

*Dancing on the Dust
of Your Tomb*

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace Church located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from messages preached by Pastor Stevens.

Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

GRACE PUBLICATIONS

P.O. BOX 18715

BALTIMORE, MD 21206

Printed in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.

Copyright © 1997

Cover Photo: © 1996 SoftKey International Inc. and its licensors

Grace Publications is a ministry of
Greater Grace World Outreach, Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	5
---------------------------	---

<i>Chapter 1</i>	7
------------------------	---

DESTROYING THE EXTERNALS

<i>Chapter 2</i>	12
------------------------	----

THE SPIRIT'S WITNESS IN THE HEART

<i>Chapter 3</i>	17
------------------------	----

MARRIED TO ANOTHER

<i>Chapter 4</i>	22
------------------------	----

COME UNTO ME AND REST

<i>CONCLUSION</i>	35
-------------------------	----

INTRODUCTION

All of us labor, struggle, and strive through external pressures, through soul structures, through human constructs, and through the letter of the Word. Like Paul when he was living in the Romans 7 experience, we try again and again, and we may have some success. But God says, "Listen, I want to write my laws in your heart. I want you to understand that I will be merciful to your unrighteousness. Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

God doesn't want us to have a thing to do with the old law, even though it was perfect. He would have us live in the age of the Holy Spirit, allowing the Spirit to glorify Christ and reveal the Word of Life. He wants His life to be written in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

It is my hope that through the message contained in these pages, each of you will be enabled to enjoy a brand-new, glorious adventure of growing, knowing God intimately, going

from faith to faith, from grace to grace, and from glory to glory. Let the splendor of the risen Lord shine out through your soul. May you learn to bury condemnation and guilt and then *dance on the dust of your tomb*.

Chapter One

DESTROYING THE EXTERNALS

The Lord consistently destroys the externals that we, unknowingly, have been locked into for years. I recently read of a beautiful man of God—a missionary for many years—who had a nervous breakdown. He got so locked into his programs, into his “external commitments,” never having a beautiful principle from God speak to his human spirit or write in his heart with the Word of Life.

This man had to be counseled intensely for six months. He had been serving God faithfully on the mission field for twenty-seven years. Though he did not get into overt sins, he was locked into a rigid program, not understanding the precious life and fellowship he could have with God.

There is a major difference between *controlling* our walk with God and *surrendering* to Jesus Christ. It is so easy to have many external rela-

tionships and control them with a religious spirit, adapting the Word of God to the process we use, instead of enjoying all of the amazing things that come from walking with God in the Holy Spirit each day.

Dr. McKinley, a great Scottish preacher, was a Bible-believing fundamentalist who had a tremendous gift of joy and humor. He was loved by those who knew him intimately, and he made a great impact upon those he ministered to. Once, while preaching at a camp meeting to approximately eighteen hundred people, he received a letter that said: "Would you stop being humorous and get down to serious preaching of the truth?"

Dr. McKinley read the letter and went on to tell one of the greatest jokes that he had ever told. With his eagle eyes, he gazed upon the congregation and picked out one older lady from that huge crowd. He said to her, "There you are!" (He called her out because she didn't have the courage to sign her name to the letter, and she was the only one in the whole place who wasn't laughing hilariously!) That lady obviously didn't know the joy of the Lord.

We have a pastor in our church who is blind. One day, he and his guide dog went into a de-

partment store and he started whirling his dog around. A clerk ran up to him, saying, “What’s wrong? What’s wrong?”

“Nothing,” said the pastor. “I’m just looking around the store.” Now *that’s* a sense of humor!

From the Mountain to the Valley

One of the greatest reasons the Pharisees, scribes and other religious people of Jesus’ day arranged His crucifixion was that, to them, Jesus seemed *too* human, not perfect. Remember, the reason Jesus was charged with blasphemy—the most serious charge among many other accusations—was that He was seen as being too human (Matthew 11:19).

Jesus was perfect—you and I know that. He was sinless, but that’s not what the religious crowd thought. “He’s of the devil,” they said. If you study the Gospels, you get a good idea why these things were said.

In Matthew 17, for example, Jesus was transfigured while Peter, James, and John looked on. What a beautiful conference they had up on the mountain! What a glorious experience it must have been to see the Lord Jesus totally transfigured before their eyes. What a wonderful event! The three disciples fell on their faces.

