



2 Cor. 3:18

Open Face

One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness

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The Source of Sin

David Clayton



The Roman Catholic Church has a list of seven sins which they classify as the “*Seven Deadly Sins.*”

“The Seven Deadly Sins, also known as the Capital Vices or Cardinal Sins, is a classification of objectionable vices that has been used since early Christian times to educate and instruct followers concerning fallen humanity’s tendency to sin. The currently recognized version of the list is usually given as wrath, greed, sloth, pride, lust, envy, and gluttony. (Wikipedia)

It is interesting and in a way, pitiful that any Christian institution should become so confused as to the true nature of mankind’s problem as to view sin in this superficial way. The list of seven “Deadly Sins,” seems to be arbitrary and there seems to be no pattern as to why these particular seven things were

chosen. Catholicism seems to embrace the view that sin is primarily the result of individual elements of human desire, behaviour or attitudes. I wondered as I looked at the list why only seven things were chosen. If I were to approach the question of sin in this way, I can think of 20 things that I might add to the list, why stop at seven?

What is even more interesting to me is the realization that many of us in Adventism hold to a concept of sin which is based on the same approach as Catholicism takes and not surprisingly, this results in the same solutions as those adopted by Catholicism. When we regard sin as being primarily an action, or a lack of self-control, we inevitably approach the problem of sin in a legalistic way. The solution to the sin-problem becomes a matter of a change of habits, a change of actions, a matter of self-control and discipline. It is true that these factors become evident in the renewed life of the person who is victorious over sin, but it is a mistake to believe that victory over sin is the result of changed behaviour. Changed behaviour is the result of victory, it is not the reason for victory.

The root of sin

The sin-problem is primarily a problem related to the nature which carnal humanity possesses, and not so much to the actions or attitudes demonstrated by mankind. This is plainly taught by the Scriptures.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, nei-

ther indeed can be. (8) So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. (Rom 8:7-8)

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. (Rom 7:14)

Man’s primary problem is not what he does, but what he is. The problem is that the unconverted man is “carnal,” he has a fleshly nature, his mind is at enmity with God, his nature is in constant conflict with the will of God.

Victory in Christ

The Bible tells us that those who are in Christ become new creatures, they become partakers of the divine nature, the carnal mind is put to death, they are in the spirit and not in the flesh, and consequently, sin no longer has dominion over them. The biblical testimony concerning this change which takes place is overwhelming. In 1 John 3:9 we read:

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (1 John 3:9)

Again we read in Romans 6:1,2,

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? (2) God forbid. How

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion of the truths committed to the Advent movement, as believed and taught by the early Adventist pioneers. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? (Rom 6:1-2)

Notice where the emphasis is placed in these two verses: We do not commit sin, we do not live any longer therein. We do not indulge in the **actions** of sin, but why? It is because we are **born** of God, it is because we are **dead** to sin. The actions of sin no longer dominate our lives because the root of sin, the carnal nature, or the body of sin, or the old man, has been put to death and we are born again by uniting with Christ in His death and resurrection. The **nature** of sin is dead, therefore the actions of sin have no more place in our lives. As Paul puts it,

For he that is dead is freed from sin. (Rom 6:7)

This is the truth of the word of God. Over and over we see this emphasis in the Bible and especially in the New Testament. We do not overcome sin by attempting to do battle with sin, no, we overcome sin by finding our place in Christ. In Him, the carnal mind which

is the root of sinful actions, is put to death and is replaced by the mind of Christ, thus, sin is defeated in one stroke.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. (John 15:5)

Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. (1 John 3:6)

All of this is wonderfully true. Yet, some of us may have found that in spite of these wonderful promises and assurances in God's word, in spite of the fact that the way is so clearly and unmistakably outlined in the Bible, in spite of the understanding which has come to our minds, we still find ourselves from time to time falling into acts of transgression and dishonouring God. This may have caused discouragement and confusion. How is this possible? If so much is promised by God, who cannot lie, and if we have accepted His word, why is it that we do not always see the power of Christ manifested in us, in constant victory over sin?

The Deadliest Sin

In examining the experiences of the first sinners, Lucifer, and Adam and Eve, some thoughts came to my mind which helped me to see more clearly that there is an underlying factor behind all sin. I don't mean the actions of sin, or the nature of sin in this case – I mean all sin, no matter how we define it. There is a most dangerous **attitude** which really lies at the foundation of all sinful actions and this is what I regard as the most deadly sin of all. It may not be sin in the commonly understood sense of the word," but I am classifying it as sin, because it is indeed the cause of all sin.

