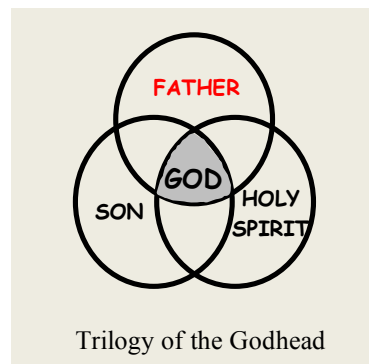


Chapter 4

THE TRILOGY OF THE GODHEAD: THE FATHER

We will now consider more closely God's **eternal purpose** for man as it relates to **The Trilogy of the Godhead**. Each member of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is very much involved in this divine intent for an ultimate relationship with man. This relationship begins with the individual believer with a new beginning and a new life. Each believer is embraced in a unique way by each person of the Godhead. A work of personal transformation continues towards spiritual maturity and fullness of stature.



Even as an individual grape is formed on the vine and slowly ripens to maturity, the individual grape is yet part of something larger, the grape cluster, and the vineyard. So we see something larger unfolding in God's master plan for man, something corporate, something many membered. There is this grand eternal goal in God's ultimate purpose for creation for the Father to have a family; the Son to have a Bride; and the Holy Spirit to have a Temple Sanctuary. Part 1 of this chapter now begins considering the Father's role in this master plan.

The Trilogy of the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Let us begin our discussion of this trilogy by considering a key verse in Genesis:

*Then God said, "Let **Us** make man in **Our image**, according to **Our likeness**; let them have **dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*
(Gn. 1:26)

There are some very important prophetic understandings to be gained from this verse. Some key words have been highlighted in **bold** print for emphasis.

US AND OUR. Note the use of the first person plural pronouns **Us** and **Our**. Bible scholars have endeavored to explain this in various ways. The only explanation to be considered at this time is that the pronouns **Us** and **Our** refer to the presence of the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. A 'father,' by its very definition, is one who imparts life, a progenitor, a bringing into being. He is the source of all things, as it is written, "*But we know there is only one God, the **Father**, who created everything.*" (1 Cor. 8:6) Thus, the presence of the Father at creation is obviously clear. In the second verse of scripture the **Holy Spirit** is seen to be present with the Father as well, "*And the **Spirit** of God was hovering over the waters.*" (Gn. 1:2) The Spirit certainly had His part to play in creation. The **Son** also is present as God as it is written of Christ, "*For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and by Him.*" (Col. 1:16) This is also evidenced in Jesus' prayer, "*And now Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world was created.*" (Jn. 17:5) So, all things are **of** the Father, **by** and **through** the Son, and **with** the Holy Spirit.

There was a grand deliberation and consultation among the Godhead at creation, at the beginning of time. Here God's master plan was designed for mankind, even before man was to walk this earth. At this grand counsel, a promise of *eternal life* was made:

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began. (Tit 1:2)

Life Perhaps two comments should be made about this *eternal life*. The first is that this eternal life is something above and beyond the created life breathed into Adam at creation. Created life is of the natural. Remember that the "Tree of Life" was yet before Adam. He never ate of that tree but fell from the grace that was before him. I believe the Tree of Life foreshadowed Christ and the life that is in Him. Jesus declared such in a spiritual way when He said to His disciples, "*Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.*" (Jn. 6:54)

The second very important point to be made about this *eternal life* is that it is more than a "forever-more vitality." Life of this nature must, and I emphasize must, exist in an intimate **relationship** with God. In all reality, life is not life without relationships. Who would ever want to live as a plant, even eternally, if such life did not have the intimacy of relationship with another? Jesus defined eternal life as such, "*This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*" (Jn. 17:3) This particular word for "**know**" means experiential knowing, i.e., to have a relationship with what is known. Jesus knows the Father intimately. Now this knowledge is offered to the believer who partakes of Christ. How can all of this become possible? It is through Jesus as the Lamb of God.

