

The Consciousness of Life in the Triune God

Prayer: “Thank You again, Father, we could be here in Your presence. We worship You. We give You all the glory for Your marvelous love and grace that You have shed upon us. Thank You, Lord. You haven’t left us to ourselves. Thank You, Lord, You’ve spoken to us. Thank You for Your speaking. We don’t take it for granted. We worship You, Lord, that You’re still talking. You’re talking to us. Thank You for Your speaking. Thank You for Your infusion, for transmitting Yourself in Your speaking. Thank You again.

We open to the Word this morning. Lord, renew us. Renew our minds. Grant us full knowledge according to the image of Him. Thank You, Jesus. Bring us out of every other realm, and especially our self. Bring us out of that realm to live to You, to no longer live to our self. Thank You, Lord. You’re our life. You’re our affection. You’re everything. We behold You this morning. Thank You, Jesus. Be with us. Grant to us the inner energy and the inner anointing to apprehend exactly what You’re speaking. Pinpoint Your burden and speak to us for Your own sake, not just for our betterment, but for Your good pleasure, for Your joy, for Your purpose. Thank You, Lord. We trust You for this. Amen.”

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Our life in the Triune God

We are enjoying together such a rich fellowship by our seeing a revelation of our life in the Triune God. In this universe God is everything. Outside of God there is nothing. God Himself is the reality and the meaning and the purpose of all existence. Such a God is our God. Such a God has revealed Himself to us and has made Himself known. And He is Triune — the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Our God is unveiling Himself and inviting us into Himself, so that we could share the life of the Triune God and participate in that life.

The fellowship that the Father enjoys with the Son is now in the current and flow of the Spirit, and we have been joined to this flow (John 7:37-39). We have been joined to the Triune God. And as Christ is the object of the Father's love, so now we also are the objects of that same love coming from the Father to the Son and rebounding back from the Son to the Father. We have been joined to this. Galatians 4:6 makes it clear that God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son right into our hearts, right here into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father! This is not imitation or working something up. This is being ushered into God Himself. The very Spirit of His Son has come into our hearts crying, Abba, Father! This is revelation.

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In the whole Bible God reveals and unfolds Himself in His triune being — as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit — showing us even *how* He exists and *how* the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one, and then *how* They have unfolded Themselves and come out in God’s economy. God’s economy is God coming out to accomplish His purpose in the universe. The Bible reveals that God is not only God in Himself, but God in His coming out to bring us into Himself. God in Himself is Triune. This is His existence eternally — the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. And at the same time we see His eternal triune existence, He did not remain in Himself, by Himself, but He had a good pleasure. The Father had a good pleasure, that He would have many sons like His Firstborn Son, like the Son of His love. So in His economy He came out to bring us into Himself. This is our Triune God.

Understanding our destiny in the Triune God

We have enjoyed the revelation of the word of the Triune God being our life and destiny. Not only our human life, but our Christian life and our growth in the Lord, is wrapped up in understanding that we are here together with a destiny in the Triune God. We are existing to participate in the life taking place in the Godhead, that

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we would be participators of that divine life and nature, and that we would be enlarged as His building and His habitation for a mutual satisfaction. It is not only our satisfaction, but God's satisfaction, because our satisfaction is wrapped up with His satisfaction. So when God is satisfied, because we are joined to this God, we have the same sense of completeness, satisfaction, and fulfillment that is in God Himself. This is because we are joined to that good pleasure. Incidentally, that is why we are so happy here. That is why I'm so happy and that is why you are so happy. It is because we are enjoying God. We are His habitation.

God has a good pleasure, that is, what He likes, what He takes delight in. It is sons. He predestinated us unto sonship (Eph. 1:5). Sonship simply means participation in the life of His Son. That is God's good pleasure. He loves us to enjoy all that Christ is as our life. He loves that we are totally detached, set free, and unoccupied with ourself to be totally occupied with Himself. He wants us to glory in Him, not having a shred of righteousness of our own, but boasting in another righteousness which has become ours as a gift (Rom. 5:17), a real righteousness that is really ours, giving us great cause to rejoice and to boast (1 Cor. 1:30-31). The Father's good pleasure is that we are occupied and satisfied with Christ.

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Life in the Triune God as a communal life

The kind of life in the Triune God is a communal life. That is, it is a church life. It is a life inescapably wrapped up with fellowship. It is not a loner life. It is not an isolated life. It is not a solitary existence. The life of the Triune God is a life of fellowship with God and with one another. To have fellowship we need more than one. We need one another. It is a one-another life. It is an interdependent life. It is a life together in the church with an open transparency between us to make room for the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19). His fullness is so full. It is embodied in His Son, and His Son is filled with unsearchable riches (Eph. 3:8). And there is no place to dispense these riches unless He has you and me. Believe it or not, He redeemed us to indwell us and to make us His abodes, where He can dispense the unsearchable riches of Christ and where we can partake of all that He is. This is the gospel, our good news. And then it is out of that that we are filled with all the fullness of God. And this is the church (Eph. 1:22-23).

