



The Planter

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EXERCISING THE CHRIST MIND

(Philippians 2:5-11)

by Stacy R. Wood, Jr.

People often talk of the sovereign God. They speak of God doing everything by and for himself. No one has to do anything for him, because he is Sovereign. However, there are two words that need to be considered to balance humanity's view of the sovereignty of God. One of these words is "YIELD" and the other is "LET." A thorough search of the scripture, for these two words, brings out a clear understanding of what is meant by "God is sovereign." The diligent student learns there is participation, a *letting* and a *yielding*, of the individual that makes us a part of the sovereign happening of God.

The apostle Paul wrote, "You are not your own, for you are bought with a price." (1Co. 6:19-20). This shows ownership or possession, but we need to understand that God's possessing us, does not signify that he controls us without giving us any 'say so' or choice in what happens. We who are possessed by the Lord are "SERVANTS." That word servant actually means "BOND-SLAVE," which is one who has given their life into slavery because of the love they have for the Master. (Ex. 21:1-6). We were liberated from slavery to sin and death at the Cross. (Ro. 3:23, 5:12, 8:20; Gal. 3:22). That is, while we were incapable of changing from our godless sinful ways God demonstrated his love for us through Jesus Christ. (John 3:16; Ro. 5:6-8). Thus, we voluntarily offered our ear upon the door post of God's house and said, "I want to be your slave. You are a good Master. You have taken good care of me. You have paid my debt in full, taken care of my housing, taken care of my food and you have taken care of every thing, there is nothing I lack. I do not want freedom to go out on my own. Now that I am free from the power and effect of sin, I want to be a slave to your righteousness." Now that is a glorious thought. Yes, we are his slaves, but not slaves in the sense that he makes us do anything. What he does is to love us so much that we respond to his love. We *LET* our self, or *YIELD* our self to him as his instrument, that is, as his servant.

We can plainly see there is an attitude of heart that must be in every vessel that God uses for his glory. Paul tells us what this attitude is. He wrote, "LET this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." (Phil. 2:5). This is the Christ attitude that is in each of God's children. We just need to *let* it become our attitude.

Now, how many *really* believe they have the mind of Christ? This understanding needs to be settled and secure within us. We must comprehend that we are not looking for the mind of Christ to come someday, but we possess the mind of Christ in *this* hour. If there is *any* doubt read what Paul says, "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him **BUT WE HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST.**" (1Co. 2:16). The word "have," that is use here, is a possessive verb. It is not saying, you might *someday* have the mind of Christ, if you behave yourself. Neither is it saying, If you are good enough you will get the mind of Christ. He has made a final or definitive statement here. To the believer he simply says, "You **HAVE**, or you **POSSES**, the mind of Christ." Now, exactly to what is this referring? If we go back into the Old Testament and find where Paul drew the first part of his statement, "for who has known the mind of the Lord." We will discover he was quoting Isaiah, who said, "For who has known **THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD** and who has been his advisor?" (Isa. 40:13-14). It is here that we discover a link between God's Spirit and the mind of God, the Spirit of Christ and the mind of Christ. Now, let us tie this together so it becomes very clear. At the beginning of this context, Paul again quotes from the Book of Isaiah. He says, "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard neither has it entered into the heart of men the things which God has prepared for them that love him, **BUT** (exception)

God revealed to us through his Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.” (Isa. 64:4; 1Co. 2:9-10). This is what Paul is saying, before we received the Spirit of God into our lives, our eye and our ear had not seen and had not heard what God had prepared. But since the Holy Spirit has taken up residence within our life, our eye now sees, our ear now hears. The very thing that God has prepared for them that love him is being engraved upon our heart. The Spirit within us searches out the very depths or profundity of God. It reaches into the wealth of his riches and his judgements.

As we follow Paul’s use of Isaiah’s question, “*who has known the mind of the Lord,*” we find he uses it again in Romans. (Ro. 11:33-36). However, in the letter to Corinth, Paul enables us to understand that when we received the Spirit of the Lord we actually received the mind of Christ. If you have received Holy Spirit since you believed, then you have the mind of Christ. The mind of Christ contains ALL knowledge, ALL wisdom and ALL understanding. Thus, we can say that we *have* ALL knowledge, ALL wisdom and ALL understanding. After all, does Christ lack any knowledge, wisdom or understanding? But now, let us get real.

