

SERVANT LEADERSHIP
BY
Calvary Chapel Outreach Fellowship

Lesson 20
Exhortation to Maturity, Part I

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I want to do a two-part study on “Exhortation to Maturity.” Now, nobody likes to be criticized. I sure do not like to be criticized, but as a Christian man I have learned the value of being criticized. You have to allow someone in your life to tell you honestly, “Hey, your breath smells.” Someone has to tell you honestly, “Hey, that cologne stinks, man.” Or “Hey man, you have lettuce on your teeth.” Someone has to be honest with you.

The Bible says this: “Faithful are the wounds of a friend” ([Proverbs 27:6](#)). A friend will hurt you at times, but a true friend is someone who loves you and tells you the truth. It also says: “But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”

David gets more poetic when he said this:

Let the righteous strike me;
It shall be kindness.
And let him rebuke me;
It shall be an excellent oil;
Let my head not refuse it. ([Psalm 141:5](#))

What is David saying? “I am not above correction, but if someone is going to correct me, I want a righteous person to correct me.” He says, “And he can even strike me in the head and it will be excellent oil.” Oil was used as a medication. So David says that the criticism—whatever is going to admonish or exhort me—if it is from a righteous man, it will be good for me.

The Bible says in the book of Proverbs:

Reprove a wise man and he will love you; reprove a scornful man and he will jump on you [or he will hit you]. (cf. [Proverbs 9:8](#))

And there are people who do not like to be corrected. When you want to correct those types of people you must be very cautious; you know when you correct them, they are basically going to pounce on you. So they go along in life without correction, thinking that their own deviation is okay with everybody around them; and in reality, everybody around them says they are off the wall.

Nobody likes to be corrected. You see, there are different kinds of correction or criticism. There is corrective criticism and there is malicious criticism and there is constructive criticism and there is destructive criticism. So you need to figure out which type of criticism it is.

In [Job 5:17](#) he says:

Behold, happy *is* the man whom God corrects;
Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty.
For He bruises, but He binds up;

He wounds, but His hands make whole.

This means when God corrects you it is not going to feel very good, but there are people who do not have the same good intentions for you that God does. There are people who like to correct others and that type of correction becomes destructive correction. It comes from malicious people who are not only there to tell you your faults and blemishes, but they want to put you down. They want to put you away and castigate you and marginalize you. They want to belittle you and do these evil things against you and those people are not there to build you up.

I have nothing to gain by teaching this and I am not trying to exploit you or marginalize you. I am not trying to belittle you and that is not why I am giving this message. In John 21 Jesus speaks to Peter saying: “Love my sheep; tend my lambs; feed my sheep” (cf. [John 21:15-17](#)). God never told anyone to beat His sheep and I am not about to beat the sheep. I love you as a shepherd and I want you to grow and be mature.

I have noticed that there are a lot of people who Paul calls “carnal Christians” in 1 Corinthians 3. He says,

I wish I could speak to you as mature Christians, but you are not. You are still infants, babies in Christ. I fed you milk and I cannot give you solid food. And still today you are infants, you are carnal people in the way you behave and the way you conduct yourself by having strife and hatred and envy and bitterness. Aren't you behaving like mere men? (cf. [1 Corinthians 3:1-4](#)).

And Paul said they were carnal Christians.

I want to share with you from Romans 8 and also from 1 Corinthians 3. This will be part one in the “Exhortation to Maturity” study. Please turn to Romans 8.

Paul the apostle says in [Romans 8:1](#)

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Verse 1 anticipates what is coming and gives you a description of what Paul is about to say. First of all, the word “walk” or “walking” basically means our conduct or our behavior. It is how we conduct the every day affairs of our life—that is what he means by “walk.” He says that “there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” The word “condemnation” comes from the same root word, “to be condemned”—perhaps condemned to a life sentence. You are condemned because you are a prisoner. You were found guilty after the evidence was presented. The judge sent down a sentence saying you were condemned to life; therefore, you are guilty.