God has given us all things in Christ. This is a most wonderful and indisputable truth. The apostle Paul speaks of this provision in the following words:

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (10) And

ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: (Col 2:9-10)

In Him we lack nothing. All victory over sin, all the power of the holy spirit, all are ours in Christ. There is no place for Satan to overcome us, no room for the actions of sin to manifest themselves in our lives. Yet, we sometimes fail! Why? We find the answer as we consider the following truth:

(For we walk by faith, not by sight:) (2 Cor 5:7)

All the abundance, all the fulness of Christ is indeed ours, but the one condition to receiving and walking in all these blessings is that we maintain our place in Him **by faith**. We walk, we live, we exist by faith, and only by faith. In other words, all that Christ has made available is ours, already ours in the fullest possible sense, but only accessible to us as we maintain our place in Him by faith. It is not that God turns off the channel of blessing if we don't exercise faith, no, it is that faith is the hand that takes hold of the benefits of the spiritual realm. It is like breathing, God does not say, "if you don't breathe I wont give you any air. No, the air is provided and we inhale it with our nostrils and so partake of its benefits. In a similar way, all God's blessings are available in Christ, and are received by the faith of the believer. When we stop believing, stop trusting, it is like a man who chooses to stop breathing, we cut off the channel to the blessing. It is not God who withholds the benefit, but we who reject it.

Yet, we live in a world which breeds unbelief. It fills the atmosphere all around us, pressing in on us and squeezing the life from us at every opportunity. It is not just that the public media is full of evolutionary and atheistic expressions, but the evidence of death, pain, sickness, injustice, suffering all around us, contribute to this miasma of unbelief. Every time we hear that a baby dies in a fire, or somebody is tortured to death, or some natural disaster sweeps away hundreds of people indiscriminately, sparing neither

age, sex nor class, the temptation comes to ask, "God, where are You? Are you really there?" Even our friends contribute to this atmosphere of unbelief for there are few people who are able to resist the temptation to speak frequently of the negatives which are happening around them every day.

As I contemplated these facts, it occurred to me that neither Lucifer, nor Adam and Eve faced any of these problems, yet they lost faith in God! I



mean, Adam and Eve were in the perfect atmosphere. There was nothing anywhere to encourage unbelief. Everywhere they looked there was evidence of the love of God, evidence of the goodness of their Creator. There were no atheists, no evolutionary theories no television, no injustice, no pain, no death – all they could see on every side was, "God is good!! You can trust Him with all your heart!" Yet still, they stopped trusting God!

We consider that the sin of Adam and Eve was the taking the fruit, but it is evident that sin began even before they took the fruit. The real problem was that they stopped trusting God – they came to believe that God was a liar! This was exactly the problem. If somebody tells you that if you touch something you will die, why would you touch it? Either you want to die, or you

believe the person is a liar. Would you dare to touch it if you truly believed that there was even a chance that touching it might lead to your death? Eve came to believe that God was a liar, this is the reason why she took the fruit, it was not a desire to commit suicide. Amazing as it seems, Eve came to the conclusion that God was such a liar that she was willing to take the terrible risk of instantly dying on the spot if she was wrong.

It was the same thing with Lucifer. What atmosphere could have been more conducive to faith and trust in God than the one in which he existed for, possibly, ages? At every moment the goodness of God was on display before his eyes. He was privileged in a special way to behold the workings of God as he stood constantly in His very presence and saw how He interacted with His creatures. Yet the staggering testimony of the word of God is that ... iniquity was found in him! He stopped trusting God.

What hope is there for us then? If these perfect beings with their perfect minds, in the perfect atmosphere of paradise with all the evidences of God's love and goodness, stopped trusting God, what hope is there that we can maintain our trust and confidence in God, enabling us to lay hold on all His strength, when we are so bombarded by unbelief on *every* side, every single moment of the day? As I considered this question it became clear that there was one underlying factor in the experience of Adam and Eve as well as that of Lucifer, which we must be aware of and avoid at all costs. This is the factor which I refer to as this "Deadliest Sin of all."

Consider this question carefully: What was the reason why Eve came to the conclusion that God was a liar? The Bible tells us plainly, it was because she listened to the serpent. This is an amazing fact and it is full of instruction and warning for us. How much time did Eve spend with the serpent? Possibly, no more than a few moments, maybe five minutes at most. Yet in five

minutes Satan was able to destroy all the evidences of God's goodness and love, all the certainty of God's faithfulness which existed in Eve's mind and which had been developing in her since she had been created. Amazing! How was it possible that in just a moment, all the accumulated evidence of many days could be so completely wiped away. There is a powerful lesson and warning here for all of us. All the evidences which we have of God's love and good-will can be eroded in just a moment if we choose to turn our attention from the evidences of the truth. This is the fact, it is as simple as that. Five minutes of listening to the wrong thing, of talking to the wrong person, of looking in the wrong direction and all the evidences of a lifetime will be destroyed! This seems very unreasonable, but it is a fact and it emphasizes the truth of the great principle that "by beholding, we are changed." The evidences which we have accumulated over years, will not suffice to preserve us in the moment of challenge. We are not kept by accumulated knowledge, no, and here is the critical point: We are kept and preserved *only* by constantly beholding Christ, only by a constant union with Him which is based on keeping the eyes on Him. Knowledge about Him has its place, but knowledge is not the key to the Christian's strength. This is why a person who knows only a little about Christ can be a very strong Christian, while another person who has studied and understands a lot about Christ and the way of salvation, may be a very weak Christian. Our strength is not in knowing the facts about Christ, our strength is in keeping our eyes fixed on Him.