How many recognize a person can have a mind or an intelligence and not use it? How many have ever said to someone else, (we almost never say it to ourselves), “*What is wrong with you? Why don’t you use your head?*” I want you to know Father is saying to every one of his sons in this hour, “*What is wrong with you my children? Why do you not use your head? Why do you not use the mind that I gave to you?*” You see, the reality is, we most often think from the bottom of our mind. That is, we think from the *psuche*’ or from the soul. When we get into the natural realm and relate to natural things and we think out of the natural mind, trying to comprehend God who is Spirit.

However, the soulish person does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1Co. 2:14).

God has given us a spiritual mind. He gave us the very mind of Christ, which is the mind of Spirit. No longer are we to compare the spiritual to the natural or natural things to spiritual. With this mind we can learn, according to the Spirit Christ, TO compare spiritual things with spiritual. (1Co. 2:13). That is, we need to interpret, or decipher using our Christ mind. We have it, now let us learn to use it.

Let us get back to Paul’s writing to Philippi. He said, “*Let this MIND be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,*” (Phil. 2:5). He establishes that using the mind of Christ is hinging upon one thing, “**LET THIS MIND BE!**” That is all it takes. Other English words for “*let*” would be give way to, allow or **EXERCISE**. Paul is not saying, “Bring this mind into you.” He is simply saying, “**LET** this mind have place.” “**LET** this thinking be in you.” The Greek used in Philippians for *mind* is a word that means we need to actually use *our* thinking or opinion, just as Jesus used his. That is, “*Exercise the thinking that is in you which was also in Christ Jesus.*” You see, there is a definite pattern of thinking that is necessary to become the manifestation of the mind and presence of Christ that abides in us.

We understand that this is a time when God is working in the minds of men. He is changing our thinking. He is renovating our thinking and renewing our soul. (Psa. 23:3). That is, it is not the Christ mind that is being renewed, but the soulish mind. He is bringing the long awaited union or marriage between *psuche*’ or soul, and the Spirit. Yes, there is a renewal coming to the soul so she can flow in agreement with the Spirit of Christ. There is a renewal, but in order for that to happen, we have to cease *letting psuche*’, the soul, which includes our intellect, will, resolve, intuitiveness, suspicions, talent and emotions, and start *letting* Christ.

We must **LET** the mind of Christ **BE** the predominant mind in us. Sometimes the *psuchikos* or soulish thinking does not like the mind of Christ being dominate in the house. The truth of the matter is, many believers would rather think with the soulish mind, because she makes one feel like something. She has a proud heart. Moreover, I am convinced much of the thinking of ministry comes from the *psuche*’ in this hour in an attempt to change the thinking of the saints. The evidence of this is because of what it does. *Psuche*’ thinking causes lofty, high-minded vision and thinking. It can also create a focus on material possessions. The reality is, when God brings a word to you, when the mind of Christ speaks to you, *IF* you receive it with the soul mind, it is most often turned around to make you can think you are something when you are not.

Paul warns us to not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. (Rom. 12:3). However, the *psuche*’ enjoys thinking more highly of itself than she ought to think. She enjoys it when someone tells her that she is ‘*all right,*’ there is nothing wrong with her, because she is ‘*perfect,*’ and ‘*everything*’ she does is good. The soul loves to be flattered in this way. However, let someone say, “*You can use some improvement. You must turn from your ways and have a change of thinking, a change of heart.*” Immediately *psuche*’ raises up in defense. It is always the soul that rises up in defense and justifies itself. It might say, “*Wait a minute. This is negative and cannot be the truth.*”

The soul is about the most religious lady that you know. In the book of Revelation she is called Babylon, Mystery Babylon, Mother of Harlots. She has all kinds of daughters and each one has birthed out of her religious thinking. Let us go back and look at Jesus and see how he ministered to the soulish religious minds of his day. If we observe him, as he confronted the religious *psuche*' mind of his day, we will notice his approach was much harsher than when he spoke to those who were sinners and recognized their state of being. He called the religious leadership "*Vipers! Snakes! White washed sepulchers, full of dead man's bones.*" (Mat. 23). He also told them they were of their father the devil. (John 8:44). Yet, Jesus told his disciples to give them recognition and respect, because they occupied the "*seat of Moses.*" (Mat. 23:2). That is, they acknowledged and valued the last great move of God and in their understanding they were "*biblically correct*" and "*the chosen seed of God.*" However, to these scholarly teachers of the law he said, "*You search the Scriptures, because you suppose that in them you will find the Life of the Ages. And it is those Scriptures that yield testimony concerning me. Yet you are unwilling to come to me that you may have Life.*" (John 5:39-40).