The Bible says for Christians, “there is no condemnation.” We do not feel that same guilty feeling that we felt before we became Christians. I was always feeling guilty like I did something wrong because I had. And this was the feeling of culpability; in fact, today when you go to a medical facility and you tell the doctor that you always feel guilty, it is a very common emotional malady. It is very common and some medical specialists refer to that as “the culpability factor.” Everybody has it they say. But the Bible says that before we became Christians, the Holy Spirit would convict us of sin through our conscience. There is conviction and condemnation. First you have been convicted and then you are condemned. The word “convicted” is where you realize that the evidence is stacked against you. Everything is against you and you realize when you hear the word of God, that you need God.

In John 1 we see two disciples of John the Baptist. And when John said, “Behold the Son, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,” the Bible says that these two disciples of John the Baptist disengaged from under him and they began to follow Jesus. And Jesus turns around and asks them, “What are you looking for.” And they say, “Rabbi,” [which means master or teacher] “where are You staying, where are you dwelling, we want to speak to you” (cf. [John 1:38](#)). And Jesus gives them the invitation, “Come and see.” The Bible says that they spent the whole night with Jesus and the next day these two disciples were so transformed that they left to find their loved ones immediately. Something happened to them when the spent time with the Lord. And I made an observation from this passage that Jesus understands the inclinations of man’s heart.

What do I mean by the inclinations of the heart? I mean that we have certain bents in our hearts. Other people cannot see them, but we feel them. There is a certain bent toward a certain way. I noticed when there is sincerity in people’s lives, and God sees that sincerity. He sees when we have an inclination and we come to a place in our life where we say that we need God. It is not a feeling caused by medicine, it is not a relationship, it is not money or position, it is not education, or anything social; we just have an empty feeling because we need God in our life. And then we come to church searching and God sees the inclination in our heart and He will also ask, “What are you seeking?” And in our heart of hearts we respond, “I am seeking You, Lord.” And God will tell us, “Come and see.”

But some people go to church for the wrong reasons—because everybody is doing it. Or perhaps you are a Christian, but you are not walking near the Lord. It is just the same old thing, business as usual and there is no dynamic, no pizzazz, and no open doors of development. This is a condition of arrested development. But notice that Paul says, “There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ.” He talks about conducting ourselves either in the spiritual realm or conducting ourselves in the flesh. When we read Romans, we find the consequences of having the mind of the flesh, having the conduct of the flesh, being motivated by the flesh, and the consequences of living in the flesh.

Whereas, when you adhere to and submit to the spiritual elements, you will see the results of what happens. And I want you to read it. I am not going to read it to you. You

cannot blame me and say, “Well, Pancho, that is your philosophy, that is what you are saying.” I am just going to read the Scriptures and let the Holy Spirit speak to you for what it is. I believe, as a pastor, there are too many Christians who do not have a propeller. There are too many Christians who do not have a mast in their ship. There are too many Christians who have no helm on the ship. There are too many Christians driving without realizing that there is no gasoline in their tank. There are so many people spinning their wheels and there is no dynamic in their Christianity. There is no development and they are standing in a condition of arrested development.

Many years ago I worked at the local Women’s Hospital. Over a period of time I worked in all four units and unit four was the psych hospital. I was put into a unit that I never even knew existed at the women’s hospital. It was a clinic called “Failure to Thrive.” This is a medical problem that occurs when a baby is not developing right. A baby could be eighteen months or two years old and the baby looks like he is only five months old. It is a grave, grave, disturbing and alarming situation. This baby is already supposed to be walking and growing and it is a serious matter.

This same illustration can be applied to many Christians who have been walking with the Lord for fifteen years, but they are in a state of arrested development. They are not growing spiritually because they are carnal Christians, and their behavior at this point is that they are powerless and impotent. They do not know how to behave. They resort to the flesh and to their own attitudes and there is no divine intervention or illumination. They have no personal revelation and there is none because the carnal Christian does not read his Bible. The carnal Christian goes to church and listens to a man. I pray that the Holy Spirit will see you because this church is a Bible-believing church. The Bible gives us instructions, not the philosophy of a knucklehead. It is the way of life. It is the Spirit that gives life and anoints the believer. It is the Spirit that enlightens us and tells us what to do.

You see, when something is going wrong in our life, we like to quote a certain Scripture. If someone says, “Oh, I just lost my job,” another person will say, “All things work for good—[Romans 8:28](#).” “NO, NO! You see I got fired because I was stealing.” “Oh, it does not work for you then.” You see we like to quote that Scripture, but we can take it out of context and when used for a pretext, then it is out of context. When you read [Romans 8:28](#) in context, we are told in order for the Scripture to work—“when all things work together for good”—we must be walking in the Spirit.

