

## DEMAND AND SUPPLY

In the Bible the principle that governs man's relationship with God is demand and supply. God deals with fallen man on the basis of the principle of demand and supply. That is, God first measures a man according to *His* standard, then this divine measurement becomes a demand upon him. This demand, in turn, reveals man's failure in coming short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). Finally, man's realization of his failure is intended by God to escort him to Christ. In other words, the measurement and the subsequent demand of God is for one thing — to lead us out of the inability of ourselves into the full supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19).

God desires to supply man with Himself. The way He fulfills this is by first putting a demand upon man to expose his shortness; second, by means of this demand He escorts him out of his own resources into God Himself as his all-sufficient supply (2 Cor. 12: 9-10).

Thus, in God's way of doing things the Word of God is always intended to produce a standard beyond man's ability and capacity. Indeed, God's Word with its divine measurement and high demand, which far exceeds man's natural capacity, is the same Word that leads man to God Himself over and over again. It is this principle that we see governing God's relationship with fallen man, both in the Old Testament under the law and in the New Testament under the higher demand of the law revealed in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5—7). Thus, we can say that *man's extremity revealed by the demand becomes God's opportunity by the supply of Another Life.*

### *The demand of the law*

The demand of the law pushes man beyond his capacity. It exhausts him of his resources. When the law makes its demand upon the flesh, the flesh cannot do it.

This failure results in a sense of discouragement within fallen man. He is discouraged because of his inability to measure up to the law of God. Of course, according to the principle of demand and supply, this is precisely what God intends to produce in man. Indeed, that weak feeling of inability and our discouragement over it become God's way of ushering us into Another life — Christ Himself!

This principle of demand and supply is addressed by the apostle Paul in Galatians 3:21-24: <sup>21</sup> "Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. <sup>22</sup> But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise out of faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. <sup>23</sup> But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. <sup>24</sup> Therefore the law was our tutor [Greek: escort, or guide] to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified out of faith." We can see from these verses that the law has become our escort unto Christ. The law could not *give* life, but it did *lead* and *escort* us to life.

The apostle Paul is a prime example of a person in whom this principle of demand and supply was operating in Romans 7. He was struggling with the demand of the law expressed in the tenth commandment, "You shall not covet." Unlike the other nine commandments that are related to actions, this particular commandment is a commandment on reactions. Basically, the Ten Commandments are commandments on actions, for example, "You shall not kill," "You shall not commit adultery," and "You shall not steal." These are commandments against certain actions. But God so designed the Ten Commandments that they would also include a commandment on reactions. In other words, no one escapes coming up short when measured by the high demand of God's Word.

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### Ministry of the Word, Inc.

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The tenth commandment is “You shall not covet,” or “You shall not feel that way,” or “You shall not react the way you are reacting.” It is a commandment on reactions. The tenth commandment shows how deep sin is in our being. Sin is not just in our actions; it is in our reactions. God’s law exposes sin to the core of our nature, not merely on the surface of our being. Our very reactions are wrong and come short of the divine demands. We are void of the divine love in our reactions. Thus, our fleshly reactions show us that we are sinful at a deeper level than outward actions.

With the apostle Paul in Romans 7, the tenth commandment was a demand upon his inner being. What he did not want to do, even what he hated, is what he found himself doing. This chapter reveals the frustration of a man trying to be right, but continuously falling back into the sinful habits and patterns that he was in bondage to. The law as the divine standard and demand did its work upon Paul — it exposed his inability and weakness.

When we come to the end of Romans 7, we find a man who has been defeated again and again. He is defeated to the point of utter frustration, discouragement, and wretchedness. He cries out in Romans 7:24, “O wretched man that I am! *Who* will deliver me from this body of death?” Thus, the law did a perfect work over Paul — it escorted him to “Who” — Another life. It guided him out of himself to Christ. It so measured him that he no longer was looking at himself or expecting anything from himself. He was exclusively turned to Another life. In Romans 7:25 Paul breaks out and says, “I thank God — through Jesus Christ our Lord!” This is an expression of a man who has been escorted to Christ.

However, many times when we as believers are being measured by the Lord, instead of being escorted to Christ, we are left in our discouragement and depression. We are left with hopeless feelings, feelings of not making it and wanting to give up. Thus, it is imperative to see that the demand of the law is the principle that governs God’s dealings with man. This demand is designed by God to produce a certain effect in man — feelings of failure and frustration. It is these very feelings that serve to escort us to Christ. God uses our frustration to lead us to Another source that we might learn to become a partaker of our continuous supply — Christ, our life.