But, notice what happened further on in this chapter. Jesus and the disciples came down from the mountain, and the multitudes rushed to Him. A father came and said, “Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is a lunatick, and sore vexed: for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him” (Matthew 17:15-16).

Here, we see the humanity of Jesus coming out in freedom and liberation as He said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me” (Matthew 17:17).

Jesus did not come with some whiny voice and say, “Oh, this is awful! Bring the boy to me.” He said, “How long have I been with you, you perverted people?” After such a wonderful conference on the mountaintop, Jesus said this.

Darkness and Light the Same to God

What was He saying? Hear it: “Darkness and light are alike to Me. There are highs, and there are lows. I deliberately brought you down into the valley, where this lunatic child was being absolutely driven by demons, so that you would not stay on the mountaintop. I want you to face *practical reality*. I dwell in the darkness,

and I dwell in the light. I dwell in your highs, and I dwell in your lows. That's reality. I dwell with you when you go into the furnace, and I dwell with you to keep you out of the furnace, sometimes. That's reality."

Jesus Christ, in His humanity, was trying to get the disciples to see reality. He went from one extreme to the other: He was so absolutely human and yet, so divine. But He was *so* human that the Pharisees hated Him and arranged His crucifixion.

Chapter Two

**THE SPIRIT'S WITNESS
IN THE HEART**

Follow this carefully. First, there was the age of the Father, when Israel wanted the Law. But, living in their externals, Israel failed the test of reality every time. Then came the age of the Son, when Jesus Christ came and gloriously revealed the Father's heart. Yet, His own disciples forsook Him, even in the age of the Son. Today, we have the age of the precious Holy Spirit, Who has come to regenerate and to seal men and women who believe in His Gospel. The Spirit reveals the glorified Son in the throne room of our hearts, writing the Word of God upon each heart.

“Whereof the Holy [Spirit] also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin” (Hebrews 10:15-18).

The Holy Spirit witnesses the New Covenant as He writes the Word of God in our hearts and in our minds. The Lord is merciful to our unrighteousness, and He remembers our sins and iniquities no more: He makes *life* the issue.

This is what Paul discovered and learned in Romans 7 (which was, if you want to be realistic about it, a diary of his sins—his own personal diary). He cried out, “The things that I *do*, I should not do. And the things I do *not* do, I *should* be doing! I am a wretched man.” (Romans 7:19, 24). Paul’s heart had not yet been circumcised through the Spirit. Even though he *knew* the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul’s heart had not been circumcised; he still had confidence in his flesh. I love the Phillips Translation of this passage. After Paul confessed, “O wretched man that I am,” Phillips’ says “I thank God through Jesus Christ, *it is finished.*”

Struggling in Conflict

At this point, Paul hadn’t resolved his conflict. He was exhausted, struggling in his flesh, striving in his soul. He had theological concepts

and illuminations that he received in Arabia (Galatians 1:17), and God had spoken to him. But, finally, he stopped struggling, striving, and trying to live in externals. Finally, the Daystar arose in Paul's heart and the light began to shine in the dark places. Now he could say, "No condemnation!" When Paul made this discovery, his heart was gloriously circumcised by the Holy Spirit.

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his" (Hebrews 4:9-10). This passage is interesting, isn't it? There is a rest that remains. A rest beyond sin. A rest beyond the Law. A rest beyond struggling. A rest beyond keeping externals. A rest beyond our old human constructs. A rest beyond the old religious institutions that try to go on serving God after the Holy Spirit has been quenched and the life and glory of God has departed.

When the Ark of the Covenant lost the glory of God, it was just a box. The splendor of God's glory had departed. When an individual or a church loses the freshness of the Holy Spirit speaking to the heart, then the splendor of God's glory has departed, "having a form of godliness,

but denying the power thereof..." (2 Timothy 3:5).

The Life Issue

The Holy Spirit's witness of the New Covenant is a life issue, not an external issue. It is not a sin issue, or a struggling issue—it is a life issue. What are you doing with the life of the New Covenant? What are you doing with the grace of God? Are you hiding in it? Or, are you growing in it? Have you surrendered to God's life, or are you trying to control 'Adam,' the old sin nature, in an effort to live for God in the external realm? Is your program to manipulate individuals? Or, are you in a process that completely brings in rest?