And when we are together participating in the unsearchable riches of Christ, of this wonderful Person, a form and image comes out. This image is the image of God revealed in Genesis 1. Colossians 1:15 reveals that

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Christ is the image of the invisible God. God is invisible. God is Spirit. You cannot find pictures of God. There are no statues of God to see. But the image of the invisible God is Christ. So if you want to know God and see God, you must see Christ. In John 14:8-9 Philip said, “Show us the Father.” The Lord answered, “Have I been so long a time with you and you have not known Me? He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” This utterance by the Lord is further defined by Paul in Colossians 2:9: “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” So He is the expression of the fullness of God. He contains all. He is the embodiment of the Godhead in a visible way. This is our Christ.

The form of Christ — the image of God

This Christ who is the image of God has a form. When we look at the description of the many things said about Him in Colossians 1:15-18, we also see the specific form of His image in resurrection. All things were created in, through, and unto Him. He is the Firstborn of all creation. He is before all things. All things are held together in Him. But in verse 18, the form of Christ who is the image of God is described: “And He is the Head of His Body, the church.” Hallelujah! Look at the image of God — it

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is Christ. But look at Him. He is not just a Head. He is the Head of His Body. So the whole Christ, the Head and the Body, is the image (1 Cor. 12:12).

Christ is the image of God in a wonderful and unique way. The way He is the image is as a Head who has become a life-giving Spirit so that He could get into every member of His Body. He is the Head as the Spirit so He could fill every member, so that every member could be in the fullness of Him, even as the fullness of Him who is filling all in all. This Christ who passed through everything for our redemption, for our life, for our union with Him, now is in us and filling us. And when He flows and fills and is allowed space to move in, not to be shut out or closed, not to say no or resist Him, but to admit and submit, and to open — regardless of how low we are on the totem pole, or how black our condition is, and how many blaring sounds the devil has put into our heads to condemn us to the dirt — regardless of it all, I can come just as I am, fightings without, fears within, O Lamb of God, I come. And His blood is sufficient and efficacious. It is so powerful that the Bible says, “When I see the blood, I just pass over.” Amen! No condemnation, so that God could fill us and God could be everything to us. So here is Christ, the image of God, filling all His members. The image of God is Christ, but not a Christ without His

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Body, but a Christ with His Body includes all His members (Eph. 5:29-30).

The corporate image of God

So when God says in Genesis 1:26, “Let Us make man in Our image,” the Triune God is speaking. And the image of the Triune God is revealed to be Christ in Colossians 1:15. And when we read Colossians 1:18, Christ is the Head of His Body, the church. Thus, the image is corporate. And the image is also corporate in Genesis 1 & 2. As male and female God created man. And then God mixes the personal pronouns from “created him” to “He created them.” “Male and female created He them.” When you read those verses you want to stand back, “But Lord, is it a *them* or is it a *him*? Is it a *him* or is it a *them*?” It is a *him-them*. That is what it is. It is just a *him-them*. That means it is a singular man. But this man is a corporate man. This man is made up of Head and Body. It is male and female becoming one. So now the image of God is Christ and the church.

The image of God as Christ and the church has a particular form and expression. The form in Genesis 1 and 2 is one flesh (Gen. 2:23-24). The ultimate result of the image of God in man was the oneness of the male and

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the female. The oneness is seen in the taking out of Adam the rib to build the woman. And then God brought the woman to the man and they became one flesh. So the ultimate form of the image of God is expressed with the male and the female, Christ and the church, becoming one. Oh, the depths of this oneness. Oh, the meaning of this oneness. Oh, the enjoyment in this oneness is past finding out. This is a oneness with Christ that causes us to have a oneness with the Father in all that He is and shares with His Son and the Spirit. And the transmission of all that is in God and all that He wants to work out for His good pleasure through us is in this oneness.

Consciousness of life in the Triune God

We have seen the revelation of life in the Triune God. We have also seen the form of life in the Triune God as the Body of Christ. And now we come to the consciousness of life in the Triune God. The life consciousness in the Triune God is a consciousness of our union and oneness with Him. This consciousness is found in the oneness that the Lord prayed for in John 17:21: "That they all may be one." He is praying for all the believers, not only the twelve, but for all believers that will believe on the Lord through their (the apostles') Word. He prays

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for all of us. We are included in this prayer. Can you believe? When He was praying this prayer, He looked down the whole corridor of time and prayed that they all would be one. So Lord, thank You for Your prayer for us. Amen! And the prayer is specifically that we would be one.

Do we know in the middle of our daily trials and experiences what it means to be in oneness with the Triune God? The Lord defines the nature of that oneness in verse 21 by saying, “even as.” The Greek word here is *kathos*, a word that means “as.” It is a word comparing something with something else. He is linking the meaning of “one” with the highest revelation of oneness — the Triune God. Our oneness is to be “even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You.” Then we need to know how the Lord and the Father are one. If our oneness is a oneness “as You, Father, are in Me and I in You,” then we ask the question, Lord, how is Your oneness with the Father? How are You in Your inner relationship with the Father? Let us leave the question for a moment and keep reading.