Notice [Romans 8:26](#) says,

The Spirit also helps us in our weaknesses for we do not know what we should to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

You come to a situation in your life and you see that life is not static. Life is not predictable, but life is unpredictable and life changes. You think I lost my hair over a period of time? No, one day, man—one day! I did a film with Viet Nam veterans and I

think I got contaminated with Agent Orange from them. I did a movie called *Quiet Hope* and I had hair. It was good and I can show you that I had hair like Sal Mineo. I had hair and after that one day, I woke up and I looked at the pillow and there was enough hair to make two wigs from all the hair I lost. And I said, “What happened? I am losing my hair!” And it freaked me out! It was like boom, instantly gone! So that is not a normal day for me. For you it would not be a normal day. Every day is a factor in our lives. You may become a mother, a parent, you open up a business, you go through a malady, an infection, you have a disease, you have children who now have children of their own, you have to buy a house, and every day the circumstances change. Some circumstances become overwhelming for us at times.

Sometimes we do not even know what to pray and how to pray for situations. You see, in different cultures we have ways to express pain. I can say, “Aye, Aye, Aye.” And I did not say a word to you, but you know what that means by the way it sounds. Someone else may say, “Ehm, Ehm, Ehm.” And I know what that means. Other people say, “Whooo wheeeee!” These things express something that we cannot articulate. And we make a sound that accentuates the pain in a groaning manner. When we cannot articulate how we feel, the Bible says that the Holy Spirit speaks for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.

[Romans 8:27](#) says,

Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*,
because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

It is not our will; it is God’s will. Our minds and our hearts are governed and controlled by the Holy Spirit. You see, we are out of the equation. Why the mind and why the heart? They are important and the Bible says that: “the peace of God passes understanding and the peace of God guards your mind and your heart” (cf. [Philippians 4:7](#)). When we are going through a difficult situation, our heart and our mind have to be hygienically stabilized because if they are not, we will go crazy and make the wrong decisions. When we go by the feelings in our heart, we are going to make the wrong assessments and we are going to anticipate that something is wrong. When the peace of God overwhelms us, we do not even know what to do or what to say. But the Holy Spirit comforts us and Jesus makes intercession for us and our mind and our hearts are conquered by the governor of peace Himself.

Now we can read [Romans 8:28](#),

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love
God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

People who have no purpose in life wake up each day and they say, “Life stinks and there is no purpose.” It is just another stinking blue day.” They have no hope. Every day the Bible says, “We have graces from God and His mercies are new every morning” (cf. [Lamentations 3:22-23](#)). I thank God that I have learned the value of getting up in the

morning and praising the Lord for another day. If you are under fifty, you do not understand that. I wake up each day and say, “Thank the Lord.” And I am learning and being disciplined by the Master Himself and that is His purpose for me.

So, Paul the apostle said,

There is no condemnation to those who are in Jesus Christ who do not walk [behave or conduct themselves] according to the flesh but according to the spirit. (cf. [Romans 8:1](#))

Notice the word “flesh” and the word “spirit.” These are two motivating forces. Paul gave it a nickname because we have two characters. We have the new man which is a Christian, and we have the old man with the old nature. Paul says that the old man will never leave us. He will not depart from us until we depart from these bodies. He calls it “this body of death,” and the old man is full of passion and lust and guilt and shame. The kind of life that we used to live before coming to Christ, now needs to be mortified. Kill the old man and you need to see how to bury the old man.

We are not killing the old man by singing the song, “Wishing and hoping and dreaming...” We will not be able to do it that way. Many people say, “Lord, please help me with my flesh.” What do you mean, “help you with your flesh?” That is like the little lady who was yelling at the church, “Pastor, pray for me. There are too many cobwebs in my house.” Now this is not literally, but in a figurative sense there were problems in her home and the house was in chaos. And every Sunday she would say, “Pastor, pray for me there are a lot of cobwebs in my house!” And one day the pastor got so upset after hearing this twenty times, he prayed: “Lord we ask you to kill the spider!”