God says, "There is a rest that remains." He goes on to say, "You have to cease from your own labors, as I did from mine." But then He says, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest." In some translations, *labour* is rendered *be diligent*, but the Holy Spirit has revealed something about this. In Matthew 11:28, Jesus said, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The Christian is always trying to labor, and he constantly gets himself into the process of being heavy laden.

Why? Because he is a free-will agent—because he's human!

Accept the fact that you are human. Of course, transformation can happen in a moment. But accept the fact that there is a gradual process going on. Don't have a fantasy of God. Don't live in the idealistic realm of subjectivity. Don't manufacture a God you cannot satisfy.

Chapter Three

MARRIED TO ANOTHER

Recently, I read an amazing book. It was about a man who, when he was seven or eight years old, heard his mother screaming as she prayed in the bathroom, “My son is going to hell! Save him! He’s going to hell. My husband is going to hell. Save him!” The mother prayed, screaming at the top of her lungs. When her son was nine years old, she died. At the age of 13, the boy needed psychiatric help—and why? Don’t misunderstand me, but, that mother’s prayer was *not* of God. It was a prayer of condemnation, a prayer of judgment. It was not a prayer of faith, not a prayer of love, not a prayer of humility. Who is to say that a normal seven-year-old boy is going to hell?

Later on, as part of his therapy, the psychiatrist took the young man back to his home town. The old house was just about gone, but one room that was left was the bathroom. When he

saw it, the boy started weeping and sobbing. Every day for years he had heard the screams, “My son is going to hell; my son is going to hell. Save him. He’s going to hell!” And ever since, he had been living in self-atonement, trying to pay for his sin. His father also had a nervous breakdown because of hearing the same prayer.

That kind of Christianity is not life. Certainly, I thank God for praying mothers. But the prayer *that* mother prayed was not life.

We labor, struggle, and strive through externals, through structures, through human constructs, and through the letter of the Word. Like Paul when he was living in Romans 7, we try again and again and have some success. But God says, “Listen, I want to write my laws in your heart. Don’t you understand that I will be merciful to your unrighteousness? Your sins and iniquities I will remember no more.”

God says, “I want you to have nothing to do with the old law, even though it was perfect. Instead, I want you to live in the age of the Spirit. Let the Holy Spirit glorify Christ and reveal the Word of Life. Let life by the Holy Spirit be written in your hearts.”

Let’s enjoy a brand-new, glorious adventure of growing in God and knowing Him intimately,

personally, living with no condemnation, going from faith to faith, from grace to grace, and from glory to glory. Let the splendor of the risen Lord shine out through your soul.

Remember, there is a corruptible seed; and then, there is the new birth—the *incorruptible* seed planted in a corruptible pot of clay, a treasure in an earthen vessel. God hasn't removed that earthen vessel; He hasn't removed that pot of clay. But, there's a precious, beautiful, incorruptible seed—an embryonic seed—that germinates and then grows and expands in a beautiful life process. Every time we respond to God without condemnation, under the terms of the New Covenant, and let the Holy Spirit teach us beautiful, precious, glorious life, then we begin to surrender our lives to Christ.

Taking up our cross does not mean suffering. It means the *old* is dead, the *new* is alive. As we go on with this new life, we experience many deaths and many resurrections every day. Yet, in obedience, through retroactive faith, we die with Christ in order to experience this new life.

Dead to the Law—the Old Husband

The young man in our story went back home. On the airplane, he began to realize that

the way his mother prayed brought all the condemnation of the Law upon his soul. His mother expected from him what he could not perform nor give her, and at such a young age.

When he read Romans 7, the young man was overwhelmingly blessed. A couple of years later, the Holy Spirit revealed to him that he was dead indeed to the ‘old husband’—the Law. In his case, it represented the mother’s condemning prayers. He was now dead to that husband, the husband who had ruled in his little conscience since he was six or seven—that husband who only condemned him and caused him grief, heartache, condemnation, and subjective guilt.