The Lord prays in verse 21, “That they also may be in Us.” It does not say, “That they would copy Us” or “try to be like Us.” It is not something of that nature. It is “That they may *be* in Us.” That is, in the real thing — God Himself. For example, it is not talking about the Grand

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Canyon and looking at a picture of the Grand Canyon. It is going to the Grand Canyon, getting down into that great chasm and looking up. You are in the real thing, deep inside. The Lord's prayer is like that — “that they may be in Us.” So this is a prayer for oneness with God Himself, in God.

Then the Lord continues in verse 22: “And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one.” Again, the Lord prays about being one “even as We are one.” Now we are getting more engrossed to know what does one mean? What does it mean to be one with Him? How are we one? In which way are we one? Is that merely a saying or slogan? Is it just an idea in our mind? One? Brothers and sisters, the Lord's prayer is that we would be one, even as He and the Father are one, that we would be in Them. To answer this question we must study and look at the Triune God to see how the Father and the Son are one. We could only understand the oneness and distinctions in the Triune God to the extent that the Bible reveals it.

Understanding the oneness in the Triune God

When the Triune God is revealed in the Bible, He is revealed as one God in three Persons. These Persons are

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real distinctions, and not mere names that have no real eternal and simultaneous existence. The Three in the Godhead exist as Three and exist as One at the same time. The Lord explains how this came to be in John 14:10-11: “Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe because of the works themselves.” *How* are They one? They are one by a mutual interpenetration and indwelling of Each in Each Other. The Father is *in* the Son, and the Son is *in* the Father. This is *how* we understand the inner union of Their oneness — mutual interpenetration. The Lord also said, “He that has seen Me has seen the Father.” This reveals how the inner oneness is expressed outwardly. The Father is completely identified with the Son in expression. How then should we understand this single expression of the Triune God? The one expression comes out of the inner union of oneness. This inner union is reflected when the Lord spoke of not doing things from Himself, and that He always and only did those things that the Father was doing.

When the Lord said He was one with the Father, it was a oneness of His union with the Father. That is how we

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understand the meaning of being “one” as the Father and Son are one. It is a union where there is a mutual interpenetration of Each in Each Other, yet a union where the Father is distinct and the Son is distinct, a distinction of the Son and the Father where neither are blurred or obliterated. But the way They are distinct is by being distinct *in* Each Other, not distinct separate or apart from Each Other. The Triune God is distinct within oneness. The oneness is a union of an abiding in Each Other, a mutual interexistence known as “coinherence” in the study of the Trinity. The Three in the Godhead coinhere. They belong to Each Other. They live and exist in Each Other. It is a oneness of union and co-inherence. This is how the Bible allows us to understand the oneness of the Triune God.

Understanding the oneness believers have in and with the Triune God

According to John 17:20, all believers have the privilege of enjoyment and participation in this oneness of the Triune God. There is a deep recognition the moment we receive Christ that we are now joined to the Lord as one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). We have an inner union with Christ. It is not that we merely have thoughts about Him or even

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that our heart loves Him. We are joined to Him. The Lord lived a life of union with the Father in His humanity. That was how He was one. There was a union, and in that union there was a co-inherence where They lived in Each Other and enjoyed mutual fellowship. So the Lord could say, “What I am doing, what I am speaking, I am not doing My works, but I am in union with My Father, and by His life I am doing what My Father is doing. I am drawing all My supply from the Father” (John 6:57). The most basic understanding of our oneness with the Triune God is a oneness of union. And the kind of union we have is a union of interpenetration and coinherence. This reveals a living in each other by virtue of our inner union with the Lord.

ONENESS THROUGH UNION

Now let me ask you, do you know where your union is with Jesus and the Father? Have you located your union with the Triune God? Have you discovered where your union is? This is the greatest discovery for all believers. One day we received Christ not merely as a ticket to go to heaven to escape hell, but we received Christ to receive a life of participation in His Person and

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all His unsearchable riches. Now through our new birth there is a union inside of us. We are eternally joined to Christ and the Father (Rom. 8:39). Discovering this union causes us to say “Hallelujah! Thank You, Jesus!”

This is how the image of God is expressed. It is expressed out of a union, a union of God and man. Again, 1 Corinthians 6:17 is such a simple verse, but yet it is so profound to reveal that “He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” The joining into one spirit means there are two spirits involved. You cannot join only one thing. Joining implies two things. The Lord as a life-giving Spirit is one (1 Cor. 15:45), and we as spirit-born believers are another (John 3:6). Spirit is joined to spirit, producing an inner union with the Lord. The Lord is Spirit, and we have a spirit. We have an inner depth of our being called our spirit (1 Cor. 2:11). The Bible speaks of it as the spirit of man which God reserved for Himself. It is like a parking space that says “Dr. Smith.” Nobody goes there but Dr. Smith. It is reserved for him. And inside all men there is a parking place that says “spirit of man, reserved for Jesus Christ.” Amen! Our spirit is where the union is. This is the foundation of the Christian life. We are born of the Spirit, and that birth is the beginning of our union with Him.

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The meaning of “one spirit”

In a wonderful way this “one spirit” spoken of in 1 Corinthians 6:17 will always include two distinct spirits. Even though there is one spirit, it does not deny the existence and integrity of the two spirits. The Lord as the Spirit always remains distinct, and the spirit of man joined to the Lord also remains distinct. There is a distinction, but this is a distinction within a union. It is the union of a co-inherence. It is a union of inner penetration. Because of the distinction in the union there is fellowship. There is activity and movement in the union. There is something going on between my spirit and His Spirit that results in one action of the mingled spirit.