Out of God's infinite wisdom will come an ultimate *glory* for man (1Cor. 2:7), and the Son was to play a special role, "*foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last time.*" He was predestined to be "*a lamb without blemish and without spot.*" (1 Pet. 1:19-20) He was to become incarnate and be offered as a blood sacrifice for man. At this time also, the Father declared that all things pertaining to man were "*to be given to us in (His Son) Jesus Christ,*" (2 Tim. 1:9) the only source of this life. "*And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.*" (Acts 4:12)

Here, before the beginning of time, Jesus Christ was chosen to bear the life seed of the Father. Even as Adam was chosen to be the father and progenitor of mankind, Jesus was to be the spiritual progenitor of eternal life. (1 Jn. 3:9, 5:12) It was determined that the Son be the only source through which life and blessings would come. (Eph. 1:3-4 is a must read) All of this, as part of a master plan and eternal purpose, before the beginning of time, is now manifested to us.

There is an important concept regarding creation we must grasp. Because there is a hint of completeness in the six days of creation, e.g., "*the heavens and the earth and all the host of them were finished...and, on the seventh day God ended His work which he had done, and He rested,*" (Gn. 2:1, 3) that an assumption is often made of a finished work, a completeness or perfection in all creation, including man. A farmer works many days preparing the field and planting the seed. He then "rests," waiting for the crop to come forth. However, he does not remain idle nor estranged from the field, for once the seed germinates and growth begins the crops must be cared for and nurtured to maturity and its fruit harvested. The Godhead's involvement would continue with creation, not because of sin and the fall of man, but through sin and the fall of man. When the Jews became angry with Jesus because He healed a man (worked) on the Sabbath, He said to them "*My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.*" (Jn. 5:17) God's work continues towards the completeness, wholeness, and perfection of His creation and His ultimate intention.

Image and Likeness. Some modern Bible scholars state that no distinction should be made between *image* and *likeness*—that the two words are similar and both are used for emphasis purposes only. Others, to which I am inclined to agree, reasonably feel that a fine distinction should be made between the two words. *Image* indicates more of an external physical and psychological similarity of man to God. *Likeness*, rather, implies something closer to the ethical nature of God, it is inward. It relates more to moral powers and capacity to grow in righteousness and holiness. It reflects itself in man's *character*—the moral qualities distinctive to each individual.

As in the trinity of God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, man in God's *image* is also a trilogy. He is soul, body, and spirit. This *image* resembles this outward nature of the Godhead. Here, we see man's spirit as Spirit, his body as the incarnate Son, and his soul as of the Father, being the source, originator, and the central processing figure. The soul of man receives information from the natural environment through his body, and from his spiritual environment through his spirit. His soul processes and assimilates this information and then in turn finds its *expression* through his body and his spirit.

Ah! But, what of this word...*expression*? Does it not come from the inward parts of man's soul—from the realm of *likeness*? Is it not what others (including God) perceive and to which relate? This is after the similitude of a seed. A seed has an outward coat of appearance, its *image*. But inward in its embryo is the young spore-bearing plant waiting to emerge. This is what will grow into the new tree, shrub, vine, etc. Surrounding the embryo is nutrition which will feed it during its early growth, until it can establish its own root system and leaves to support it. Its *likeness* will be found in the expression of its internal chromosomes, genes, etc. within the embryo of this emerging plant. Given the right environment, it will grow, mature, and be what God intended it to be.

May I now call to remembrance the conception of the *seed of Christ* in the believer as spoken of the believer, "...for His seed remains in him." (1 Jn. 3:9) This *seed* contains all that is necessary to grow, establish roots, mature, produce fruit, and bring forth life.

In summary: The *image* of man is after the outward expression of the Trinity of God. It is in man's make up of soul, spirit, and body functioning as a single entity. *Likeness*, however, is the ethical similarity expressed in attaining towards Godly righteousness and holiness. It involves character (integrity) and personality—of which many traits come with birth—both in the natural and in the spiritual rebirth through the seed of Christ.

Dominion. The last word in our opening verse to be addressed is *dominion*. *Character* determines the nature of this *dominion*. It is sad and spiritually upsetting to witness the abuse in the use of this God-ordained mandate, even in the church. I believe we all have encountered dominating and controlling people in authority, including husbands and pastors, holding what they believe to be God given authority over people, families and flocks. What had originally intended to be after the similitude of a Godly *dominion* has perverted to a satanic and egotistical manipulation of others. What had originally been intended as an inward desire for the care, nurturing, and well-being of others, has so often degenerated to exacting obedience to rules and regulations. What had originally been intended to nurture forth life from the innate seed of Christ has regressed to exacting defined qualities out of the seed of man (Adam).