Before, when he went to church, he tried to live in self-atonement, trying to pay for his own guilt, and trying in some way to pay himself back as a penalty for his failure. He didn’t know exactly how he had failed, but he apparently felt wretched before God because of his mother’s prayers. Then, Romans 7:3-4 came in and he finally understood that he was dead to the law of the old husband and married to another, *even Christ*. These verses took over this young man’s heart in his teen-age years.

Later, he said, “Many times, working out my salvation with this new revelation of grace, it

was as if the old husband would come out of his coffin in the middle of the night while I was sleeping. That spirit of condemnation, the spirit of judging, the spirit of failure would come out to say, ‘You’re going to fail, God’s going to reject you. You’re not going to make it.’” Even after he had mastered the truth as knowledge in his mind, he still had dreams of the old husband coming out of the coffin.

Finally, after suffering years of guilt, the young man read Romans 7:25 and 8:1; and the Holy Spirit wrote it on his heart in light: “I thank God that my Lord Jesus Christ finished it! *There is no condemnation!*”

In his heart, the young man saw that coffin filled with all his condemnation. Then, he saw the dust collect on top of the coffin, and it was as if the Holy Spirit said to him, “Go and dance on the dust of the coffin.” He pictured himself, in the Spirit, dancing on the dust of the coffin. Totally liberated and married to “Another,” he experienced the life of Jesus Christ, the life of resurrection, the life of God’s grace, the life of unconditional love, the life of mercy rejoicing against judgment, the life of peace, the life of imputed righteousness, the life of wisdom, the life of joy, the life of happiness.

Chapter Four

COME UNTO ME AND REST

Can you picture the Lord Jesus Christ coming to the man who had been ill for thirty-eight years and could not walk?

“Would you like to be healed?” Jesus asked him. Well, what would you want after thirty-eight years? I guess he would like to be healed, wouldn’t he?

“Take up your bed and walk,” Jesus said (cf. John 5:8). The Lord Jesus addressed that man’s response to His words.

How simple it is for God to address a person’s response to *words*: words of life shining in a dark place, words of grace penetrating the mind. Words enter the mind which, like an iceberg, is ninety percent submerged, the subconscious and unconscious making up the vast subjective mind.

I want you to notice how Hebrews 4:9-10 says that there is a rest that remains for you, but

you have to cease from your *own* labors, as God did. When Hebrews 4:11a says, “Let us *labour* therefore to enter into that rest,” labour means “let us be diligent.” But Jesus Christ also said, “All ye that labor and are heavy laden, come unto me, and I will give you rest.”

God knows that we’re going to labor. He knows it because we are human, because we go through gradual growth processes. And, because we won’t fully accept what has been done for us, we will not readily accept all the grace available this moment. So, we labor.

And God says, “Go ahead and labor; you’ll come out. When you get exhausted, you’ll accept my provision. No matter what I say to you, you’re going to go through *so* much laboring—so, go through it. When you get sick and tired of it, when you’re exhausted by the external programs you’ve carried on for years in the energy of the flesh, you will finally say, ‘God loves me anyway!’”

This reminds me of a young Christian who was in our church in the early days of our ministry. He was twenty-nine years old, a rugged man, but he was young Christian. Someone in the church put a guilt trip on him because the young man got angry, lost his temper publicly,

and he couldn't control it. Well, he had only been saved for a couple of weeks, but a deacon took him outside and really told him off, telling him how bad his anger was.

The man got into his car and drove to a cemetery. He cried as he thought, "I'm not going to make it!" Here's this 240-pound man saying to himself, "I'll never make it. I'm going to fail. God *can't* accept me." He began to think he would lose his salvation. Immediately, there in the cemetery, the man saw an amazing sculpture of Jesus Christ with His arms wide open. Above it was written, *Come unto me, and I will give you rest.*

This rugged young man, two weeks old in the Lord, said to himself, "Well, they don't love me at the church, but I guess I've got to come to the cemetery to get rest." (Of course, there's a happy ending. Eventually he met a very kind pastor from our church who invested in his life. Today, this man serves God with a meek and gentle spirit.)