This is the reason why I have chosen to represent the greatest sin as being, the attitude which causes us to turn our attention from Christ for even one moment. We may think, "what harm is there in a moment?" But the entire destiny of our planet was changed disastrously because Eve took that attitude. This change of focus is the root cause

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Glimpses of Divinity

William Van Grit, Ph.D

In “A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists” printed in Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1872, we find this concise statement about God,

“That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by His representative, the Holy Spirit. Psalm 139:7.”

Holiness, wisdom, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy are all wonderful characteristics of our Heavenly Father whom we worship, adore, pray to, and sing praises to. How should we worship and adore Him? Jesus declared in John 4:24,

“God is Spirit, and His worshippers must worship in spirit and truth.”

Please note that we ought to worship Him in truth, in accordance with the truth as expressed in Scripture, not according to the traditions of men, for Jesus said in Mark 7:6,

“These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.”

No one has ever seen God the Father. He is invisible to our eyes, but He is present everywhere by His representative, the Holy Spirit. John 1:18 states,

“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”

The disciple Philip once asked Jesus, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Christ answered him in John 14:9,

“Don’t you know, Philip, even after I have been among you

such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?’”

These words of Jesus reveal the close relationship between these divine persons, Jesus and His Father. In Hebrews 1:3 Paul states,

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation or the precise image of His being.”

But didn’t Elijah catch a glimpse of God after he became very discouraged when Jezebel threatened him with death? It seems that Elijah wanted to give up and die, but rather than take his own life, he requested the Lord to do it for him. In 1 Kings 19:10–18 we find that the Lord appears to Elijah and asks him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” In the next few verses we see how the Lord reveals Himself to Elijah. First Elijah encountered a fierce wind, then an earthquake, followed by a fire. Finally, he heard a gentle whisper. Notice that the Lord was not in the wind, neither in the earthquake, nor in the fire, He was present in “a gentle whisper.”

Let us examine a few other cases in the Old Testament to see how God revealed Himself on various occasions.

In Genesis 32:30 we read that Jacob saw God “face to face” and yet lived. The Bible does not make it clear in what sense Jacob “saw” God, but it does say that Jacob saw God “face to face.”

Moses was the great leader of the Jewish people. As we study Moses’ life, we see that there existed a close relationship between God and His servant Moses. We remember their conversation at the burning bush in the desert where God chose Moses to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt and bring them into Canaan, the promised land.

In Exodus chapter 33 God first tells Moses that He is pleased with him and that He knows him by name. Moses replied, “Now show me your glory.” This was a very bold request. Not even Abraham had asked this of God. It is clear here that Moses yearned for further evidence of divine favor. He wanted an even closer fellowship with God. This led to a request that no man had ever made up until then. The natural instinct of sinful man is to be afraid of God. Moses, however, was so in harmony with the will of His Creator that he was not afraid to ask to see God’s face.

“And the Lord said, ‘I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, as I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion ... But ... you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.’”



Then the Lord said to Moses,

“There is a place near me where you stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock and cover you with my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”

Thus we see that God allowed Moses to see His back, but not his face, for had Moses seen His face he would have instantly died. Hebrews 12:29

says, "Our God is a consuming fire." When Jesus returns at His second coming at the end of this world's history the glory of God shining from the face of Christ will wipe out the wicked, but the righteous will be not be hurt.

In Ezekiel chapter 1 the prophet Ezekiel has a vision of the Glory of the Lord God. First he sees four living creatures, who speed back and forth like flashes of lightning. After giving many details of these living creatures, Ezekiel has a vision of the Glory of God.

"Then there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high on the throne was a figure like that of a man. I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire and brilliant light surrounded him. Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. When I saw it, I fell face down, and I heard the voice of one speaking." (Ezek. 1:25-28)

After this the Lord proceeded to tell Ezekiel to speak to the Israelites and warn them of coming doom. It is interesting to note that in Ezekiel 8, verses 1-4, we see a repetition of the vision of Ezekiel 1. Here we read,

".... Then I looked, and there was a likeness, like the appearance of fire — from the appearance of His waist and downward, fire; and from His waist and upward, like the appearance of brightness, like the color of amber. He stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my hair; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the north gate of the inner court, and there, where the seat of the image of jealousy was,

which provokes to jealousy. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the plain."

What does all this mean? What is the point of this long description?

The prophet attempts by various repetitions to describe the exceeding brightness and glory of the scene. Yet the display is only a dim replica of the original, for the Eternal Father dwells "in the light which no man can approach to; whom no man has seen, nor can see." (1 Timothy 6:16) We see here a grand climax of the vision of God's glory. The greatest glory has been reserved till the last. Above the crystalline firmament appears what first seemed to Ezekiel a concentration of the richest, deepest blue. The Hebrew text reads, "like the appearance of a sapphire stone, even the likeness of a throne."