All the governments of the world—its militaries, its business and educational systems—have this perverted sense of dominion. They all contain a hierarchy of authority and power, often having oaths and allegiances, and a strict code of behavior written into laws and ordinances. Man in his fallen state may

require such dominion, even in a religious way. But thankfully, Jesus brought another, a Godly dominion. He told Pilate, *“My kingdom is not of this world.”* (Jn. 18:36)

Jesus Christ, when walking this earth, was our incarnate figure of God. What kind of dominion did He exact over others? Even on those given to Him by the Father? *“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom you gave Me I have kept.”* (Jn. 17:12) They were His, as ordained by the Father. Yet He never used the tactics of this world to hold them or compel them for anything. It was not in His godly character. Rather, He ministered that inward quality of life. There was a time when Jesus’ teachings were very ‘heavy,’ and some disciples simply walked away from Him. He then turned to his apostles and said, *“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”* *“Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’”* (Jn. 6:63, 67)

The apostles were free to choose, to leave, or to stay. Jesus made no demands upon them, made no threats of curses if they were to leave, or to force guilt upon them. He required no oaths or pledges of obedience. He simply ministered life. Peter answered and said, *“Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”* (Jn. 6:68)

The Master Plan and the Fatherhood of God

It is interesting to note that when I began to write on this subject of The Trilogy of the Godhead: The Father, I had some preconceived notions on how to begin. However, my thoughts immediately were turned to an unintended direction. My prayer, “Father, what is upon Your heart as the eternal purpose for redeemed man?” seemed answered in a nontraditional manner. You see, man considers in his mind what must be the highest intention for himself. He considers things like being saved from damnation and hell, of eternal life in a blissful state, immune to diseases and hunger, and perhaps being reunited with loved ones. All of this is perceived to be in an ethereal environment called heaven. How much of this is scriptural and realistic and how much is mystical will be addressed in the context of these writings. But for now, God permitting, let us look into the Father’s heart.

It is abundantly clear in all of scriptures that indiscriminate love permeates the Father’s being. That is clearly not an issue. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”* (Jn. 3:16) Encompassed in this love is the most sincere desire for a *relationship* with man, a special kind of relationship leading to His, the Father’s, highest purpose for Himself and for man. In an attempt to unveil the nature of this relationship, the remaining part of this section is divided into the following three topics:

- **Child Relationship:** Children to Have the Father’s Own Life
- **Son Relationship:** Sons to Fulfill His Purpose
- **Relationship of Expression:** A Family Possessing His Character

CHILD RELATIONSHIP: A Child to Have the Father’s Own Life. In all of my life’s experiences, I have never encountered such a lack of understanding, appreciation, and appropriation of anything scriptural as the *new birth*, also known as *regeneration*. It is certainly a spiritual reality and not just a state of mind or change in behavior. It has so often been reduced to acts such as: citing a statement of faith, prayer of repentance, church membership, baptism in water, behavior modification, and other acts that may well accompany the *new birth* but are no substitute for it. These are nevertheless a part of religious settings.

It is a matter of baptisms. It is written (Acts 18:24-25) that Apollos, a scholarly teacher of the Christian faith, at first “*only knew the baptism of John,*” that is, water baptism. He was brought into more fuller understanding by Priscilla and Aquila. Likewise some disciples at Ephesus “*only knew the baptism of John,*” a baptism of repentance and of water, until Paul not only instructed them more fully but also ministered a further baptism in the Spirit. (Acts 19:1-6) Water baptism is a necessary beginning in the Christian faith, but even John the Baptist noted, “*As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.* (Mt. 3:11) The Spirit is life!

Simply stated:

The *new birth* is the receiving of the Father’s own life into the being of the believer, by Spirit baptism, with the impartation of the spiritual seed of His Son Jesus Christ. The believer becomes a child of God.