Why are we asking the Lord to help us with our flesh? We are being like the lady with the cobwebs. The apostle Paul uses the words, “walk according to the flesh,” which means that one is “working toward” or “having an appetite for” the things of the flesh or the world. As Christians, we need to walk according to the Spirit. Apart from the Spirit, we naturally have no interest in the things of God, but our interest is only in the world.

There are women who come in for counseling and they have boyfriends who are not Christians. And there are guys in our church who are seeing girls that are from Egypt, in other words they are worldly; they are Egyptians—they dress, walk, act and dance like an Egyptian. Both will come in and say to me, “Pastor, pray for us.” No the Bible clearly says to separate from that worldly person because you have nothing in common. The girl thinks she is going to get married and once they are married they are going to travel around the world partying. And the Christian man thinks when they get married they are going to go to church on Sunday and Wednesday nights. And his girlfriend thinks: “He is crazy—what is church?” But they both say that they love each other and I can see that there will be problems ahead for them.

How are we to be walking and dealing with the flesh ourselves? We will read it now in [Romans 8:2](#)—

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

So, this is a very graphic contrast. Those people have the mind (that means their appetite) where their time, their energy, their planning, their forethought, and everything is surrounding the flesh. And what is the flesh? Well the word *sarkikos* is the Greek word for flesh. It means meat, body meat. But when you translate *sarkikos* into the Latin language it becomes *carnes*. That is where we get the word meat, plain meat like *chili con carne*. However, when we speak about a carnal man, it means the fleshly desires. It is characterized by physical rather than intellectual or spiritual orientation. It is giving too much heed to the carnal aspects of day to day life. They are more concerned about themselves and they have the mentality of the world.

And that is why Paul says, “You are a carnal man because I cannot speak to you as a mature Christian; you are still drinking milk” (cf. [1 Corinthians 3:2](#)). Now, there is nothing wrong with drinking milk. Babies that were just dedicated cannot eat *menudo* because they will die. Their little digestive tract can only digest mother’s breast milk or formula—that is all. But in time, babies need to be given vegetables and then when they get their little deciduous teeth, we can start giving them food. And later on they get so big that you have to take them to Tommy Burgers to get two burgers and fries and two malts and root beer and then they want a pastrami! And you ask yourself what happened? He is growing and he is maturing. It is normal when you see a baby drinking milk. They are sucking and getting nourishment and it is wonderful. But can you imagine seeing a sixteen-year-old boy or girl with a bottle? It is not funny. You instantly think that something is wrong.

When Christians are being carnal, we cannot see their baby bottles, but we can see their childish behavior. Now, God wants us to be childlike, in other words, there is a good and a bad side to it. When you are a child you believe everything and you are so simple. You are not complicated.

Years ago we used to have a beat up old BMW 2002, which was a high precision car. It was beat up but the motor was right on. And sometimes my daughters would be in the back seat strapped in with the seat belts. And they would complain because the windows did not work, and sometimes the engine did not start. And I wanted to make them

appreciate my car because they were embarrassed by it when they were about four years old. They complained that the heater did not work and the windows would not go up and they would be freezing, and so I had to dress them up warmly. But I would tell them that we had turbo power! They would ask what that was—turbo power? And I would push this button and then we would go flying fast. It was the turbo button that I pressed, which was a lighter that did not work, and I would step on the gas and we would speed forward. Duo-turbo! And they would tell all of their friends, “Our car is not good, but we have a turbo and we go fast.” They would tell everyone their daddy just pushes the turbo button and we go so fast.

And for a long time I kept them believing that until they found out later on that I had no turbo. But they believed it because they were *childlike*. But being *childish* is basically behaving like a brat. Someone who says, “Don’t tell me what to do.” But wait a minute, when you tell somebody the meaning and you want to correct something—“Honey, let me tell you something, your breath smells like a dragon.” Or you could say something like, “Honey, can I share something with you? You know that I love you and I married you, but you know what? Your breath smells.” This is corrective, not vindictive or malicious. “You eat too much.” “What are you trying to tell me?” “You just eat a lot.” “Well, what does that mean?” And our natural response is to defend ourselves and we come back and we defend ourselves by saying, “Don’t tell me what to do.” And that is the reaction that we all have. We are not to get upset with others because we all have that in us.