We should keep in mind that the prophet saw only a representation of the original. Ezekiel did not see the Divine Being Himself, but rather a representation of the Deity in a vision. Ezekiel in describing God the Father like a man, uses extreme caution, using a combination of terms like "a likeness like the appearance of a human." In John 1:18 we are told, "No man has seen God at any time," and so human beings are not really able to give an accurate description of His actual essence.

It is true that God reveals, and has revealed Himself to people in vision in various forms: to Abraham, Christ came as a wayfarer (Genesis 18:1); to Jacob, as an attacker (Genesis 32:24); to Joshua, as a warrior (Joshua 5:13). To John in vision on the island of Patmos Christ revealed Himself in various forms, including that of a lamb (Revelation 6:1; 14:1) His "visions of God" gave Ezekiel the needed assurance of the genuineness of his prophetic calling.

Ezekiel saw the firmament and the throne of God directly above the heads of the four living creatures who were angels. What comfort for Ezekiel and

for us to know that there is a God who sits above the cherubim and that He is in control, that He guards His people, and that every earthly power that tries to exalt itself against the God of heaven will be laid low one day. We are reminded of a well-known verse in Ephesians 4:6 where Paul writes that there is "one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

With a description of the rainbow, the prophet completes the presentation of God's glory. Overwhelmed and overpowered by the celestial brilliance of the scene, Ezekiel fell on his face, but a voice asked him to get up and listen to the Lord.

Perhaps Ezekiel was reminded of the gracious promise made to Noah and his family when the first rainbow was seen after the flood. At the time of Ezekiel things were in bad shape for Israel and Judah. As discouraging and foreboding of disaster as the national outlook for God's people presented itself to the prophet, Ezekiel knew that God's thoughts toward His people were thoughts of peace and not of evil. Ellen White wrote,

"The throne arched with the rainbow of promise, is the righteousness of Christ.... The rainbow encircling the throne represents the combined power of mercy and justice." (Review and Herald, December 13, 1892)

I would like to point to one more vision of divinity and it is found in Daniel chapter 7 right after Daniel had the dream of four beasts representing four world empires: The Empires of Babylon, the Medes and Persians, Greece, and Rome. We see a lion, a bear, a leopard, and then a fourth beast, terrifying and very powerful. This beast has 10 horns representing 10 kingdoms, and a little horn having the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully. Daniel describes what he sees next.

"As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took His seat. His clothing was

as white as snow; the hair of His head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing coming out from before Him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.) In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all power, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is everlasting that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. (Daniel 7:9-14)

Please note the detailed description of the Ancient of Days on his throne, His white clothing, His white hair, His throne flaming with fire. We behold here a scene of the heavenly judgment. We then see one like a Son of man, Jesus Christ, coming with the clouds of heaven, approaching the Ancient of Days, and being led into His presence to receive power, glory, sovereignty, and authority over the whole world. It is clear that the Ancient of Days represents God the Father. In Aramaic we read, "an Ancient of Days" or "One, Ancient of days." This is a descriptive term.

We need to exercise caution when interpreting the representations of symbolic visions. Again, let us be reminded, John 1:18 says, "No man has seen God at any time." Daniel only saw a representation of the Divinity. To what extent this representation reflected the

reality cannot be known at this time. God the Father is presented in various forms, the form assumed generally having reference to the teaching objective of this vision, namely there is a judgment coming and every vain word, every evil action or thought of man will be brought into God's judgment.

In a vision of the second advent of Christ, John saw Jesus as sitting upon a white horse, clothed in a garment dropped in blood, and having a sword coming out of His mouth. (Revelation 19:11-15) Obviously, we do not expect to see Christ, our Redeemer, thus clothed, equipped or mounted with a sword protruding out of His mouth. This has to be taken symbolically. We realize that each feature has some instructive value. For example, in Daniel's vision we may see in the white garment of the Ancient of Days a symbol of God's complete purity and in the white hair a mark of antiquity, for God the Father has no beginning and will have no end. To go beyond symbolism and speculate on God's appearance is to enter the realm of the forbidden. God is a personal being with a physical appearance and this cannot be doubted. God is a Spirit; yet He is a personal being like Jesus, for man was made in their image.

What could be the purpose of discussing these visions of Daniel, Ezekiel, and speaking of Moses' conversation with the Lord? The prophetic presentations and visions should give us courage and inspiration today, when things in the world look so bad. Around us we only see problems, economic, financial, environmental, and political chaos. When contemplating these visions of these prophets, we should realize that God is in control. There is a divine, overruling purpose at work. God is a personal God and we need to turn to Him daily, realizing that we, as His children, can have the assurance of His love and protection.

It is still true that no one has ever seen God the Father in the full sense of the term. Yet we find a promise in the Beatitudes of Jesus in Matthew 5:8,

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." We need to be pure in order to have this privilege and in heaven, after the righteous have put on immortality, this will be possible. We read about another promise in Revelation 22, the last chapter of the Bible. Revelation 22:1-4 says:

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads."