The best example of the mingled spirit is Galatians 4:6 and Romans 8:15-16. The Galatians passage says, “God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying, Abba, Father!” It clearly says the Spirit of His Son is doing the crying. But Romans 8:15 says, “We have received a spirit of sonship in which we cry, Abba, Father!” This verse plainly says we are the ones doing the crying. So one verse says *He* cries, and the other verse says *we* cry. These are not two separate cryings. It is one mingled cry of a union of two spirits — the divine Spirit

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and the human spirit. The distinction of the two spirits within the one crying of the mingled spirit is unveiled in Romans 8:16: “The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.”

The union and the distinction in experience

The Spirit of the Son cries in our crying spirit. The initiative of our spirit releases the Lord through and in us so that *the Son* saying “Abba, Father!” is right here with all of *us* saying “Abba, Father!” We are one spirit. This is union. The union is not an obliteration of our initiative and activity. Look at His union with the Father. He was not a robot. He was a man. He had a will. He made choices. In the garden He prayed, “Father, not My will, but Thine be done.” He was exercised with sweat drops of blood to pray through in His union. It was intense prayer, and He touched the willingness in His spirit to go to the cross. Look at His union. It was not the union of an automaton. He exercised His distinct human spirit to pray, to activate His life of fellowship and coinherence with the Father. Through His fellowship, the Father’s life interpenetrated Him until the supply of the Father touched His whole humanity. Here we could see even the Lord

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Himself in His humanity had a distinct human spirit. Yet his spirit was in union with the Father's life and partook of the Father's life (John 5:26).

So in our experience we have a spirit that is distinct, yet we have a union with the Lord as one spirit. This is a fact. But it is not a fact that automatically bowls us over without the initiative of our spirit. So we cry with our spirit, "Abba, Father!" And because of the union, the coinherence, and the interpenetration in the oneness of our spirit and the divine Spirit, in a wonderful, most mysterious way, He cries in our crying. He sings in our singing. He speaks in our speaking. His tone is in our tone. His expressions are through our expressions. His preaching is through our preaching. His praying is in our praying. The church is in union with the Head, and He gets expressed through us as we live in this union. This is the marvelous way that the image is etched and expressed in the church. It comes with every member living in the deep consciousness of abiding in our union with Him.

The place of the abiding is our spirit union with Him. Romans 7:4 says, "So then, my brothers, you also have been made dead to the law." To be "made dead" is a passive thing. We are made dead to the law "through the

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body of Christ so that you might be joined to another, to Him who has been raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit to God.” This verse tells us that we are joined to another, to the resurrected Christ. This is describing the nature of our inner union with Christ. What have we done with our union? How do we treat our union? Do we care for it? Do we water it? Do we feed it? The union means everything to us, because that is where He resides in us, and that is where He operates in us. It is in the spirit union.

The Lord's union in daily life and ours

The Lord had a soul. He could have done a lot of things. But He says, “He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him” (John 8:29). He lived as a carpenter for most of His human life. We don't know much except about His birth and being in the temple for a short time. Then all we hear about Him is that He was the carpenter (Mark 6:3). And so He was ten years old, twelve years old, eighteen years old, and then in His twenties. Now months and days are going by. If you lived in Nazareth, you would see Jesus going into the shop, working, labor-

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ing, building this, building that. He lived most of His human life as a carpenter. But we do not have any knowledge about all the things that went on in those years. Those are the silent years. We don't know. But we know later that He said, "I always do the things that are pleasing to My Father." So in the carpenter shop He lived a life of union with the Father, pleasing Him all day long. Can you imagine? No outward ministry, just work every day in union with the Father. A lot of fellowship was going on between Him and the Father in a normal and ordinary way.

So we could see that the Lord Himself lived one spirit with the Father, and we are one spirit with Him. So the consciousness of a life in the Triune God is at the bottom level the consciousness of union with Him in our spirit. Thus, with this consciousness is a realization that I have a spirit that belongs to me as much as my right hand does and as much as I can exercise this right hand at will, because it is my hand. It is part of me. It is member of me. I can choose to move my hand in the way I want to. My spirit is exactly the same way. It is *my* spirit. So I can exercise my spirit. How have we treated our union with Him?

What happens is that problems accumulate with us and we live in ourselves. We are totally undernourished, not supplied. And the evidence of this is that we are

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irritable. We are reactionary, worried, unbelieving, hurt, envious, lustful. We are just down in the dumps. We are left with no supply. Our problem is not that His life does not work. Our problem is that we have not put the premium on the union. In the Gospels, whenever someone asked the Lord about something, “What are You doing? Why are You doing that?” His answer was related to the activity going on in His union with the Father. “My Father is working until now, and I also am working” (John 5:17). Or, “The words that I say to you, I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works” (John 14:10). Whenever we observe the Lord talking about His actions and movements, He answered according to His union with the Father. Whatever He did, whatever He said, it was coming out of the union. That means He had an ongoing, constant fellowship with the Father.