### *The demand of the Lord’s sayings in Matthew 5—7*

The Lord not only measures us by the law, but even more, He measures us by what He taught in Matthew 5—7. The Lord’s sayings in this section of the Word reveal a higher demand than the Old Testament law. In Matthew 5:17-20 the Lord says, <sup>17</sup> “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup> For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass

from the law till all is fulfilled. <sup>19</sup> Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”

When the Lord speaks of having a surpassing righteousness for entering into the kingdom, He is applying a finer measurement with a much higher demand than the law. The standard of the law could be compared to measuring in “inches,” but the Lord’s sayings in Matthew 5—7 could be compared to measuring in “picas,” which are a fraction of an inch. This means the measurement is much finer and more detailed.

The Lord’s word in Matthew 5—7 measures our emotions, our attitudes, our reactions, our exaggerations, our comments about others — He measures it all! He measures our heart, He measures what we think, He measures the fantasies in our mind, He measures how we look at others, He measures lust, He measures anxiety. He measures how we react in situations that touch our selfishness and personal convenience; for example, going two miles instead of one, or giving our outward coat as well as our inner garment. Nothing escapes being measured.

If we were discouraged by the law of Moses, we are even more discouraged by Matthew 5—7. Indeed, in Matthew 5:48 the Lord reaches the point of saying, “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Perfection in this verse is the demand to love exactly as the Father loves. It is not merely putting up with our enemies, but praying for them and blessing them. Such a measuring of our love finds us all short, but at the same time escorts us to Christ as our life-supply. When we are escorted to Christ, we become *partakers* of His love. This is why the Lord begins Matthew 5—7 with “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3). When we are poor in spirit we realize, for example, that in ourselves we do not have the divine love toward our enemies; we realize we are nothing and can do nothing. It is this sense of nothingness that escorts us to Christ. The Lord’s high standard is intended to cause disappointment over ourselves, in order that we would be drawn away from our own energy and strength to the energy and strength of His life.

In Matthew 5:17 when the Lord said, “I did not come to destroy the law or the prophets but to fulfill,” He meant that *He Himself* would be the fulfillment of all that He taught and commanded. In other words, it was as though He was saying, “I am living the perfect life. I am overcoming sin, the flesh, the world, and the devil. I am bearing the penalty for sin. I am going to be raised from the dead, and I will become a life-giving Spirit to enter into you and

fulfill in you all that I have spoken (Rom. 8:4). Everything is now embodied in Me! Now just learn how to draw from Me, drink of Me, feed upon Me, depend upon Me, and abide in Me. Let your need and sense of nothingness, which comes from being measured by the divine standard, escort you into all that I AM!" Amen!

### *The demand of our environment*

Being measured and confronted by the divine demands is always for the purpose of escorting us to Christ. God uses not only the law and the Sermon on the Mount to measure us, but He also uses our environment. Our environment makes demands upon us that cause us to sense our frailty and weakness. How we meet our environments, face them, and interact with them is used by God to lead us to Christ—our supply. Environments include your husband, your wife, your children, your money, your job — all persons, matters, and things in your daily life that affect you. In fact, environment, according to the biblical understanding, is simply *that which affects us*. A stormy relationship can affect us, money problems can affect us, taking a thought about a past mistake can affect us. Whatever may affect us — this is environment. Environment is like the law making a demand upon us that is beyond our capacity to handle. Just as the law escorts us to Christ, God intends that our environmental trials would also escort us to Christ. This means that we accept the “all things” of Romans 8:28 as being under God’s sovereignty. Categorically, all things are working together for good, because under the mighty hand of God they lead us to Christ.

Environment, which is measured out by God, is always pushing us a little bit too far. We have environments that we cannot cope with in ourselves. We get discouraged. We get depressed. We turn inward upon ourselves and sigh, “How can I go on?” or “I can’t make it.” Oh! brothers and sisters, that’s right! That’s exactly right! God intends that our environments push us beyond our limits.

This experience of being pushed beyond what we’re able to do becomes our guide to escort us to Christ. This was Paul’s experience in 2 Corinthians 1:8-10: <sup>8</sup> “For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. <sup>9</sup> Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, <sup>10</sup> who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us.” Here Paul allowed his “despair of life” to lead him to the God who raises the dead, knowing that He would deliver him. Thus, again and again, every kind of demand in our environment is actually an escort in disguise to lead us to Christ.

A further example of the Lord’s speaking concerning what He intends to accomplish through environmental dealings is found in Deuteronomy 8:2-3: <sup>2</sup> “And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. <sup>3</sup> So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.”

When the Lord said, “to humble you and test you,” He meant “to measure you.” When He said, “to know what was in your heart,” He meant that in their hearts, the children of Israel would discover murmuring and rebellion manifesting itself, and they would find themselves coming short of God’s standard. In other words, all their negative reactions to their environment were allowed by God to escort them to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

The fact that the Lord allowed them to hunger and then fed them with manna signifies that they were pushed beyond their capacity in order that they would be escorted to eat divine food. Not to “live by bread alone” meant not to live by the natural life, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. God was seeking to lead them in the wilderness to learn to live by Him as their source and supply.