Is this not encouragement for us to be faithful to God, to be sensitive to His will and to strive to be ready for translation into immortality whenever that moment comes?

How many of us are looking forward to seeing God's face? I know that I want to be in that city, the New Jerusalem where God and the Lamb will dwell with their people. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. See Isaiah 25:8 and Revelation 21:4.

My prayer is that one day we will be there standing on the sea of glass, singing the song of victory, the song of Moses and the Lamb, the song of victory over sin and praise to God, and the Lamb, Jesus Christ. May we all be able to sing

"Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb. (Revelation 7:10)



Ladies' Day, 2010

From DEATH to LIFE

Sabbath, December 18, 2010 was a special day in our fellowship at Albion. One person watching via our live Sabbath broadcast was offended because it seemed to her that we were having a Christmas program. Such is the tendency of humanity to misunderstand. However, the fact that the ladies of Restoration Ministry fellowship were all dressed in black and red had nothing to do with Christmas, but had to do with the theme on which they were focused that day, "*From Death to Life*." Black representing death, and red, representing the lifeblood of Christ.

It was "Ladies' Day," at least, this is how we referred to it for want of a better description, but it was simply the occasion when the ladies took total charge of the day's proceedings and shared what was on their hearts.

For some reason, whether traditional or otherwise, ladies often do not share as much as do the men, in our religious services in spite of the fact that they sometimes have much to contribute. This day provided an opportunity to break this mold.

It was a packed day as almost all



The Ladies Choir sings of a "Brand New Life"



"Side by Side" at the end of a blessed day.

of the ladies contributed in one way or another. Talent appeared which we had not thought existed. We were blessed

with poems, readings, exhortations, Bible studies, talks and of course, a lot of singing.

Orlando Bible Study Retreat March 2-6 2011

This year the Orlando Campmeeting will take the form of a Bible study retreat. Details of this spiritual convocation are not yet finalized but as always, We expect a rich outpouring of God's blessings. For details, contact Jim and Jerri Raymond.

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The Source of Sin

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of unbelief (distrust in God), which separates us from God's spirit, which is the reason for disobedience, which we define as sin. The real problem is not the end-result, the real problem is the source from which originated all the subsequent steps which led to the end-result. So the point is, never take the eyes from Christ and we are permanently safe. Take the eyes from Him for even a moment, and we have committed the deadliest sin, the root and the source of all evil.

Peter knew of Christ's power, trusted in Christ's power, to the point where that knowledge and trust set him to doing the impossible feat of walking on water. But was it his knowledge which sustained him? Was it his knowledge of Christ's ability which enabled him to defy the laws of nature? No, when he turned his eyes from Christ, he still had the knowledge of Christ's power and good-will in his memory, but with his focus changed, *memory* was not enough to keep him from sinking. His stored information was not enough for the present crisis. He needed a present interaction with Christ, maintained by the look of faith. When this was broken by the diverting of his attention elsewhere, he was beaten. What a striking lesson!

So the point is, victory over sin is not dependent on us living in perfect surroundings, having an abundance of information concerning what is true, and having perfect minds. The most perfect persons lost their way, not because they were lacking in the right environment, it was because they chose to look away from God and to spend a moment with unbelief. This was enough to bring disaster upon them, and the entire human race. But the converse is, we, with imperfection and negatives all around us, may yet maintain a life of perfect harmony with God, of total victory over sin, not because we have a flawless environment or are more ca-

pable than others, but simply because we learn the lesson and learn it well, that we *dare not* take our eyes from Christ for even a moment. Those who learn this lesson are safe, no matter what their circumstances or how feeble their intellects. Those who don't learn this lesson are doomed to continual failure and are in danger or eventually losing their souls.

None of us is strong in himself. Our strength is Christ and only Christ. Outside of Him, we can do nothing. This is what He tells us very plainly (John 15:5). Therefore, God has given us this capability to choose where we will keep our eyes focused. We all can do this irrespective of our intellect, our environment or our circumstances. We do not have the strength in ourselves to do what is right, but we are able to choose what we look at, and we have the assurance that as we keep our eyes on Christ, all His strength becomes ours. We are enabled in Him to do all things, victory over sin, the world and the devil becomes our constant experience.

So, let us guard carefully and uncompromisingly against the influences which daily seek to obstruct this vital bond between us and Christ. Resist the inclination to indulge in discussions with unbelievers who attempt to erode our faith, guard against the temptation to spend a few moments listening to, or watching something unwholesome. As the saying goes, "we can't stop the birds from flying over our heads, but we can stop them from making a nest there." Let us fill our minds with the presence of Christ, read His word at ever opportunity, when we can't read,

listen to it, make opportunities to speak of Him with all who will listen. Keep your minds sensitive to His direction, look for Him and His leadings in all we do at every moment. Make the time to speak with Him frequently throughout the day. In fact, let our love and need for Him impel us to pray without ceasing.

