fuelled activity.

It seems a bit complex but actually the meaning is simple – activity which finds the human soul its source is just that - human activity as opposed to rest. Activity which is fuelled by the spirit is what the Lord wants because the Holy Spirit is the source. We are at rest from our own works and obediently walking in the Spirit.

### **No condemnation.**

'There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.' (Romans 8 : 1)

This verse is often mis-quoted because the second half, the condition, is omitted. We cannot find peace, we cannot enjoy freedom from feelings of condemnation when we walk according to the flesh. So the call is to walk according to the Spirit and in accordance with all truth.

We can work out our calling – we can stand tall and we can take responsibility when we rest from our own works.

The plantation is a place of resting from one's own works and obediently flowing with the Spirit in His works.

## **Chapter 7**

### **'By My Spirit'**

We are probably familiar with the verse from Zechariah – 'not by might, nor by power but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.' 4 : 6

Zechariah was a prophet in Israel about 500 years before Christ and he was prophesying to the builders of the temple in Jerusalem. In the time before Jesus came, the Holy Spirit would bring new birth to those who placed their trust in the Messiah to come and would manifest in various ways – including healing, prophesy and miracles. But He did not indwell humans until after Jesus had risen. John 7 : 39 confirms this and John 14 : 17 shows the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is still future when Jesus spoke at that time.

John 20 : 22 – the risen Jesus breathes on them and in command mode says, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'

So, if in the Old Testament the work of the Lord was to be done in the power of the Spirit, how much more, now that we have the Spirit indwelling, we should be operating in His power.

We need to avoid a tendency, seen in some places, where we seem to commit our way and ask the Holy Spirit to guide us only to proceed without any further reference or obvious guidance from Him.

#### **Another one like Jesus.**

When Jesus rose and went to the Father in heaven, His promise was to send another Helper. One to come alongside. The Greek in the scripture uses 'another of the same type' rather than the alternative 'another of a different type.' The Holy Spirit is just like Jesus to us and He dwells within. Hence Jesus says that He and the Father will come and make their home with us – this is fulfilled by the Holy Spirit. (The Godhead is so intimately intertwined that Jesus could say to His disciples - 'If you have seen Me you have seen the Father.')

#### **Discerning the will of God.**

How do we come to know the will of God? On a general level the scripture gives lots of guidelines, with lots of teaching about righteous living and the way we interact with each other – that is all to the good.

On a specific level we need and want to know His particular calling for me. In Romans 12 : 1-2 we find some clear instruction, 'I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.'

First – we set our wills to follow Him

Then – we adjust our behaviour to become more and more holy in our ways. Repentance and seeking the Spirit to change us is par for the course. We cannot achieve it ourselves - rather as we co-operate with the Spirit He changes us from one degree of glory to another.

Then – stop thinking the way the world thinks. This is not as easy as it sounds because we live in the world and we live and operate within the world system. However, we are servants of the living God and we are not bound by the way the world does things. We serve a living God who through His Spirit and through angels, which are ministering spirits, we, by following the leading of the Spirit rise above and beyond the ways of the world. Because He can do exceedingly more than we can ask or think, according to the power that works in us. (Ephesians 3 : 20)

## **In close fellowship**

So a close friendship with the Holy Spirit, in which we hear His voice and choose to follow His leading and guidance, is required. [In this series there is a booklet 'Hearing God speak' which details some of the ways God will speak to us.] It takes time to adjust from our normal 'fleshly' way of operating to learn to listen and to learn to recognise Him when He speaks to us. It also requires us to choose obedience.

The Holy Spirit can be grieved – Paul expresses this in Ephesians 4 : 17-30. Put off the old way - the way of futility of your own mind, the old ways of lust, greediness, lying, corrupt speech, uncleanness, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking. These things grieve the Holy Spirit within. Put on the new – walk in love, walk in light, walk in wisdom.

We can choose what we allow to settle in our thinking. We cannot stop thoughts arising but we can choose to accept or reject them. We are urged to dismiss all futile thoughts. We can focus our thinking on Jesus, on scripture, on the Holy Spirit, on goodness.

James advises us to avoid friendship with the world and its ways of doing things because if we make ourselves friends of the world we become enemies of God. (Chapter 4 : 4)

The more our thinking is centred on Him the closer our relationship with the Holy Spirit becomes and the easier it becomes to recognise Him speaking and the more frequently we experience it.

Then in our walk on earth we can readily come to the throne of grace in prayer and seek His strategy. This is particularly important when the world, or others, or the enemy or circumstances come against us. He has the answer. We don't have to try to work it out ourselves – indeed we shouldn't. We reign in life by receiving the abundance of His grace not by our own efforts.

The plantation is brought into being by the Spirit of God. His plan for our safety.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Don't take the credit**

As we learn to flow in the Holy Spirit we will be a great blessing to those around us. There will be life changing events. There will be miracles. This is what the plantation is for - it's a place of safety where the tall trees and the bushes have great power.

#### **Humility is required**

Watch out - it's easy to become proud – and then it will all go wrong because God sets Himself against the proud. Anything you accomplish through the Spirit of God is not your work it is His work through you. There is no credit to you other than the simple obedience. You could not accomplish it but He could through you.

#### **Lion and lamb.**

Jesus is the perfect picture. He is mighty, He is the Lion of Judah. He created the world we live in and upholds it day by day. When a cohort of troops was sent to arrest Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane they couldn't even stand up when Jesus declared who He was – they all fell to the ground! When we flow in the Spirit we too can manifest the attributes of the lion of Judah.

Jesus is the lamb. The sacrificial offering to pay the penalty of our sins. The lamb that goes willingly to His death. The lamb that cares. The lamb that calls children to Himself. The gentle and loving one who does not want anyone to perish. The one moved to tears by the death of His friend even though He knows he will raise him from the dead. The one with compassion for the lame, the sick, the blind and the demon possessed. When we flow with the Spirit we too can manifest the same compassion.

Jesus humility led Him to accept death on the cross for you and for me.

#### **Be humble**

'God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.' James 4 : 6

'Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.' James 4 : 10

When it all falls into place in our thinking we realise that, of ourselves, we have nothing to offer – no reason to be proud. When we walk in the Spirit there is no limit to what may be achieved.

So the call is to humbly walk in the Spirit and see the mighty works of God manifest.

The plantation will be a fellowship of likeminded believers who know their position, accept responsibility, don't work out of their own ambition or their own strength but humbly serve the Lord and each other as led by the Spirit of God.