I love this little principle: Jesus said, in Mark 6:31, "Come apart and rest awhile."—If you don't, *you'll come apart!*

The Ego's Surrender

There was a book that came out years ago called, *Get Rid of Your Phony ID*. Maybe some of you have read it. I often wonder if part of the reason we don't want to get rid of our ego is we think that if our ego dies, there'll be no resurrection for anything. "Why, if I give up my old life and God doesn't perform a resurrection, can you imagine how terrible my life will be?"

"Come unto me and rest," Jesus says, "My yoke is easy, and the burden is light."

In Romans 7, Paul lost confidence in his flesh, and he could finally say, "Have no confidence in the flesh. My sufficiency is Christ" (Philippians 3:3, 2 Corinthians 3:5). He became so exhausted trying to keep the law and trying to make it with his ego. He knew truth but didn't let Christ and the Holy Spirit take over his ego.

Thank God that we don't actually *lose* our egos. If that were true, how could we present our *selves* to God? God's Holy Spirit and the human spirit have to be on top of the ego, controlling it. Then we use the ego to receive, honor, and obey God as we surrender, allowing Him to take over instead of trying to control our own lives.

Romans 1:16-17 says, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

The Universal Logos

In Romans 1:18, God justifies His right to bring His wrath upon the universe. Watch how He introduces a unique premise in this verse. “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.”

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against *all* ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...against whom? Those “who hold the truth in unrighteousness.”

Romans 1:19 is a key verse. I have never understood it the way I understand it now: “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.” Think of this for a moment. “That which may be known of God is manifest...” where? “...*in them.*” Do you understand that? “*That which may be known of God is manifest in them.*” The verse goes on to say, “for God hath shewed

it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen...” (Romans 1:19:b-20a).

But, compare this with Romans 2:14-15: “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law *written in their hearts*, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts, the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.”

The work of the law is written in their hearts. God writes something in a ‘*universal logos*’—the expression of God’s thoughts to man—and He writes this ‘*universal logos*’ in men’s hearts.

Well then, do we need to preach the gospel? Of course we do! Do we need to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth? Yes, of course we do. Cornelius, in Acts 10:1-33, didn’t have the Gospel, but he honored the light that he had, and the Holy Spirit brought Peter to him.

Do you see how this works? God wrote something in Cornelius’ heart, and he listened to his heart—from God, *not* from his flesh. He listened to that heart, honored that heart, and became devout and hungry for God. Then God sent Peter to him.

God writes in people's hearts. There is a 'universal logos' as well as the creation logos (Psalm 19:1-6).

I want you to notice a passage in Romans 10, that is seldom preached upon. There are ministries that preach certain things but have left out something that I am going to show you.

"How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Romans 10:14-18).

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." That's very clear, isn't it? Then, read verse 18 carefully, *"Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."*

There is a ‘universal logos’ God writes in people’s hearts, and the wrath of God will come because people didn’t honor the initiation of love and grace shown to them even before the Living Word came. They didn’t honor the light that they had, even before the Word defined it. God says, “I say unto you that they have heard. And I say unto you, when the Gentiles have the same thing in their hearts without the Law, it bears witness to their consciences.” In other words, “that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.”

This is the faithfulness of God, preparing people and showing them somehow, some way, even before the Gospel is preached to them, how much He loves them. He tries to draw them and puts truth in their hearts. And when they honor that still, small voice, then He sends men and women to preach the Gospel and bring the Word to them.

It’s a beautiful provision to have a ‘universal logos’. God sends it throughout the world, because He created us. Yes, we fell into sin, but God’s love wants to buy us back by having us respond to His drawing power of grace.

Hiding in the Darkness

What a beautiful, precious thing it is to know that God hides in the darkness as well as in the light. Light and darkness are just the same to God. Job said, “he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him” (Job 23:9b). Then he said, “But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined” (Job 23:10-11).

God is not going to let any person live on the glorious mountaintop for very long. He will let us internalize love, internalize life, internalize grace, allowing the deep to call unto the deep. As He does this, He brings us into the opportunity of faith, the opportunity of finding Him when He is hiding. He’s right there, hiding.

Then, He tries us. “I couldn’t find him,” Job said. “I looked to the left, I couldn’t behold him. Then he tried me, and I knew that He knew the way I would take. After I was tried, I knew that I would come out as gold. My walk of faith did not decline or fail. I esteemed His words more than my necessary food” (cf. Job 23:12).