There will be a people who become all that the Lord wants them to be. Even now God is preparing them. Yet these people, when they finally appear, will be essentially, no different from anybody else in the world. What will make their experience different from all the others, including the generations of Christians who have gone before? It will simply be this: They will have learned the lesson which God has always wanted us to learn, the lesson that Christ is *everything*, and that we dare not let Him go for even a moment, for in ourselves, we are *nothing* and can do *nothing*. Christ is all in all. This is the message of Christ our Righteousness and is the message which even now, God is once again lifting up in its beauty before all who will open their eyes to see.

When we truly know, from the depths of our hearts that we truly can do nothing of ourselves, that Christ is truly in an absolute sense, our entire righteousness, that all our hopes of goodness and right-doing are in Him, then the consequence of this understanding will appear in a single-minded devotion to Him which will produce the results God has long-desired. God help us to learn this lesson quickly.



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More Abundant Life

Lenworth Frankson



Many people have trouble getting through the day. They feel tired even after getting eight to nine hours of sleep. They often awake groggy in the morning and find themselves even more lethargic by the afternoon. In some cases, due to illness individuals experience very low energy levels. But I am not referring to those cases where people are diagnosed with an illness. I am writing about those who are not sick but for them energy seems hard to come by and as a result they go through the day accomplishing only a fraction of what they could have done. It is interesting that the National Sleep Foundation claimed that a third of the individuals who participated in a poll said they have missed work or other important events, or made errors at work because of being too sleepy and tired.

Then there are others who always seem awake, alert, ready to achieve, even as your energy level seems to have hit "Empty." They are not "hyped up" on any type of drug and for many of these folks they even eat less than the average person. So what is the secret that these "other people" know, and why is it that they appear to have endless energy?

The truth is that the difference between both groups of people is not that

one group has some extraordinary secret, but more often than not, simply that the members of one group are practicing some fundamental health principles which are being neglected by the other group. They have discovered that there are some key ways to increase energy and keep it consistent throughout the day.

You are What You Eat

We have heard many times the cliché "you are what you eat" but how seriously do we take it? It may be a cliché, but it is true, nevertheless. What we eat and drink directly affects our bodies our minds and our spirituality. The most obvious source that we can look at for supplying energy to our bodies is the food we eat. I have discovered that there are about seven diet-related factors that can drastically affect ones energy levels throughout the day.

Drink more water. If you get dehydrated, you will feel sluggish and weak. This is not my opinion; it is a fact. Remember your body is made up mostly of water. Your brain needs water, and plenty of it. Without water, your brain will feel worn out, tired and sluggish. Water regulates all functions in the body, including all the activities of the dissolved substances that it transports around the body. Of course we know that the energy available in water is available to us in two ways. First there is what is called "kinetic" energy. This is energy that is used during the execution of processes, such as movement. The other is potential energy, which is energy that is stored in the water. Muscle tissues are made up of thousands even millions of cells and every single one needs water to function.

Have breakfast... even if you don't feel hungry. You'll be a lot perkier: Studies show that people who eat breakfast feel better both mentally and physically than those who skip their

morning meal. British researchers at Cardiff University even found that eating a bowl of breakfast cereal every morning is associated with lower levels of the stress hormone "cortisol". If you are one of those individuals who don't feel hungry in the morning, you are probably eating too late in the evenings or at night. A simple solution to this problem is, skip dinner or supper the night before and drink a few glasses of water instead. In the morning you will be the first at the breakfast table or in the kitchen. Eating your heavier meal earlier in the day and having a light and simple supper at least five hours before going to bed will also help.

Eat enough protein. Make sure you are eating enough healthy protein throughout the day. Insufficient protein as well as too much protein has negative consequences. Our bodies need adequate protein to keep organs functioning and energy levels up. "The body interprets a state of protein deficiency as a signal to enter into starvation mode. As a result, the body attempts to compensate for the deficiency by pulling out stores of protein in the body for recycling. The first source the body will turn to, to make a protein withdrawal is the muscles, which leads to a condition known as muscle wasting. In fact, weakness resulting from a loss in muscle mass is one of the first symptoms of protein deficiency."

Watch carbohydrate intake. Eating too many carbohydrates can slow you down, but not eating enough of the healthy kind (like those from veggies) can also have the same effect. Carbohydrates are starchy foods that keep your blood sugar levels balanced throughout the day, which in turn makes you feel alert. Complex carbs break down and release energy more slowly than simple carbs, therefore providing more energy throughout the day without energy crashes. Be sure you're

eating the right amount for your body size and lifestyle.

Avoid caffeine. If you can't get going without some form of caffeine; your body is dependent on a stimulus. You have an addiction problem! Your body is depending on a drug to get you going and this is not good! Depending on caffeinated beverages to supply your body with energy and to kick start your day will actually result in you feeling more tired in the long run.