We must give correction the way God wants us to do it, with gentleness. When someone has a broken bone, we do not come to that person and hastily grab the limb and say, “Let me fix it. It is going to hurt you but I am going to put it back in place and then we will put it in a cast.” Rather, we must explain that it will hurt but we are going to gently put it back in place and then we will cast it. We warn that it is going to hurt, but that we are there to help them and medically treat them.

The Bible says that the Son of God produces life in [verse six](#).

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

So when someone is walking in the flesh, he is conducting himself in the flesh, governed by the flesh, monitored by the flesh, thinking of the flesh, his heart is of the flesh; then the Bible says that person is not ready to be governed by God. Because there is hate in his mind, there is enmity toward God. And Paul is speaking to people who always have a chip on their shoulders against the things of God.

Some people who have not wanted to work will complain to God, “You said that you would take care of me and I am going through changes. Why am I going through changes?” And God, as a loving Father, will tell you: “It ain’t me, babe! It ain’t about me, it is about you. You do not want Me to be a part of your life. You profess Me, but

you do not possess Me. You call out for Me, but only when you are in trouble. You do not want Me to speak to you. You do not pick up My Word. You do not even pray. And all of a sudden You think I am a magic genie for you.” They complain, “I got problems, Jesus, Jesus, come.” And they think that He will appear at their service. It does not work that way. That is not reality!

Think about this correlation. Do you have children? If you have a child who never speaks to you and does not want to call you up, does not even email or send a postcard, not even a call on Thanksgiving; but when he is in trouble he calls you from Idaho and says, “Daddy, I am in a drug rehab.” You may say, “Oh, it is Daddy now? Where have you been, your mother has been worried to death.” And so parents understand this type of relationship. There are a child who never speaks, governed by the flesh, propelled by the flesh, and yet they want to have a relationship with God.

The Bible says when your mind is controlled by the flesh and your mind and heart are governed by the flesh, it is enmity against God. The flesh can never please God because God is not in the physical realm. Now do you understand that [Romans 8:28](#) does not work for everybody? And people use that verse very liberally. Whatever you are going through they will quote that verse to you. A woman’s husband left her. [Romans 8:28](#) does not work because she tried to kill her husband. That Scripture does not belong to that person. It is applicable when you are walking in the Spirit of God. This does not mean that you are going to be exempted from problems, you understand that? Just because you are walking in the Spirit, it does not give you some kind of inoculation to not go through pain without feeling it.

When we are walking in the Spirit, we cannot think that there will be no problems. Oh, the electric bill gets paid, my A/C is working, my heater is working, I have cable and the big screen, and this is all great because I am walking in the Spirit. No, that is not how it works. Realize that when we are walking in the Spirit sometimes there is even more battle because the enemy realizes that we are girding up to fight him. We are saying, “Enough is enough. I am going to dedicate my life to Jesus. I am going to be committed to the things of God. I have been walking in the flesh too long.” Do we think we are the only ones who know that? The enemy will not let it rest.

When someone is walking in the flesh the enemy has him in a state of amnesia until he wakes up spiritually. Now the devil is concerned. There will be about twenty of his cohorts waiting outside and they are going to try to get this person to change his mind about walking in the Spirit. They will try to tell this person that the pastor was talking trash. They want him to be their buddy and go party. They will say that the pastor does not know anything and he is talking about Someone (Jesus) who means nothing to him.

But God may be rousing you and He is awakening you spiritually. Some of you who are walking in the flesh as Christians, you know that it is not right. You know it is not proper. You know that you are not developing or growing and you know why. You are still dealing under the table. Maybe you are married and you are still goo-goo eyes at that guy or that girl at the office, and you are wondering if you a “still have it.” I know these

things because sometimes I walk around or I ride around in my car and I want to see if people are looking at me. Nobody looks at me!

My children and I saw a guy driving by himself in an SUV and he had a television monitor in the front, television monitors in the second-row seats, and two more monitors in the back. The windows were all open, all the television monitors were on and he was by himself. He might as well have worn a sign: “Look at me!” And of course I looked at him and my son said, “Don’t look at him dad, that’s what he wants us to do. Don’t look at him.” I said, “I have to look at him, I want to see what kind of fool he is. I just want to see what he is doing.” He stopped and he was watching the television like it was some program that he needed to watch. It was so sad. “Look at me,” he was saying to the world.