When this kind of teaching is heard by those, who consider themselves to be sons of God, in this day, many respond, "*Our God, does not speak to us that way.*" "*He would not speak to us that way.*" "*He wants us to know we are sons, we are more than conquerors.*" "*We are good people.*" However, the mind of Christ can take the negative as constructive criticism. The mind of Christ immediately grips what is said and responds, "*Lord search my heart and try my reigns and know my way.*" "*If there be any wicked way in me find it, reveal it, change it.*" (Psa. 139:23-24; Jer. 17:10). While the the *psuche*' mind says, "*You should not talk to me that way. I am a son of God. I am the most high. I am God. I am Christ. . .*"

Let this thinking be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Jesus recognized his true inward identity was the form or character of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Notice. It is not robbery to be equal with God, based on the essence of the inward nature of God. God's character, and likewise the nature of the believer, is based upon being spirit. (John 3:6, 4:24). Being spirit, by nature, is not a reference to invisibleness, but it points to the very root of a God like character. Light, which God is and so are we, speaks again of the true nature of God, and light speaks of illumination and manifestation. This means there is absolutely no darkness, dimness, or obscurity at all in a godly character. (Jam. 1:16-18). Spirit and Light speak to us of the manifest attitude that is seen in the life of the believer. (Mat. 5:14; Phil.2:15; 1Jo. 1:5). Thus, equality with God is manifest through an attitude of love, affection and benevolence that exhibits no partiality. Moreover, since God is one and by nature we are as he is in this world, our life will demonstrate integrity and trustworthiness, along with complete dependability and peace. There will not be disorder, instability or confusion. (Ac. 10:34; 1Co. 1:9, 10:13, 14:33; 2Co. 1:18; Gal. 3:20; 1Jo. 1:7, 3:3, 7, 4:8, 16-17).

Thus being the true character, or nature, of those who are exercising the mind of Christ, it is time to look at the next dimension of correct thinking. We are told that Christ Jesus made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. (Phi 2:5-7).

The nature of the person God chooses for his purposes is different from the *norm* of human expectation. God's requirements often appear to be less than the standards many humans set for the servants or sons of God. Most often the law becomes the standard by which everything is measured. However, the law can never produce righteousness that pleases God because its primary purpose was to expose and magnify sin. (Rom. 3:20, 7:7-9, 8:2-3; 1Co. 15:56). Moreover, Christ is the termination of Law to every believer. (Rom. 10:4).

What are the criterion and function of the true Christ mind? Let us look at Paul for the answer to this question. We will see how he kept a balanced life with the mind of Christ. According to the custom and requirement of the pharisaical system Paul had blamelessly and without faults kept the law. He had perfectly attained his religious goal through his own efforts. Yet, he counted all he had gained through his Israelite heritage and religious pharisaical training, as detriment and disadvantage to his Christ life. He gave all of his former life and training a common value and said it was equal to the scraps or refuse left from a meal and thrown to the dogs. That is, all that was considered gain, or advantage, actually was only dog food. Accounting his former life a detriment, he abandoned it for the surpassing worth and supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus the Lord. Paul no longer wanted to be found in his "*own righteousness*" which is attributed by the keeping of the law, but desired the righteousness of God that is through the faith of Christ. His determined purpose was to know Christ intimately and completely. Likewise, he longed to understand the outflowing power of his resurrection. He also wanted to understand the joint participation of Christ's sufferings receiving the same form as his death. All of this in hope of somehow coming to the resurrection

which lifts out from among the dead even while he was in the body. (Phil. 3:1-11).

Did you know Paul considered himself among the perfect of his generation? (1Co. 2:6; Phil. 3:15). Yet, he did not consider himself having reached the finish of his race. Paul continued pursuing Christ in hopes of grasping hold of that for which he also was taken hold of through Christ Jesus. What could have possibly gripped Paul's life beyond what he was yet able to manifest? He clearly recognized there was something more provided in the Gospel to be manifested. What was the *GOAL* set before this apostle? He told Timothy that God saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus, before the times of the ages. This was now made *manifest* through the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus indeed abolished death by his death, and through his resurrection he *enlightened, shined the light upon, life and immortality*. (Rom. 8:23; Phil. 3:11; 2Ti. 1:9-11). Life and immortality had not been manifested and Paul believed he was to continue pressing toward the *manifestation of the life and immortality*. He believed this was a part of the word of God that was given him to complete when the Lord captured his life on the road to Damascus life. (Ac. 9). He went on in Philippians to say, "*My brothers, I do not count myself to have taken possession, but one thing I do, forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*" Then he admonishes those who were perfect in his generation. He says, "**LET US** therefore, **AS MANY AS BE PERFECT**, be of this mind." (Phil.3:12-15).