Eat when you are hungry. If you have developed a time for eating, stick to it. Your body will tell you when to eat. Try hard to stick to that routine even when you might be very busy. If you keep pushing lunch back until you're about to faint, your blood sugar levels will plummet—and so will your energy.

Eat a balanced diet. Give your body all the protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals and nutrients which it needs; if you don't you won't feel energized. Adding natural vitamins to your diet, especially B complex, when your diet is deficient in these vitamins will greatly boost your energy level throughout the day. Look for signs of vitamin B12 deficiency that might include; feeling weak, tired, and lightheaded, having pale skin, having a sore red tongue or bleeding gums, feeling sick in your stomach and losing weight, experiencing diarrhea or constipation. If the level of vitamin B12 stays low for a long time, it can damage your nerve cells. If this happens you may experience numbness and tingling in your fingers and toes. You need B12 to make red blood cells which carry oxygen through your body. Not having enough B12 can lead to anemia, which means your body does not have enough red blood cells to do the job. This can make you feel weak and tired.

Too Tired to Exercise

Too often we make excuses for not exercising depending on the mood that we are in. With the exception of those days when we are ill, we should exer-

cise every day. If you feel you don't have enough energy to do it, you're probably the person who needs it most. Our bodies were designed to be active. It might sound ironic or even foolish but putting out the energy to "work out" will give you more energy and make your daily tasks easier. I can testify to the truthfulness of this as I have proven it from personal experience. Those who do make the effort to exercise regularly they will tell you that they experience higher levels of energy throughout the day, increased resilience and a greater feeling of well-being. Any regular exerciser who takes a break from their routine will tell you that they have experienced a drop in their energy level. Here are some suggestions as to how to get the maximum benefits from exercise.

Vary your workouts. Do aerobic activities like brisk walking, jogging or cycling one day and a strength training work out the next. This will keep you from getting burned out and keep things fun. Any exercise that gets you to move is an exercise that will energize you.

Stretch. Stretching is an important addition to your exercise routine. It will not only minimize the risk of injury, but will contribute to increasing your levels of energy. Using the proper form in stretching is essential to achieving the maximum energy benefits.

Use intervals for cardio. While doing a cardio workout, alternate several minutes of high-intensity movement with several minutes of lower intensity. This will get your energy levels up without wearing you down.

Watch your intensity. If you're working so hard that you can't talk, you probably need to tone it down a bit. Exercising too hard can leave you feeling tired, rather than energized.

Negative Emotions

If you allow negative emotions to become trapped in your mind, it will definitely drain you of your energy. Here are some factors which may contribute to these negative emotions:

- Lingering resentments from an argument with your spouse, a family member or a good friend.
- Frustration about a work or school project.
- Disappointment in yourself or others.
- Feeling like you are not good enough.
- Anxiety about an upcoming event.
- Worrying about finances, illness or other issues.

These things can lead you to feel stressed, unmotivated, drained and often trapped not knowing how to free your mind. In fact, even some positive things can lead to energy draining emotions; things such as, the buying of a new house, having a baby, getting married and even meeting deadlines for work or school assignments. However the good news is that our loving, caring Father does not want any of us to live and function like this even for a minute. He sent his son to show us how to live and we have his promises in the Bible to encourage, guide and help us. Let us never forget this.

It is true that the enemy is relentlessly seeking to discourage and destroy. He is the adversary and his plan is to devour. Peter reminds us of this truth but he also tells us in 1 Peter 5:7 that we should cast **all our cares** upon him; for he cares for us. To me this is the freedom that we can experience when we are "*in Christ*". The idea here is supported strongly by the apostle Paul in his letter of encouragement to the Philippians when he says "*Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.*" "*Always*" means all the time.

It is a challenge for all because our nature is to be in control of our lives; every aspect of it. When we are in situations where we are not in control we tend to be somewhat uncomfortable and uneasy. It is a challenge to rejoice always but there is freedom, joy, contentment and rest when we begin to rejoice in the Lord, from our hearts. It is then that we begin to experience the

way Jesus lived. when we cast all our cares upon the LORD, our frustrations, anxiety, disappointments, resentments, worries, challenges and problems are no longer ours but His. Paul reminds us of this when he says “*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.*” One aspect of that mind set is the constant awareness that God is with us. Jesus told his disciples “*I am not alone, because the father is always with me*” and Paul goes on to say “*I have **learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.***”

Friends this is where we ought to be in our daily walk as Christians. As the saying goes, “*let go and let God,*” we must allow God to deal with **all** our issues. When we are in control of our lives, the stress leaves us weak and drained with little energy. Towards the end of Paul’s letter, the assurance is given “*But my **God shall supply all your need** according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus*” “All” means everything. “All” includes the energy we need and receive through Jesus Christ. Remember that Christ is the power and the wisdom of God. (1 Corinthians 1:24) Where there is power there has to be energy and since Christ is the power of God then I am literally energized and charged when Jesus lives in me. What a wonderful promise and assurance. I pray that we all will experience this energy.