In the same way, God humbles us through environments that we just can’t cope with. It’s at those junctures that we need to quickly recognize our escort! The feelings of not being able to cope *are* the escort. Our escorts leading us to Christ come in the form of frustration, desperate feelings, and failure. We need to recognize these escorts and allow them to guide us to live by manna! That is, we allow them to guide us to live by Christ as our bread! Thus, the environmental demand leads to the supply.

The law is beyond our capacity. The Lord’s sayings in Matthew 5—7 are beyond our capacity! Our environments also push us beyond our capacity! All of these things are absolutely God’s favor to us, because He is not leaving us to ourselves. He exhausts us. He allows us to be defeated and feel discouraged. But the problem is this — we do not see discouragement as our escort to Christ! May the Lord open our eyes to see what is happening to us in the midst of our reactions, that we might seize our discouragement and let it escort us to Christ.

Have you had any escorts lately? There is great hope in our escorts. They turn defeat into hope. The most defeated can use their very defeat as an escort to Christ. Whatever the Lord may expose in our lives — our reasoning mind, our divided heart, our motives — causes us to feel undone, naked, and defeated before Him. We

need to realize at that time that the Lord is simply escorting us to Himself. Paul indicates this in Hebrews 4:13: "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." Following this verse in which we are exposed to the core of our being, Paul says in Hebrews 4:16, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." This speaks of being escorted to Christ *at the very time* of being naked and laid bare. Thus, all the demands and all the defeats are our personal escorts to Christ.

The demand of the law, the demand of the Lord's sayings in Matthew 5—7, and the demands of our environment are all arranged by God to lead us out of our own limited capacity and ability. God's intention is to bring us into the resurrected and ascended life of Christ. He wants us to touch the life that has already made it into glory! Touch the life who is the victory! Touch the life that is now dwelling in our spirit!

Now we need to know how to turn to Christ in the midst of our problems and defeats. That is, we need to know how to touch the spirit and how to partake of the One that we are being escorted to. Without this turn to Christ we will still languish in ourselves. But brothers and sisters, there's an installation in us! It is the installation of the Triune God. The Father is in the Son, the Son flows as the Spirit, and the Spirit is joined to our spirit (John 14:20; 7:37-39; 1 Cor. 6:17). When we open our mouths and contact such a God, we open ourselves to all the riches of the Godhead as our supply.

There is nothing that is too hard for Christ. He has already been perfected for us and become the source of our salvation (Heb. 5:9). So what should we do with our defeatedness, our sense of discouragement, our reactions that say "I can't do that! I can't be that way! I can't love that way!?" Simply allow all these to become escorts to lead us to Christ.

To properly understand the Christian life we need to apprehend this divine principle that governs God's relationship with man: wherever there is demand from God, there is always supply waiting to meet that demand. We need only to be escorted to the source of the supply. Whether it is the demand of the law, the Sermon on the Mount, or our environmental dealings — all are to lead us to Christ to interact and fellowship with Him that we might partake of His victorious life.

May this word govern us the rest of our lives, that we would realize again and again that our weaknesses are our escorts out of ourselves into Another life. So, today when our flesh reacts to the Lord's measurement, instead of staying in the reaction, or fueling the reaction, we need to allow the reaction to bring us to Christ in a specific way. Various kinds of reactions — discouragements, defeats,

and temptations — are all our escorts to experience more of Christ.

Brothers, yes, your flesh is lustful. Your lustful feelings affect you in a negative way. But walk in the Spirit and you will turn those feelings into paths to Christ. None of us can change our flesh (John 3:6). It is irreparable and unchangeable. However, while we are still in these mortal bodies as redeemed children of God, God uses the flesh to lead us to Christ over and over again! Therefore, when we allow our greatest weakness to escort us to Christ, it will become the factor of our greatest supply of life.\*

—Bill Freeman

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\*This article is edited from the book, *The Church Is Christ*, by Bill Freeman and may be ordered for \$13.95 postpaid from Ministry Publications, PO Box 48255 or call (800) 573-4105 / (509) 466-4777 / E-mail: [ministry@thechristian.org](mailto:ministry@thechristian.org).

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### RELOCATION TO SPOKANE

Greetings to all receivers of *the Christian* periodical! We would like to update our readers concerning the recent relocation of our offices. We are now located at 205 W. Hawthorne Rd., Spokane, Washington 99218, and are receiving mail at **Ministry of the Word**, PO Box 48255, Spokane, WA 99228, USA. Phone numbers: (509) 466-4777, and (800) 573-4105; Fax: (509) 468-4222; and email and website remain the same as below.

Due to this period of transition, the last published issue of *the Christian* was the April-July 2004 issue, making a total of three issues for 2004. Now that we are newly settled, we will resume our bi-monthly publishing. Thank you for your prayers, patience, and support during this time.

Please let us know if you would rather receive a free email edition instead of a printed copy, and/or if you would like to be removed from the mailing list.

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