ONENESS THROUGH FELLOWSHIP

Oneness *in* God and oneness *with* God starts with union. And the union is a union of coinherence. This means oneness includes fellowship. To be one means union and fellowship. Fellowship means participation. Participation implies joining. And thank God we are joined. And because of the joining there is fellowship and

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participation in God. It is this union and fellowship that expresses God's one image through the churches. So for the image to be expressed, it must be through union and a large participation and fellowship with the Triune God. First John 1:3 says, "Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ." Then 2 Corinthians 13:14 says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." These two verses reveal our fellowship is with the Triune God — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And the fellowship is a direct participation in God.

So this is how the consciousness of being in God happens. It happens by union, and fellowship. And it is wonderful that we have a spirit that matches what God is for this fellowship and participation. He is Spirit, and we have a spirit, and we are joined to Him in spirit (John 4:24). So when we take initiative to call His name, "Jesus," when we open our mouths to sing, to pray, to let Him out, to give a testimony, to share Christ with others, we participate in God.

Paul says in Ephesians 5:18; "Be filled in spirit." In other words, treat your union that way. Be filled in your union by speaking, singing, psalming, giving thanks. So that when you are in the worst frame of mind about your life and you are on the negative side of the bed, get on the

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other side on your knees and itemize item by item all the things in your life. Do it specifically. I mean this is important. Do not just say “Thank You” in a general way. Itemize specifically: “Thank You for my job. Thank You I have no money. Thank You there are some enemies that I can’t cope with.” Be specific, and God will be specific in His answer. It is just exercise, to fellowship, and start thanking Him.

And when you start thanking Him, you are filled. That is participation. That is participation. This filling by participation is what happens to us without us realizing what is happening to us when we walk into this building. So oftentimes because there is such a corporate participation in God, you just come in one way and it is like you are put into an instant transformation machine and all of a sudden you find yourself with no problems. Everything is okay. You love your wife. You love your husband. You love your situation. What happened? You participated in the union. That’s all. There was just fellowship with God in the union.

This is how we abide in this oneness the Lord prayed for in John 17. We abide in the union. The union is our point of reference. It is our spirit joined to Him. Then we exercise our fellowship with the Lord. And we fellowship with the Lord vertically and horizontally. We love

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one another. We drink even of the testimonies and the enjoyment of Christ coming through the members. That is our fellowship. So we are abiding. That is why John speaks of remaining in the church and not going out (1 John 2:19). Some went out from the church indicating there was not a fellowship with God in the light with the members (1 John 1:7). That is a real deficiency if I do not have a fellowship with God in the members.

ONENESS THROUGH THE SUPPLY

With union and fellowship comes supply. Supply means there is a transmission of God into our being. Then in the fellowship there is a divine law and that law is that God supplies you with Himself and He transmits His life into us. What He speaks, He actually transmits the supply into us. So out of our union comes fellowship with Him. And in that fellowship the supply comes and the transmission comes. Philippians 1:19 tells us about that supply. He says, "For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation." "This" refers to Paul's environment and his situation. It was difficult. There were pressures. He was in prison, so Paul needed supply. So he said, "I know this is going to turn out for my salvation." It is like saying the salvation of my reactions to this environment. That is the

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realm of my salvation. The supply happens “through your petition” that is, the Body, “and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” And then he goes on and speaks about what is going to happen “according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” It means being supplied to live Christ in whatever environment God allows in our lives.

The Christian life is a supplied life

We must understand the Christian life as a supplied life. This means that whatever God says to you, He intends to supply that very thing to you. The process, however, of the supply is by first exposing our shortness and weakness. Our initial reaction is often, “I can’t do it and I don’t want to do it.” But that is the way it is supposed to work. We are supposed to drop ourselves and go directly to our union and increase our fellowship. And in that fellowship we participate in Him, “Lord, You do it in me. You live in me. You be this in me. What I can’t do, You must do, Lord.” So every overwhelming feeling of despair that you can’t live for God is an escort in disguise

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to bring you to the supply. It just means to escort you right into God. Those sinking feelings — “I can’t do it. I can’t make it.” — those are escorts. They are saying, “Come on. Let’s go to the supply. You don’t have it, but God has it.” So increase your fellowship. Double your eating and your enjoyment. Sing deeper. Touch God. Admit to Him there is nothing in you, and supply will follow.

Supply comes in the fellowship, regardless of the nature of the fellowship. This is all included in abiding. This is what it means to abide, to stay in the Triune God. To stay in this wonderful reality of His purpose and expression is to stay in the union, to stay in the fellowship, and to stay in the supply where the transmission is taking place. This is abiding. And this is how the image gets expressed through the church. It is people who are one, one in a union, one in fellowship, one in that supply.