What did he say? Notice. Paul does not say let, as many of you *THAT ARE* perfect. He says, "*Let as many of US THAT BE perfect.*" The word perfect used in this passage means **MATURE**. Jesus taught his followers to be perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect. This perfection or maturity is manifested in love without discrimination. (Mat. 5:43-48). The writer of the book of Hebrews said, "*Let us go on to perfection.*" (Heb. 6:1). Paul's goal in ministering was "present everyone perfect in Christ Jesus." (Col. 1:28). God has called all believers to perfection, or maturity, Paul shows us it is okay to recognize our maturity.

Let us go back to Philippians chapter two and see what is the basis on which we can recognize our maturity. Paul says, "*Let this mind, thinking be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*" This is first line of thinking in the mind of Christ and the beginning of letting the mind of the Christ be in us. This scripture is the first time we find that it is not robbery for us to be in complete union and on an equal foundation with God. If this thinking bothers you, I want you to know to reach the goal it is necessary to *let* this thinking be in you. This is the first step in thinking like Jesus. Jesus knew that it was not robbery to be one with God. It was not robbery to be equal with God, and this was part of the salvation he came to reveal to humanity. (John 14:6-11, 20). The word **EQUAL** is easily understood in this sense, I have a son and my son is equal with me. The reality is my son is not me but my son in equal with me. My son is my heir.

A good example of this is found in the Hebrew law. It was such that the oldest son became the one who inherited the entirety of the estate. The oldest son ran the estate, yet the father still had the final say in everything. Father was also a partaker of all the benefits. The son was equal to his father, but was not the father, and that is what we are seeing here. Since we are God's children, then we are heirs. Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. (Rom. 8:17). We are equal to our Father. But he will always be the head of the family and have the pre-eminence over the sons. Yet, the sons have all their Father's authority, as sons with Jesus, we have all his power. (Rom. 8:29). We can draw upon all of his wisdom, knowledge and understanding. We have been given rule over his domain. We are to govern his kingdom, just as he would. We must understand, just like Jesus, it is not robbery to be equal with God.

Jesus knew it was not robbery to say, "*I am the son of God.*" It was not robbery to say "*I Am Christ, the anointed one.*" It was not robbery to say, "*Do you not know, you are gods, judges, rulers; I know that I am.*" It is not robbery for us to use our Father's name and say, "*I am that I am,*" meaning "*I will become what I will become.*" (Ex. 3:14). Jesus said, "*I Am the bread of life.*" (John 6:35). "*I am the living bread which came down from heaven.*" (John 6:47,51). "*I am the Light of the world.*" (John 8:12, 9:5). "*I am the door of the sheep.*" (John 10:7, 9). "*I am the Good Shepherd.*" (John 10:11, 14). "*I am the Son of God.*" (John 10:36). "*I Am the resurrection and the life.*" (John 11:25). "*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*" (John 14:26). "*I am the true vine.*" (John 15:1, 5). He knew it was not robbery to be equal with God. Although he understood this truth, it was not his chosen emphasis. It was not his solitary focus. It was not what he entertained in his mind. God help us in this hour, because somewhere out of the *psuche*, when one hears such things, they want to center and focus on only this truth. "*I am.*" "*I am as he is.*" "*I am Christ.*" "*I am God.*" "*I am perfect.*" "*I am sinless.*" All this is true, but it is not the focus of the mature mind

of Christ.

Our passage goes on to say, "*Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*" Do you recognize you are in the form of God? The Greek word translated form is "*morphe*," which speaks of the inner quality and character. The mind of Christ recognizes the existence of the inner character and quality of God. We need to recognize Christ and our union with him, until it is no longer I, but Christ, who lives. (Gal. 2:20). Christ is our very inner quality and character. (2Co. 4:7). Now, think about it. This is not something to be apprehended or achieve, because we already possess it. That is what Paul is saying, when he says, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God. It is not something to be grasped after or to lay hold of because it is something we already have.

We cannot achieve Christ likeness. It cannot be achieved, because it is already in us. It is not something to be flaunted and talked about, but it is a simple fact of life. Just like a seed of corn cannot brag about being a seed of corn, it just is, so Christ is an incorruptible seed that God has placed in our earth. The nature of this seed is to spring forth into life. (1Pe. 1:23). It can become nothing other than a Christ manifestation, just like the corn seed will not grow to become watermelon or carrots. As we draw upon the Christ life within the seed, it births from within us.