Nobody looks at you and yet you are wondering if you still have it and you are trying to play the field. Listen, if you are married, you cannot play the field. You do not even have a catcher’s mitt, you have nothing! You cannot play the field! And so, when you are wheeling and dealing in the things of the flesh, listen to some agricultural insight: if you are planting corn, do not expect watermelon. As you go to the harvest at harvest time, do not be amazed that it is corn that you have produced. It is corn because you planted corn.

The Bible says, “Do not be deceived, whatever you sow, that you will reap” ([Galatians 6:7](#)). So if you are planting seeds of deceit, seeds of the flesh, seeds of the yahoo stuff, and then you come for the harvest and then you will realize that it is a bad harvest! And you wonder why? So now that you realize this, you understand your mistake. And then you begin to plant seeds of the Spirit and in time, when the harvest comes, you will reap the rewards of planting seeds of the Spirit.

You may think I am making this up, but in [Romans 8:8-9](#) it says,

So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

So, if you are not a Christian and you have not received Christ, the Holy Spirit is not in you.

Remember that God sees the inclination of your heart. If you are searching for God, He will meet you (cf. [James 4:8](#)). But even if you are just doing it because everybody else is doing it and you were brought in and forced to church, know that God divinely brings people to a place by His sovereignty and in His providence. He often uses a friend, a neighbor, a co-worker to bring people to the place where they can hear Jesus say, as He did to His disciples, “Come and see.” And now you are hearing. Not only are you coming and seeing, but now you are listening to the Word of God. There is a condemnation, a guilt, and a shame without Christ. The moment we receive the Lord Jesus Christ, we do not see it, but supernaturally the Holy Spirit, the presence of God comes upon us.

Jesus spoke about the Comforter. Before He went to the cross, Jesus was in the upper room and there is a whole discourse in the Gospel of John 13 through 16 of the dialogue that went on there. Jesus dropped the bomb on His disciples. He said, “I am leaving, I have been telling you that I am leaving. I must go but I will not leave you as orphans” (cf. [John 14:18](#)). Now when we think of orphans, we think of a child without parents. The Greek word is *orphanos*, but that is not what it means. The word *orphanos* literally means “comfortless.”

Now, how would you describe someone who is comfortless? Well the epitome of someone who is comfortless is a child without the love of a mother and a father. So, Jesus said,

Listen, I have to go away, but I will not leave you comfortless. But I will send you another Comforter. And when He comes He will come in you and upon you and He will guide you, He will lead you into all things. He will tell you about the things of the future and He will bring to mind the things that I have shared with you. He will bring you to remembrance. He will lead you in all things and testify of Me and when He comes He will guide you. (cf. [John 14](#))

And that is what Paul is talking about— the Holy Spirit coming “upon” us.

If you do not have Jesus Christ in your heart, the Spirit is not in you. Now, you need to think about this. In [Romans 8](#), Paul is speaking to Christians who are carnally minded. They have salvation in Christ, but they have not completely surrendered their old life to Him. Regarding this, one commentator said:

Many carnal Christians are found in the church. These are Christians in whom Christianity is not dominating their lives. The world still has much power over them and much attraction for them and they allow the enemy to hinder them. They love Christ, but not enough to lead them to live very near to Him. They are chiefly living for fault and failure.

Let’s continue in [Romans 8:9-11](#).

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

10 And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to [quicken] your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Now he says that the kind of power that the Spirit works upon us is a similar explosive power to that which raised Jesus from the dead. He said if that Spirit also dwells in you (and He does) he said that He will give life to your mortal bodies. What does mortal mean? It means that eventually we are going to die. But before we die, as we are living—like the King James terminology says—“The Holy Spirit will quicken us.” It means He will revitalize you. It means spiritual pizzazz!

My wife used to work at a clinic before we got married and I would go pick her up. And at this facility they would give vitamin B12 injections to people who were lethargic. I was not lethargic, I was a wired coffee bean. I was naturally wired up. But one time she said “Pancho, you need to feel better. We nurses always give shots to each other, especially on Monday we shoot each other up and we go at it.” So I agreed to take the B12 and they gave me a shot and boom! I do not know if you have ever had a vitamin B12 shot or how you responded, and maybe it was psychosomatic, but I tell you what, it was like I worked double-time and it was legal. It just gave me an edge and it was something that metabolically happened to me.