ONENESS THROUGH THE OPERATION

In the supply and transmission is the operation of God. There is an operation, and that is there is a working of God in us, a marvelous operation. This operation is clearly unfolded in the context of Philippians 2. If we start with verse 1 and then go to verse 12, we will the full picture of how God’s operation takes place in us. Be-

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cause the thought that is in verse 12 comes out of verse 1. In verse 1, Paul says, “If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ,” That implies fellowship. That implies touching the Lord. That is turning away from yourself to Him. Then, “if any consolation of love,” that is, if there is any tapping into the source of God Himself to supply you with the divine love. Then, he says, “if any fellowship of spirit,” that is, if any participation in the realm where God is. If that can happen, oh, that is a marvelous thing, because there is a union there. The union only needs fellowship. “If there is any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions,” then he goes on and says, “make my joy full.”

All these phrases in Philippians 1:1 are saying, we need the fellowship and the supply that comes from the union. In other words, “I’m going to talk to you about oneness and about having one soul, about thinking the one thing. But I know that that could never happen among you if there is no encouragement in Christ, if there is no fellowship of the spirit.” That is, if there is union, if there is fellowship, if there is supply, if you are abiding to that extent, then in that supply is an operation — an inner operation where the divine life goes to work on me. In the operation God works on my heart, and breaks down in me the very hardness that a few moments ago resisted Him, but

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now almost in a fickle way is giving in. I said no; now I'm saying yes. I am saying yes because I touched the fellowship and I got the supply. And now the operation is inwardly causing my heart to be softened. And I give in to the Lord. That is operation.

Now we read verse 12; "So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only but now much rather in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Then verse 13, "For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure." So when he says work something out, immediately he says, "For it is God who operates in you." How does He operate? He operates in the union. He operates in the fellowship, in the supply, and in the transmission. And then He produces the willingness in you, where your heart actually gets changed. That is operation. The Word speaks in many places about this inner operation. When we discover the union and we realize the secret of this life is fellowship, supply, transmission, we get the operation. This is how we are one as the Father and the Son are — "just as We are, the way We are, Father, the way You live in Me and I live in You, and I'm drawing from You and I listen to You and I hear You, and You operate in Me, and I just follow You, that we would be one just as You and I are." The Lord's prayer

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is that we would be brought into Them so that we will have the same kind of life — a life of union, of fellowship, of supply, transmission, and of this marvelous operation.

Ephesians 3:20 reveals this operation. Verse 20 is at the end of Paul's prayer for the believers in chapter 3. In verse 16, he prays "to be strengthened with power through His spirit into the inner man," that is into the union. The inner man is the union. It is where we are one with Him. Then in verse 20, he says, "But to Him who is able to do," not meagerly above, but "superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us." This reveals to us that in the Christian life there is a power which operates in us.

So brothers and sisters, this should be the cycle of our living day by day — from union to fellowship to supply to operation. It happens over and over again. In this age, in our present weakness, in the present situation, I can be one with God as a member of His Body for the image of Christ to come forth and be expressed on this earth. And I do it because I am in union with God Himself. And in that union I can exercise my fellowship with the Lord. And then I get supplied, and I get the transmission of God. And when that transmission touches my mind, emotion, and will, it operates. God operates in me.

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ONENESS THROUGH COOPERATION AND OBEDIENCE

But now I come to the main point. Everything up to this point is all a structure to help us to come to the final point which completes the cycle of the union, the fellowship, the supply, with the operation. I think maybe some of us may have stopped with the operation and did not complete the final step in the cycle — cooperation. Cooperation, and obedience.

We need to see this full cycle of life in the Triune God. This is the cycle of abiding in Him. This is what it means to be one with the Triune God. With the operation comes inclinations, propensities, feelings, thoughts, question marks on things, reservations within us, deeper senses like, “God, my life is filled with the world. So little supply.” You think you are talking to yourself, but that is operation. You are in the cycle now. You are in the circle. You are in the union. You have enjoyed. You have called. You sang. You are supplied. You have the transmission. Now it has reached the stage of operation and the operation is simply a little sense in you that you need to wake up in the morning and set the alarm and spend time with the Lord. Or “Lord, I’ve been accumulating all my money. I have not given that much to the church. I have only given a pittance to the church.” You

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have a thought like that. That is operation. That is God. It is God who is at work in you. That thought is the operation of the divine nature that has been transmitted by supply, and has now reached the stage of an inner operation manifesting itself in your thoughts.

Now you need not only to say “Amen.” The “Amen” must trigger the actual giving to the Lord. Writing the check is the obedience and the cooperation. The Lord said, “I only do what My Father is doing. What I hear, I do.” He actually said, “I *do* it. What you just saw Me do in healing this man on the Sabbath day, I actually did it. I did it because the Father was working in Me, operating, and I did what He said.” That means obedience.

It is at the stage of cooperation with the operation that some of us default to a wrong thought about God doing it in us. We say “God is going to do it. God is going to do it in me.” And at the same time we say that, we do not have the consciousness that the way God is going to do it is by our responding to the impression He has already put within us. He has already put the inclination in us. That is the operation. Now the operation is the signal to respond in word and deed.

In my experience years ago, I remember God put a willingness in me. He put it in there. I prayed for a month. Something that was impossible to me. I kept enjoying the

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fellowship. I got the supply. I got transmission. Then I got the operation. And I felt willing. But you know what? I said, “Lord, I’m willing. I’m willing.” Then there was a carrying out in my experience of the operation. So there is a cycle of operation that we respond to and complete. And when the Lord comes to the churches in His Triune being to search the churches, one of the areas that He speaks to the church in Sardis is that “your works are not completed before My God” (Rev. 3:2). That means you stopped with the operation and did not carry it into the cooperation.