The truth is, we are Christ, not because of how we act, but because of what he is doing within us. We are gods or judges in the earth. This is not because of what we can do or have done, but because God has sovereignly chosen us out of himself in Christ, before the foundation of the world. (Eph. 1:4). Moreover, God has placed us in the family, as sons. This is not something we need to even think about once we have the knowledge that we are sons in Father's family. We simply accept the fact we are in God's family and we are his sons. Moreover, we are kings, rulers and judges in the earth. All of this is not something we need to grasp after, because it is an understanding we have. None this is our central thought, theme or purpose for being.

Now, let us move a little higher in our "*thought*" life. We want to think like Christ. Christ did not hold his equality with God, as his center focus. When the Pharisees challenged him and tried to get him to say, "*I am God, I am Christ, I am the one for whom you have looked.*" He would just slip around such questions and leave it to them to make the "*assumption.*" He knew who he was and did not need to defend himself. He certainly did not have to tell everyone who he was. He just turned it around, so they would have to consider who they were. One time they called him Beelzebub, "*lord of the flies*" or literally "*dung god.*" It was a filthy name. To call someone Beelzebub in the Hebrew tongue was equal to some of our four letter words. The Jews also called him a son of Satan, but he turned right around to them and said, "*You have no idea who your father is.*" (John 8:41-44).

You see, we know who our Father is and we know our origin. Without a doubt, we came out of God before the world was founded. (Gen. 1:26-28; Psa. 8:3-6; Eph 1:4). We have been destined to this particular time and to this particular level of existence within the creation of God. We are here for the purpose of manifesting his name, his glory, his nature, and his purpose to all creation. There needs to be a transformation in our thinking. Once we discover who we are, we need to set it aside. It is not something to continually think about. Who we are is just who we are, and now, we must learn to how to be!

What is the next stage toward developing a mature Christ mind? Paul says, "*Jesus Christ made himself of no reputation and took upon himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of humanity.*" (Phil. 2:7). This actually says he "*emptied himself*" by becoming a servant. In Jesus' life and ministry there was no, "*I am the man of power for the hour.*" He laid aside all his status, glory, and honor and became a servant. Jesus did not promote himself or his ministry. Rather than seeking fame and prominence, he laid down his rights as God's son and became a bond-servant. The mind of Christ makes itself of no reputation. Now, making oneself of no reputation does not mean you will not have recognition. Jesus indeed had a reputation. Among the religious leadership he was a deceiver and devil. Among all, especially to those who believed, he was a miracle worker and provider. However, his popularity was not something resulting from self promotion.

Yes, the mind of Christ caused Jesus to empty himself and to take hold of the form of a servant. Again, we have the word "*morphe*," meaning he took upon himself the inner quality and character of a servant and he was made in the likeness of humanity. The Christ mind identifies with its' human heritage. It is true that what is born of spirit is spirit. However, it is also true that what is born of flesh is flesh. (John 3:6). Jesus made a conscious decision to identify with humanity. He took upon himself a different form of identity with the lower social status. He became a real man, a human being. Now, I recognize we are a spirit creation, we have a soul and live in a body. (1Th. 5:23).

However, I also recognize if we are going to identify with and help humanity we must be known as human beings. The person who attempts to portray themselves as *spirit* and not *flesh* to humanity, causes others to consider them as strange or mentally imbalanced. Trying to convince others of our *spirit heritage* causes them to look, but they are not able to relate to us. Thus, we must be known from our earthy substance. We should not walk around making an ostentatious display of our spirit life, because we are human for a reason.

Jesus, took on the human persona and he continues to keep his identity with the human race. Paul's writes, "*We have one mediator between God and humanity, that is, the human, Christ Jesus.*" (1Ti. 2:4). Thank God! Christ identifies with us and has never left or forsaken us. He continues to identify with his *flesh* birth and is still identifying with humanity. We do not need to tell the world that we are *spirit* beings, because it is not important to those we serve. If one emphasize that they are *spirit* most would think they are crazy. Furthermore, it is only a partial truth, because we have laid aside the glory of being a spirit being to become a human being, for the purpose of ministering to humanity.

Now, the Father reveals the reality of our heritage during our years of development into maturity. For me this took place between the age of twelve and thirty. God opened my heart to understand we are sons of God because he placed us as *sons*. In the Bible this is called *adoption*. Biblical adoption means we are placed in God's family as sons. It does not mean we were taken from outside of God's family into it. We were born into his family, as children. All the children are raised together in mother's house until we reach the age of *adoption*, when Father calls us into his house. This is the time we first hear him address us as his *son* and from then on we will "*be about or around our Father.*" (Lk. 2:49). Now, we were chosen and predestined as sons before the disruption of the ordered arrangement or world. (Eph. 1:3-6). However, we are ordained to the earthen realm to set creation free from their subjection to disappointing anguish, misery and corruption. (Ro. 8:19-22). This knowledge gives us purpose within this state of being. We have been given the human form so we can identify with creation and serve them to this glorious end. We are human beings, but humans *with* God quality life and character on the inside.