This experience is above and beyond the realm of creation and extraneous to all abilities and powers of man. It is bestowed as a gift by the Father. It is actually an act of generating of a new “species” of people. Paul writes, “*For this reason I bow my knees to the **Father** (Gk. *pater*) of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole **family** (Gk. *patria*) in heaven and earth is named.*” (Eph. 14, 15) And this *family* comes into being through the baptism of Christ and the impartation of His *seed*. (see 1 Jn. 3:9)

This, is what Peter clearly stated,

“*having been born again, not of corruptible **seed** but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.*” (1Pet. 1:23)

This is the inception of eternal life! **This** has nothing to do with the seed of man (as through Adam) but everything to do with the new and everlasting spiritual seed of Christ.

“*But as many as received Him (Christ), to them He gave the right to *become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God.*” (Jn. 1:12-13)

[***become**: Literally, to come into being. Not “to be” but to become--signifying a change of condition and constitution. What was born of man may now become born of God.]

Thus, to summarize these two verses of scripture:

- A distinction must be made between God the Father by creation and natural birth, and of God the Father by spiritual birth.
- *Corruptible seed* is of the seed of Adam through man. All are subject to death.
- *Incorruptible seed* is of the seed of God through Christ. All are subject to eternal life.
- When one conceives the *incorruptible seed of Christ* into his heart he becomes something he was not before. He becomes a *born again* child of God and member of the *family of God*.

Personally, this understanding alone immensely impacted my life. Literally, I was translated from the realm of religion into life, a living relationship with the Father through Christ.

Now this *incorruptible seed* of Christ contains all the “spiritual” genetic material necessary to potentially bring forth a new life, not just something eternal in existence, but of His likeness in living experience. This is far and above all the behavioral modification and religious practices that man can achieve in and by himself. For now it is, “*God who works in you both to do and to will of His good pleasure.*” (Phil. 2:23) It is a work, as nothing is automatic, for it requires faith and cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

I do not believe it can be made any clearer than this. It is in His divine will that all would taste of the reality of this new birth. O how each of us must humbly bow before the Father asking for the fullness of His Son in our hearts--not just as a mental grasp, but the life changing, mind altering, spiritually apprehending reality of it.

SON RELATIONSHIP: Sons to Fulfill His Purpose. Even though it is not always evident, scriptures often make a word distinction between a youthful *child* (Gk. *Teknon*) and a mature *son* (Gk. *Huios*). (Care must be taken because not all Bible translations make this distinction.) A **child** is thought of as being under the tutelage of guardians and instructors where he is trained and schooled. The mature **son**, however, is prepared to take on responsibility in the family household and enter the father’s business. This was evident in the life of Jesus.

*“For unto us a **child** (Heb. *Yeled*) is born, unto us a **son** (Heb. *Ben*) is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder.”* (Is. 9:6)

Note, the *child* is born, but the responsibility of the government is upon the shoulder of the *son*. Of course this verse is prophetic of Jesus. Let’s look a little closer at His life. Perhaps you recall the incident described in Luke 2 when He was twelve years old. His parents were in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and assuming Jesus was with them, departed the city a day’s journey. Upon discovering He was missing, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. “*After three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.*” (Vs. 46) The *child* Jesus was being schooled and learning. The chapter ends with, “*And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*” He was maturing.

For the next 18 years scriptures are silent about the life of Jesus. He continued unto maturity increasing in wisdom and stature. Jesus then began His earthly ministry. “*Now Jesus was about thirty years old when He began His ministry.* (Lk. 3:23) The anointing for His ministry came at His baptism when, after being baptized in water by John the Baptist, he saw the heavens open and, “*the Spirit of God descending upon Him. And suddenly a voice from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved **Son**, in whom I am well pleased.’*” (Mt. 3:16-17) Sonship initiates true ministry or service in the Kingdom of God. (NOTE: There is another, a fuller sonship to be revealed at the resurrection. This will be discussed at a later time.)

In a similar manner the prophet Samuel anointed the lad David as king of Israel, for God had rejected Saul. (See 1 Sam. 16) Some modern contemporaries estimated David to be about 15 years old—roughly the same age as Christ in the temple. And, according to 2 Samuel 5:4, “*David was thirty years old when he began to reign*”—the same age of Jesus when He began His ministry.