I know that is a sad illustration for what Paul is saying and I apologize, but understand that the Holy Spirit will quicken us and will revitalize us. It has nothing to do with man’s efforts. We cannot just wish or hope for it. No, it is none of our doing. All God wants from us is a yielding and a submission. And when we surrender to the Lord, the criticism becomes instructive and that changes us. And that is just the beginning when we acknowledge Christ in our heart.

The second step after we acknowledge in our heart, and we yield to Him in our heart and what He wants us to do—then we are to do it. That is the second step. And the third step is to submit to Jesus Christ. Let Him change us from the inside out.

Now notice what he says in [verses 12-13](#),

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Wait a minute, [Romans 8:13](#) says, “But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of our flesh, you will live.” So it has nothing to do with us saying, “I am going to take care of it. I am going to do it.” We cannot. We had been trying to do that on our own for years. We have to allow God to do it. Sure there are things that we need to do ourselves. If you are in an illegal relationship, it is your responsibility to end it. Do not wait for God to give you a revelation that you are living in fornication. Do not ask God what you should do if you are seeing a married woman. That is adultery!

“Lord I am about to rob a Seven-Eleven, what should I do?” That is robbery! That is a 211! Sometimes you do not have to pray because it is simple logic. You do not have to pray for that. You have to do what is logical and legal! But the illogical, the

impractical—which is the inability to do it on your own—is a God thing. That is when we say, “God this is for You. I cannot do it. I do not love my husband. He is a creep.” God will put that love in your heart supernaturally.

You might say, “God I am tired of hearing my wife yap, yap, yap. God help me.” And then when you hear that “yap, yap, yap” you say, “I love you.” So, what happened? Well, there was a transformation that took place, and that is what you needed. But when you are responding and reacting in the flesh, then you are part of the problem and not part of the solution.

The Bible says in [Romans 8:13](#), “by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body”—kill it.

Romans [8:15-17](#) says,

15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.

You see, when we receive Jesus Christ, “the Spirit of God is not a Spirit of timidity but He is a Spirit of power and of sound mind” ([2 Timothy 1:7](#)). And God says that we become adopted, we become children and by the Spirit we begin to cry out *Abba*, Father. Now what does *Abba* mean? It is a term of endearment that is very personal. None of you call me “Poppy”—my daughters call me “Poppy.” My children call me “Poppy.” You see there is a certain way that they call me Poppy. But when my girls want to seek a quality decision, they have learned as adults to seek the God of their father, but at times they want that human touch and they ask, “Poppy, can I have a word with you? I am going through a decision making process and I was wondering...” And that is when I give all of my attention to them. Why?—because of my love for them. We raised them, they are our children, our flesh and blood; and because they are our children, we listen to them.

In the same way when you and I become children of God and when we need His assistance to work in our lives by the Spirit, the Spirit causes and induces us involuntarily to seek after the things of God because the Spirit causes you to yield. And in humility you cry out, “Abba Father.”

And then when we read [Romans 8:28](#), “All things work for good to those who love God and are called of God according to His purpose.” Why? It is because the Spirit of God is prompting and protecting us, leading us, guiding us, opening doors, protecting our minds and our hearts. God is interceding for us up in heaven. And although it had been a closed door, a closed door, a closed door, God now miraculously opens the door. And we ask how a particular thing happened? All things work for good for those who love God and

are called of God. He has a purpose for our life. When we allow God's purpose to be done in our life, we no longer have to trust in the flesh.

It is no longer, "I am doing this, I want to do this I want to open this door. Abba Cadabba, Ali Babba, open this door!" When you open all the doors, you will realize that behind every door it is empty and there is nothing. There is nothing but a dark room with broken toys or maybe it is a thrift shop instead of the palace where God wants you to go. God has doors open for you and all you have to do is trust Him and say, "Lord, the world is crashing against me. I don't trust anybody, Abba Father." And with groaning you submit to His Lordship because "all things work for good for those who love God and are called of God" (cf. [Romans 8:28](#)).

May the Lord bless you.