Regain your Energy

Spend quality time each day with God. He is the source of all life and energy. He is the Creator of the Universe and the designer of the human body. He admonishes “*Man shall not live by bread alone*” How then should we live? “*By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.*” To live requires energy. There is energy and life in him and his words. Ellen White wrote:

*“All things Christ received from God, but **He took to give.** So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for **all created beings:** through the beloved Son, **the Father’s life flows out to all;***

through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete...” DA 21.2

Honestly, ask yourself this question: Can the life of the Father, through Christ, be in you and you have little or no energy? The answer is obvious. Where there is life there must be energy. The greatest energy source in this universe is the life of God and those who receive it will be physically and spiritually charged and energized. Believe it, receive it and live it because it is given freely. (Romans 8:11& 32)

Do enjoyable things every day that are uplifting, meaningful, and productive. Find something to do that will give you a sense of achievement, something that will be a blessing to others. The truth is that when we focus less on ourselves but rather on helping others, we are encouraging the trait of unselfishness in ourselves. Look at Jesus’ life and you will notice that his entire ministry was built on this principle. True joy and happiness comes when we concentrate on helping others rather than ourselves. I have noticed that the folks who are always happy are usually those who are full of life and energy.

Don’t cry over spilt milk. We have heard this saying many times but do we practice it? Remind yourself that what has happened in the past is in the past and there is nothing that you can do to change the past. I have to remind myself of this every day and believe me it is a challenge; I am human. Beating up yourself on the mistakes or wrong things that you did will not help you in any way. If you have sincerely asked for forgiveness and repented of your sins, then quit holding on to the past. Live in the present and look towards the future. Many times we are so unforgiving to our selves that we miss out on the fact that God has already forgiven us for our past mistakes. If you have forgotten, then read this passage of scripture over and over until you are reassured:

“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.” Psalm 103:12-14

Bend with the wind. There is a proverb that says something close to this: “*the stiffest tree is most easily cracked, while the bamboo or willow survives by bending with the wind.*” Bending with the wind does not mean that you should compromise on the values, beliefs and godly principles you know to be true and right but rather learn how to cope with people, new situations and ideas that are not always pleasant and favorable. Welcome new ideas and possibilities for there is always room for growth and improvement. I like to look at it from this angle: When the Holy Spirit that is promised (the wind) is blowing on you and in your direction, then bend with it and in the direction that it is blowing. The Holy Spirit comes to guide us into all truth. (John 16:13) Resisting eventually leads to cracking or breaking. Paul encourages us to try the spirits, but never to resist the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees would not bend to the holy spirit as they listened to Jesus’ teachings. They were very stiff and rigid in their beliefs and their life styles. For many, the same thing is true today. They are so rigid and stiff in their approach to life, that new and different views are never welcome. They refuse to approach life with an open honest mind and a willingness to look at new ideas and possibilities. This kind of thinking results in a type of breaking. The breaking doesn’t happen by bending but by resisting.

Adequate Sleep

Sleeping for less than eight or seven hours per night can produce chronic tiredness or fatigue. If you know you have lifestyle habits that are making you feel drained, change them! Staying up late watching TV, talking, studying or even working on an important

project will drain your energy resources. Going to bed early and getting up early is a much better option. Sleep gives the brain an opportunity to reorganize data, to help find a solution to problems, process newly learned information and organize and archive memories. Sleep lowers a person's metabolic rate and energy consumption. Scientists still do not fully understand the importance of sleep. What is known however is that sleep is a building and repairing process that is believed to restore the body's energy supplies which have been depleted through the day's activities. Sleep is also a time for restoring mental energy. We spend all day thinking and creating, and that also uses up our energy.

Studies have also shown that short 'power naps' as they are called; can indeed be more refreshing than long naps. Napping is not intended in any way to replace or substitute for a good night's sleep but rather to boost energy,

alertness and concentration. Some research suggests that no matter how long you sleep at night, your body is programmed to get sleepy in the early afternoon. On the basis of my personal experience I am not sure that I fully agree with the findings of this study. Nevertheless a short nap can give you alertness and energy. Some studies suggest that a 30-minute nap is usually more restorative than a nap of two to three hours.

Trying to stay awake by drinking caffeinated beverages is counterproductive and according to sleep experts, just creates an illusion of efficiency and alertness, while depriving the body and brain of much-needed sleep.

Feeling alive, frisky and energized is a condition that most of us can experience. There is no special formula, recipe or drink that we have to take. It is simply making some important necessary changes in our beliefs, diet and

life style. Once you have experienced this boost of energy you will always want to have it. Getting older is not the problem for there are old men and women that are faster, friskier, stronger and more alert mentally than many young people. The problem is that over time we have developed, inherited and practiced bad habits and beliefs. The solution lies in adjusting the way we think and do things.

We are fearfully and wonderfully made and it is our Creator's desire that we experience a life full of energy, vigor and vitality so that we can enjoy our time here to the fullest and be equipped to give the best service to Him, and to others. Remember Jesus' words: "*I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly.*" John 10:10



Open Face

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