Now, notice the quality of life and character that Paul mentioned is within the one who *lets* this mind of Christ *be*. It is the highest quality and character of the Father life. The quality of being a servant, a bond slave, if you will. That is, we are servants, not because God says we have to be. We are not serving humanity because God says, "*If you know what is good for you, You better do it, or else.*" We do not serve because we *have* to serve. We serve because it is our nature to serve.

In this hour, some brethren feel they cannot commit themselves to a local gathering of the body of Christ. They recognize a need to serve, yet they do not understand that Christ came to serve the dead, the fatherless, the motherless, the hungry. This also is where we have been called to serve. (Psa. 82).

There comes a time, in the life of a son, when "*revelatory information*" is not sufficient for one's life. This is the season where life quits flowing from the mystical dimension of sonship and sons get down to being earthly humans. Remember. Revelation without manifestation is merely information. Moreover, an inward growth without an outward reach generates stagnation, paralysis, death and eventually judgement. Coming to this season enables us to finally understand what we **BE**. We **BE** sons in the image of our heavenly Father, who is "*bond slave*" to his creation. (Mat. 5:43-48; John 3:16-17). This is where we learn we have come to serve out of love. Now, when this recognition comes, some folks become fearful and want to back up to the mystical realm where there is no real responsibility. (2Ti. 1:7; 1Jo. 4:18). In the beginning stage of growth, as a son, we reveled in what Father unveiled of who we **BE**. All the while, we were developing and growing up to become sons in the flesh. Human beings who have the heart of our Father, while we are yet in the body. That is, our inner character and quality becoming a bond slave, while our outer form remains obviously human. (2Co. 4:7-12). Moreover, we have been *espoused* and are *bound* to marry the bride, the church. Even if we want to get out of it, we cannot, because we have grown to love the church just like our Father, who chose her for us. There is something of a binding, a cementing, or a mortar in love that fixes us in our place, making it impossible for us to leave our responsibility. (Col. 3:14).

There is a ministry, a responsibility we need to recognize, as sons of God. This is a ministry or serving we have toward one another. Look out if we are attending meetings solely for what we can get out of them, as a *maturing* son, we are attending for the wrong reason. It is not long before such sons as this quit finding what they need to be satisfied. Then, as they experience the emptiness of seeking self satisfaction, they begin to wander looking somewhere else to fill the void. Remember. We are where Father has placed us and as sons we are becoming joined

to the bride of Christ. (1Co. 12:18). We are becoming joined to members in particular of Christ's body. There is a bond of love even when the church smells of rotting flesh, appears lifeless and beyond help. God says, "*Son, she is asleep. Lovingly serve and awaken her. Learn to bring change by laying down your life for her in love.*" (Rom. 13:11; Eph. 5:14, 25-32). It is important that we understand this principle. Not only are we bound to the body of Christ, we are also bound to the whole world.

Among sons there has been a lot of talk about coming into immortality. Do you know why I want immortality? Not because I want to live. In my thinking it would be so much easier just to pass on to the other side. I could go to sleep and awaken in the presence of the Father and his angels with all the problems and difficulties settled. You see, on this side I have to work through everything that the flesh brings my way. But on the other side all the questions would be answered; every tear, sorrow, illness, pain and even death is dealt with once and for all. (Rev. 21:4). Yet, there is something that holds me to this earthen existence. I need immortality, because of the need to serve the creation. If we do not find true immortality we will vanish from this plane of existence and from this dimension of serving. A portion of our inheritance is here on this plane of existence, for we are to inherit the heathen, the earth, the glory. (Psa. 25:18; 37:9, 11, 22; 82:8; Pr. 3:35; Isa. 54:3; Mat. 5:5; Rev. 21:7)

Some think after the body dies that we continue to serve as spirits of just men made perfect. (Heb. 12:23). I also believe our ministries continue beyond our present state of existence. However, I question that we will be able to serve effectually from the heavenly realm into earthen realm. Just as we have not been capable of effectively serving in the heavenlies from the earthen realm. So you see, we need a change of heart. Instead of grasping at sonship, which we already have, we need to practice being a son. Instead of running around trying to mentally convince ourselves that we are sons, we need to demonstrate our true state of being. And if we are not able to function as a son we need our Father's discipline and adjustment until we can. Many times we dreamed up something and set it as the goal of sonship. That is, we have drawn a picture of what being a son of God is, and we have defined perfection in us. We need to simply accept what God says about us and live like we believe it.