The important point being made is that men and women are not, or should not be, thrust into ministry or Godly service without a proper spiritually-maturing process. This maturing process involves both wisdom and character. Knowledge alone is insufficient. Training alone is insufficient. Service without a “*broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart*” becomes self-serving, manipulative, and the work of

the soul rather than that of the spirit. There exists a need for knowledge to blossom into wisdom, training to blossom into “calling,” and the blossoming of a righteous character.

Perhaps the scripture, “*Many are called, but few are chosen,*” (Mt. 22:14) may come with a new understanding. It is a *calling* **in** salvation and not **for** salvation. And, the *choosing* is for a work, a service, a responsibility. And, the *choosing* is by God and not by the election of man. The *choosing* is not to what some errantly refer to as a choosing for salvation. The *calling* and choosing requires a proper response. Obedience is unto the will of the One who calls. A choice is always before us, it is not a one-time decision. May we always, as Christ, strive to know surely the Father’s will and submit to that with all our heart, mind, and soul, even as Christ uttered, “*nevertheless not my will, but Yours, be done.*”

ESSENCE OF RELATIONSHIP: A Family Possessing His Likeness—Bearing the Fruit of His Spirit.

“The Lord said to Samuel, ‘How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?’” (1 Sam. 16:1) It is terrible to be rejected by God from His calling upon one’s life—a calling not **for** salvation but **in** salvation. It is a calling and anointing in His service. However, it is also a calling from which one may fall: “*And Samuel said to Saul, ‘You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you...Now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after **His own heart.**’”* (1 Sam. 13:13-14)

In this passage of scripture not only is the rejection of Saul noted, but also mention is made of the Father’s **heart**. There exists the outward manifestation of God, as in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the **image** of God. There also exists, in the core of His being, His nature, His character. It is Who He is. This is His **likeness**. When Moses inquired of God His name, God said to Moses, “*I AM WHO I AM.*” And He continued to say to Moses, “*Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, I AM has sent me to you.*” ‘I AM’ is who He is! Not as represented by an image, or by His words or signs, or by a thick, dark cloud, lightning and thunder, and the smell of sulphur. I AM is known by His **heart**—the essence of His character and likeness. This is why an idol or image is forbidden to be made of Him. It is impossible to form an image of His **likeness**.

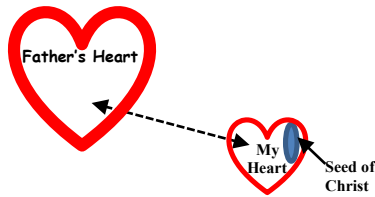
Since God had rejected Saul as king, He sent the prophet Samuel to the house of Jesse the Bethlehemite to anoint a new king over Israel. When Samuel looked at Jesse’s first son, Eliab, he was really impressed at his appearance. Samuel thought, “*Surely the Lord’s anointed is before him.*”

*...“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the **heart.**’”* (1 Sam. 16:6-7)

Do you see the connection? The relationship God the Father is seeking with His children is a **heart to heart relationship**—the essence of ‘I AM’ relating to the inward heart of man, who ‘he is.’

It is man’s nature to look at the “presentation” of the person, his stature, how articulate he is, his charisma, intelligence, and so on—his visible and auditory appearance. But it is as though all this outward façade is invisible or just immaterial to God. It really doesn’t matter to Him. It is written even of Christ, “*He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.*” (Is. 53:2) God sees right through this “outward man” and looks upon the **heart**—the “inner man,” within the soul of man with all its mind, affections, will, attitudes, and all those other traits that make us who we really are, not what we want others, including God, to think we are.

Jesus said to the Pharisees, “*For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*” (Mt. 12:34) Who we are of the inward man is revealed in what we say and do—unless we say and do things just to give a false impression of who we really are. And, it separates the religious part of man from the true spiritual, from the acts of duties, sacrifices, rites and rituals to the knowing, discerning, and relating to the Father, to His life and His will. It is a gulf that separates the two.



So, this heart is the innermost core of one’s being. It is the seat of our character, our real personality. This is what the piercing eyes of God see. And this heart is what He wishes to connect with and have a relationship. (Have you ever had a sincere, honest, open, candid, heart-to-heart talk with someone? These talks are most often limited to a tiny portion of the heart. If so, this is approaching the objective of the Father—but of course including the whole of hearts.)