The principle of cooperation

The principle of cooperation with the operation is deeply embedded in the New Testament. In Philippians 2:12-13, Paul says, “So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only but now much rather in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is operating in you.” So what we are doing here is the working out of what He is working in or operating. And now we have the most practical example of what it means to work it out in verse 14; “Do all things without murmurings and reasonings.” That means you are tempted to murmur, complain. God is operating in you. You have the fellowship. You

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have the transmission in your heart. And now you have gone home after the meeting and the brothers didn't do the things right, and you are about ready to express your complaint and say something negative. Now at that juncture, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, because it is in those little moments that God is working in you. Now you obey and do not talk. You take His grace. You take His supply. You obey with your mouth (James 3:2-3).

Perhaps the operation takes in the realm of your reasoning. You start thinking, and thinking. How do you handle your thoughts? We handle our thoughts with our spirit union. We call upon Him. We actually obey with the activity of the mind. Instead of allowing it to go on, we cast it down. We obey. We work it out. And we complete the cycle of our oneness with the Triune God. We have the union. We have the fellowship. We have the supply. We have the transmission. We have the operation. And not only that, the final stage is, "Amen, Lord." And I obey. That is the completion of the cycle. And it is in that final "Amen" that we abide. Stay with Him now. Abide in Him. Don't leave Him.

But if we disobey, the Lord will allow some environment to happen, and we go back to union, fellowship, supply, operation. It happens again. Next time around

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there is a consciousness now in us — “Work it out.” Because what happens when you disobey is that the Lord is merciful. You get dry. You get more irritable. He kind of just lets His enemies run over you a little bit. Just like He did in the Old Testament, let the enemies come in when they disobeyed until they got desperate, until the obediences were secured. This is right. So there is a working out in God’s operation.

EXAMPLES OF COMPLETING THE OPERATION

Perfecting love

The New Testament has many ways to reveal this principle of cooperating and completing God’s operation. In 1 John 2:5, John says, “Whoever keeps His word, truly in this one the love of God has been perfected.” If you keep His word, “truly in this one the love of God has been perfected.” And then in 1 John 4:12, he says, “No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.” Can you believe? The love of God that has been poured out into my heart, and I am in union with this love, I am partaking of it, enjoying, fellowshiping, and getting supplied with it, and it is operating in me. But that

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indwelling love of God still needs to be perfected in me. When I go across the room and express the divine love to a saint, and carry out the love in my heart to one another, then the love gets perfected. And it is by the perfected love that we abide in God. This is how we abide in God. It is by not only having the feeling to call, the feeling to pray. It is to pray, and it is to call, and it is to go, and it is to actually complete a literal obedience. Do it literally. We perfect the love of God in our obedience.

It is like this life is resident within us. We are joined to the very divine nature. Now He wants to perfect that in us. And it is perfected as we are in fellowship, getting supplied, getting inclined, and then it is perfected in a thousand obediences where we actually do His word, and love one another — then we abide in Him. You stay in Him. So 1 John tells us the love is perfected. Philippians tells us the operating God needs to have something worked out by our doing all things without murmurings and reasonings.

Perfecting holiness

Second Corinthians 7:1 reveals this same principle; “Therefore since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and of

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spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” Holiness is in our holy spirit. We have a holy spirit (2 Cor. 6:6). Our spirit is a holy spirit because the Holy Spirit is in our spirit. It has made our spirit holy. So there is inwardly, intuitively, a sense of separateness, and holiness that is resident within every one of us.

But if we touch the unclean thing and we are not separated from darkness, from the filth of this world, from Belial, from lawlessness, from the contamination and the defilements of the age which are permeating the atmosphere of our present culture, if we live in that, touch that, the Holy Spirit and the holy life within us does not get perfected. I may come to the meeting, enjoy the fellowship, get the supply, enjoy the transmission with God’s operation, then I go to the grocery store and all the defiling things are there. And I pick up the magazine and I start looking. I was just in the meeting. God was working and operating in me, but I didn’t obey the operation in the store. I didn’t perfect the holiness. Paul says, “Let us cleanse *ourselves* from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” Notice how Philippians and Corinthians both say “fear” in relation to God’s operation in us. This is a holy sense that my life is not my own, and God is in me in all those moments waiting for a cooperation and an obedience.

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Can we all say Amen? Amen! We need to say a strong Amen that the Lord would infuse us with the complete cycle of what it means to be one as He and the Father are one. The Lord's whole life was in union, in fellowship, with supply, transmission, operation, and He obeyed all the way to the cross. He just said, "Yes, Father," all the way. And He actually went. Many times He obeyed by not answering what they were asking Him. "Are You this? Did You do this?" He just obeyed, and remained silent (Matt. 27:12-14).