More To Come In Next Issue. . .

November 1, 2004 – Year End Update

Changes! Changes! Changes! These are the prophetic words we have been hearing for a number of years. They always left us with the question, "*What exactly are the changes?*" Well, the time of change has come and there is no more question, for the Father has given us direction and vision.

Nearly thirty-five years ago Stacy's life was dramatically altered, when the Father sent him out from the "*workforce*" to live by the ministry. It was miraculous how doors opened throughout the United States and the nations of world without any need of self promotion. Someday he will write down his testimony and we will share the work of the Lord in our lives from the beginning, but we do not have the room to do it in this letter .

Our last mailing was nearly three years ago, in March 2001. We have continued to send a monthly audio teaching tape (TOM) to those who asked to receive them. The present experience in our lives is producing a real change in our thinking and mode of ministry to the body of Christ. After traveling, nearly nonstop for so many years, the breaks have been applied to the traveling. In the past year we have gone out twice in ministry and both of these were weekend trips. This has caused some to ask, "*Where have you been lately?*" "*When are you coming our way?*" Thus, we write this letter to update everyone at the same time with what is happening in our lives.

Health Update

To begin we have received numerous requests, asking for an update on Stacy's health. In a nutshell, he is doing so much better since starting dialysis. For you that are not aware, about six years ago Stacy was diagnosed with renal failure (kidney failure). Along with this he suffered several severe bouts of congestive heart failure (CHF). After his last bout with CHF, the doctors told him extensive damage had been done to his heart.

During the time all of this was going on with his health we continued to travel, intermittently returning home to the mountains of California. There we lived in a beautiful and quiet location near Yosemite National Park that belonged to Stacy's youngest brother and his family. We appreciate their faithfulness to the ministry in providing this place for us. The difficulty was in the location, because we lived about two hours from doctors, as some might say, in the sticks or boondocks. The visits with the cardiologist, at that time, yielded an even bleaker report. They told us he would need an operation to straighten out the damage done to his heart. Some of you will remember his

condition during these times. It was with difficulty he walked from the parking area into the doctors office. His breath was short and he had to rest often. However, I will always remember the incredulous look of confusion on the doctor's face as he looked at the lab results. He smiled and said, "*If I believed in miracles, I have seen one today, your heart is 100% restored.*" Praise the Lord! Stacy's step was much lighter and my breath came much easier as we left the doctors office that day. I became even more mindful that God can do anything.

Update On Location

A short time after this we heard the Father say, "*You are going to move from this location.*" Not knowing exactly where or when we began to consider making a move. It was shortly thereafter that Stacy's brother told us they needed to sell the property we were living on in California. Then we received a phone call from our dear friends, Tom and Naomi Boyd. They live in what I have heard Stacy call "*a little corner of heaven on earth,*" Blue Ridge, Georgia. They told us they were converting a little red barn into a house and they felt we were to be the occupants. From there everything fell together, as only the Lord can cause it to happen. We made our move and arrived at our new home on July 4, 2003. It is a small but comfortable with two bedrooms, two baths, with an office built onto it. There are plans to add on another room and porches in time. Moving here has been a tremendous blessing, because we are no longer two hours from civilization. We also have several friends located on the property, who I can call on to help me and Stacy should the need ever arise.

More Health Update

Shortly after moving to Blue Ridge, Georgia, Stacy said the Father told him it was time to do what the doctors had been saying he needed to do for the last 4 years. He went to the hospital and had an access placed in his left arm in preparation for starting dialysis. Then in March 2004, he started dialysis. This means he goes to the clinic, in Ellijay, Georgia, three times a week, for a minimum of 4 hours each session. Not including the half hour drive to and from the dialysis clinic and the hour or so to connect and disconnect from the machine. He drives to the clinic, but is normally much too tired to drive home, so I go with him. All this to say a big chunk of our day and week involves dialysis. Stacy takes his computer with him, but he can only use one hand and that just part of the time.