So, all the sons of Jesse were made to pass before Samuel, and Samuel replied, “*The Lord has not chosen these.*” Yet there was one son remaining, the youngest, who was away keeping the sheep. Samuel asked for him. His name was David. “*And the Lord said, ‘arise, anoint him; for this is the one.’”* “*Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.*” (1 Sam. 16:10-13)

And there is the matter of the conscience. It seems David sinned before God as well. He had gone into Uriah’s wife, Bathsheba. He then subsequently cleverly contrived Uriah’s death in battle. After Nathan the prophet confronted him, David’s conscience began to bother him and he became remorseful. He did not try to rationalize his errant behavior as Saul tried to do. He wrote Psalm 51 as a prayer of repentance. In verse 10 David wrote, “*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*” If anyone understood that God looks upon the heart of man and that His desire is not in outward religious acts of sacrifices (see vs. 16), it was David. He wrote later in the Psalm, “*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart—these O God, you will not despise.*” (vs. 17)

This conscience in man’s heart (centered in his soul) can convict one of wrong doing, giving a feeling of guilt. Both Saul and David experienced this guilt. However, man’s conscience can also be suppressed, consoled, and appeased. Quite often, as Saul, he regrettably rationalizes and justifies his behavior. He makes convincing (at least to himself) excuses for his actions. He believes a lie and suppresses the truth to where facts become dormant—though it never really goes away. He becomes callous to his conscience. But, David humbly asked for a *broken and contrite heart*.

Read with me now Ezekiel’s prophecy regarding salvation:

*“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a **new heart** and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you will keep my judgments and do them.”* (Ez. 36:25-27)

What a promise! God’s fulfilling His desire for a people—a family—with whom His heart may connect and fellowship with them in all truthfulness and righteousness. It is as Peter wrote to the elect, “*Let it be the hidden man of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of the Lord.*” (1 Pet. 3:4) Something wonderful happens at this point in salva-

tion. A new heart is generated. Actually, and more so, it is the seed of Christ that now dwells within this innermost core of the believer, in his heart—*“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.”* (Eph. 3:17)

The presence of the Spirit of Christ plays an important role in man’s “new” conscience. Things are not the same. Citing 1 Jn. 3:9, *“Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin because he has been born of God.”* Now this verse requires a little further explanation. In the literal Greek, *“does not sin”* is really translated as *“will not continue in or make a practice of sin.”* The conscience is pricked. Conviction now is to the nth degree. Understand that the *seed of Christ* contains all the divine genetic traits, as a plant’s genetic code is in the embryo of its seed. The qualities are there to be nurtured and groomed for proper growth—submitted to the Father’s way of nurturing and not man’s way. His love towards His sons (and daughters) includes both instruction and discipline:

“And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as sons: ‘My son, do not despise the chastening (discipline) of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives’ And if you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?” (Heb. 12:5-7)

Thus, through such divine discipline, the son’s heart is brought into alignment with the Father’s and the inward seed of Christ is nurtured, and growth is toward maturity.

A Final Scripture. Perhaps the following scripture from 2 Peter best summarizes the heart of this message, regarding the intent of God the Father for His relationship with the redeemed—His children by spiritual birth. Man is seen to be in the *image* of God as a triune being: soul, spirit, and body. But the Father’s desire is for His family to grow after His *likeness*. The new birth may be a spontaneous conception as the seed of His Son Jesus Christ enters one’s heart. But the transformation into *likeness* is a maturing process—hour by hour, day by day.

“As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2 Pet. 1:3-4)

“You may be partakers of the divine nature!” This is truth. It is verification of the awesome power of God to transform fallen man into His image and likeness. Shall we consider this word of scripture and the remaining verses 5-11 (please read), most soberly. Maturity as sons is not automatic. It is a matter of deliberate moral choices and obedience, looking deeply into the heart, and not suppressing the conscience. Let us receive it, in fullness of faith, with all our heart, our mind and our soul. This is the will of the Father.

A Final Prayer

Father, it is in oneness with Paul's prayer for the church of Ephesus we pray:

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of our understanding being enlightened; that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that fills all in all.
(Eph. 1:17-23)