Job was saying this: “Many, many times God places me right in the center of darkness and

doesn't seem to answer my prayers—it doesn't seem as if He will come through at all. I can't feel Him. But I have discovered that he knows the way that I take. After He tries me, He will bring me out like gold, because He is hiding *in* the situation.”

Do you understand this? God dwells in darkness. Yes, Peter, James, and John were on the beautiful mountain. Jesus was transfigured, glorified right in front of them. Then, He took them right down into the valley, to a child who was a lunatic. In the rawness of human expression, Jesus made this statement: “How long must I put up with you, you perverted generation, you faithless generation?” That wasn't very sweet, was it? That wasn't exactly a whiny voice, trying to be kind, having a superficial smile, and *trying* to act in the realm of “reality.”

God wants us to experience the reality of our humanity, the reality of His Word, the reality of failure, the reality of faith, and the reality of love. He wants us to experience the reality of weakness and, yet, the reality of His strength; the reality of darkness and, yet, the reality that He's hiding in it. He will lead us and guide so we can internalize promises, internalize truth, and have deep-rooted communion with Him.

Regardless of what the externals are, throw away the old constructs. Stop trying to keep the Law. Be dead to the first husband. Bury him with the coffin. Let the dust gather. Get on top of everything that represents the Law and the old man, and dance with joy. Dance with God's love. Enjoy the feast and the victory of the Lamb.

The Lost Parts

In us there are many lost parts. Now, it's possible for God to reveal those parts. But you know, none of us can receive it all from God, so do you know where we look to fill in our lost parts? We look to the Body of Christ. Do you know what happens when we look to the Body for our lost parts? We receive from the Body and love the Body of Christ.

If, however, we're living in distress or guilt or fear, our view is filtered by a distorted heart toward God.

Let me tell you of a man in Florida, a pastor of a certain ministry down there, who fell into sin. He came to the church after having a heart attack and confessed and repented for months. The church would not forgive him, and he literally died because he wasn't accepted.

The person who told me about this said, “The church members saw themselves in his sins, so they tried to get rid of what was inside of *them* by condemning *him*.” You see, the life of God hadn't been internalized. Forgiveness hadn't been internalized. Mercy hadn't been internalized. An external message with an external construct of the ‘old husband’ affected those church members.

Often, we hear the voices of our parents and think it's the voice of God today. Certainly, our parents contributed values to us, but we must not mistake the voice in our conscience, from a parent, for the fresh life of God today.

In marriages, a woman must not merely echo her husband, and a husband must not echo his wife. They both must grow, into the individual process of internalizing God and being alive in the Spirit—thinking, making decisions, and growing in faith. That's honoring your spouse. The wife is not to rebel; she's to honor her husband. But she will face God at the Bema Seat alone; therefore, she must individualize her walk with God so that when her husband dies, she can face the wilderness, seeing eye-to-eye with God, knowing the Master and walking by faith.

No one can be cloistered, obstructed, or restricted by anyone or anything. Every individual must get to know God. I can guarantee you, He will pull you out into the wilderness, give you *no* support, and say, “Now are you willing to get to know Me?” Your flesh will fight, and you’ll rebel and react. Then you’ll say, “I can’t stand it!”

And God will say, “Stay out here.”

You’ll say, “I don’t like this.”

And God will say, “Stay out here.”

Then you’ll say, “I surrender. I accept Your love and mercy,” and the struggling is over.

Then do you know what we find out? His yoke is easy. His burden is light, and we enter into a wonderful communion with a risen, ascended Lord who's really real. It's a communion that's a living reality, one that's practical, one that we can trust. And we can go out in an adventure of obedience without living in resentment, bitterness, or reaction with the sins of the mind.

CONCLUSION

As we continue making the amazing discovery that we can utterly, totally, and completely trust every word of God and have His life, recovering instantly when we fail, let us go on in the amazing witness of the New Covenant by the Holy Spirit. Let's recognize that we are married to Another, completely! *married to Another*. Don't go back into spiritual adultery with condemnation, with the law, or with the flesh. Don't enter into spiritual adultery.

That old husband is dead. The coffin is closed. He's been buried. There's dirt over the grave. Go and dance on the tomb (spiritually speaking) and be free and clean through the Word of God.