Stacy is feeling much better now that he has started this process, although he says there is a constant mental battle with feeling he has lost his usefulness by becoming so confined to home. The dialysis machine is an amazing thing. Three days of four hour treatments does what normal functioning kidneys do 24/7, by removing toxins and fluids from the body. When he arrives in the clinic they weigh him and then seat him in a special dialysis chair. Next, they stick two huge needles into the access in his left upper arm. Then, they begin the process of extracting his blood using a hand pump! Just kidding! We thank God for modern technology. The machine completely recycles the blood, out of his body through the artificial kidney and back into the body, 8 to 10 times an hour. In the process, filtering out all the toxins, a job that his kidneys no longer care to do. This process also removes several liters of excess fluids. We are also thankful for the staff, three wonderful, dedicated, sensitive, caring people, each with a good sense of humor. Their days at the clinic begin around 5:00 AM, and end some time after 6:30 PM. Although our clinic has only five chairs and machines, they are full most of the time.

Ministry Update

Stacy and I are very happy here in Blue Ridge. There is a local gathering and we minister as the Lord directs. So far we have not been traveling out of state, due to difficulty with dialysis at other clinics. For years we have traveled from town to town, some times holding meetings in two or three places within a few miles of each other. People have been so accustomed to this that they would simply wait for us to come across town to their location. However, it will be different now, because when we come into an area we hope folks will come to where we are ministering to hear what the Lord has given. Moreover, because of the time needed for dialysis each week, Stacy says we will need to fly and rent a vehicle in the area. Flying is not easy these days, because new regulations say they can charge Stacy for two coach tickets due to his size. Because I care for him, it will take three coach or 2 first class tickets to make a trip.

Since we have cut back on traveling, quite a number of people ask, "*Where should we send support for Promised Seed Ministries?*" We still receive ALL financial support through the Alhambra office in California. There, Laura, a good friend, picks up our mail and deposits any enclosed checks into our bank. She then sends us the envelopes with the information written on it and all personal notes. I enter the information in our data base and send

out thank you letters from our home in Georgia. We do it this way because, as you know, when we do travel it is necessary to keep the bills paid on the home front. We have not changed this method, as we still believe we will be ministering around the country.

We have also been asked, *“What are you doing now that you travel so little?”* Well, we are certainly staying busy here in Blue Ridge. The door Father has opened to the ministry is quite time consuming. As the finances come available, Stacy has been taking some Internet classes to advance his webmaster skills. He is interested in developing skills more advanced than MS FrontPage, because he has a vision for creating Promised Seed School of Ministry Online. Many know he was the Dean of Curriculum at Florida Theological Seminary in Orlando Florida for a couple of years, which was an avenue of the ministry he enjoyed immensely. If everything goes as we hope, we will make both audio and video Bible classes available Online. It is our desire to become accredited and offer degrees for completed courses of study. All this is quite time consuming and costly, but we feel the time has come for the present movement of God’s kingdom to break forth in fullness to all who have an ear to hear. God gives us the direction and the internet gives us availability. We ask each of you to join with us in prayer for the increase in knowledge, understanding, wisdom, time and finances, which are all necessary to reach the goal.

We Are Expecting A Miracle

We are continuing to trust Father for a full and complete healing of Stacy’s body. We know from past experiences that Father is more than capable. Remember. Only two years ago God gave Stacy a 100% restoration of his heart. God can do anything! And I am waiting, with great expectation, for him to reverse the doctor’s prognosis of Stacy's kidney condition. 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. (2Co. 4:18). We hope you enjoy the following writing.

Current Tape of the Month

We are currently sending out Stacy’s teaching on the book of Revelation, as the tape of the month (TOM). If you want to receive these studies let us know. Now there is more than one way to receive these materials. If you have access to the Internet you can go to our web page and listen or download the TOM in a MP3 format. The Implanter is also available on the Internet and you can read it or print it for your keeping. Let us know if you want to receive the TOM and Implanter by way of the Internet and we will discontinue sending hard copies. Donations to Promised Seed Ministries can be made through our Alhambra office *and also* through the Internet. This site is located at www.promiseed.com or www.sigler.org/wood. We have place PayPal on our site and by clicking on the *“donate”* button you will be taken to a **secure** site where a bank transfer or credit card donation can be made. This a great way to clear up the “paper clutter”and still have access to ministry materials. You can also email us at: PSM@promiseed.com or Pamla@promiseed.com

We thank each of you for your continued and generous support of this ministry. We do not put a price on God’s Word because we believe the Word to be invaluable or priceless and we cannot put a price on the teacher, because this will vary with every individual’s need and relationship. Pamla and I are thankful for your helping us to defray the costs of sending out this publication. We are so grateful for those of you who find value in the word and the messenger and have sent a *“love offering”* to help in the support of this ministry.