So there is a perfecting of holiness. There is a perfecting of the love. There is a working out of God's operation. This is the cooperation and obedience. This is the part where our fallen humanity is brought back to God to be presented to Him (Rom. 6:19). And these eyes and these ears and these hands and these feet that have been rebellious to God have been brought back to be presented as members for obedience, for saturation for God's expression. That is, God's expression with His image in every member in the Body because of this full and complete cycle of life going on. Brothers and sisters, if we don't have this cycle of life, there is no church. We are only playing a game. This is the way the image is expressed out of every member. It is in this continuous cycle of life in the Triune God.

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Fulfilling obedience

Second Corinthians 10:5 reveals this same principle: “As we overthrow reasonings and every high thing rising up against the knowledge of God, and take captive every thought unto the obedience of Christ.” Then verse 6, “And we are ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.” Paul wanted to do something in the church, but he could not do it because many of the saints had not completed this cycle of cooperation and obedience. He wanted the whole church to be purified from all the rebellion. But many of them were in their reasonings. Their thoughts were uncontrolled. They did not pull down the strongholds. They didn’t obey in their reasoning minds. So as a result, Paul was stifled in his ministry to the church. But he exposes the problem at Corinth — their obedience had not been fulfilled. “When your obedience is fulfilled” God will do more in your lives and in the church. So that means we can go a thousand times from union to operation, and never touch the “fulfilling of the obedience” part where God is requiring an actual step in our experience to fulfill it.

Let me ask before the Lord all of us, are our obediences fulfilled this morning? There is a Triune God operating in us. And the image on this earth hinges on the

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last, final step to abide and then to obey, to follow. This will change a lot. It will change the atmosphere of your home. It will change your whole financial situation. You are encumbered. You are worried. You are anxious. And all God is requiring is that you obey with your money. Obey Him with your money. Let God be the source of that. You and I are not authorized to run our lives. He is the source. Just obey Him in that area. And watch your thinking, your planning, your consideration, change. It says “Seek first the kingdom.” And when He says “seek first the kingdom,” He is talking about your food, your housing, your clothing, and about tomorrow. He is talking about those practical things that we are all concerned about. But He says, “Seek first the kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added.”

I think this verse in Matthew 6:33 is good ground for us to follow the Lord practically. Some criticize at times because saints move for the sake of the church. The Lord says “Don’t worry about your house. Don’t worry about your job. Don’t worry about the future. Seek My kingdom first, and all these things shall be added.” I remember one brother considering a move related to the church. I distinctly said to him, “whatever decision you make, let it be whatever helps you to seek first the kingdom. Do that. Whatever it means practically, seek

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first the kingdom of God. Am I right? We fulfill an obedience and then God propels us on. And you know what? God will come in and do more among us. The enemies will be cast out. The hidden sin will be exposed. God will do much more when one member after another fulfills their obedience. What a mercy. The Spirit searches the churches.

Completing the grace

Paul also unveils this principle of cooperation in 2 Corinthians 8:6: “So we entreated Titus that, even as he began before, so also he would complete for you this grace as well.” That means grace had started in the saints. It was a grace in their hearts to give. But it wasn’t completed. They hadn’t actually done it. They were willing to do it. They had the operation to do it. But a year passed by and they still had not actually done it. So Paul sent a little helper, a little reminder, like our brothers at the end of a meeting gives us a little announcement, a little word, a little reminder. He sent Titus to “complete in you this grace.” There is such a thing as the completion of the grace. And that is in the actual doing of something that He is speaking to you about. So this shows us there is a working, there is a fulfilling. And it is all God. It is God

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doing it in me. It is the grace working and operating in me. And now it has found its operation in my actual obediences and my body being presented and my whole being is getting filled with God and expresses His glory. This is marvelous.

Thorough obedience

In the Old Testament there was King Saul who illustrates how we are *not* to obey. God wanted Saul to go and completely exterminate the Amalekites. Whether we can understand it or not, God spoke that word to Saul (1 Sam. 15:1-3). The Amalekites in the Old Testament represent the flesh, God's enemy. God wanted Saul to obey His word, and He told him, "Do not spare them." "But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep . . ." (1 Sam. 15:9). He wiped out almost everything, but it says he spared Agag and the best of the sheep. The Hebrew word for "spare" means "he had compassion." He had a natural feeling to keep Agag. He did not fully and completely obey. He only obeyed partially. When Samuel came to Saul, Saul glibly said, "I have performed the commandment of the Lord." Then Samuel spoke a strong word to him: "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of lambs. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as

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iniquity and idolatry” (1 Sam. 15:22-23). Saul rejected the word of the Lord by not obeying thoroughly, and the Lord rejected him from being king. Why did Saul spare Agag?” It was a matter of obedience to God to get rid of Agag, but Saul spared him because he used his reasoning mind. The roots of disobedience are found in the reasoning mind.

So, brothers and sisters, with this cycle operating in us, from union, fellowship, supply, operation, let us not spare anything in the cooperation. Don't have compassion on those areas of disobedience, because it may be that we would end up with the Lord coming to us as He did with Sardis and say, “You have a name that you live, but you are dead in actuality because I have not found your works completed before My God.” That means you haven't obeyed Me when I've required it. This is abiding. It is cycle after cycle of enjoyment, supply, transmission, with all of what God is, with that divine operation, and then we obey.

— Bill Freeman
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