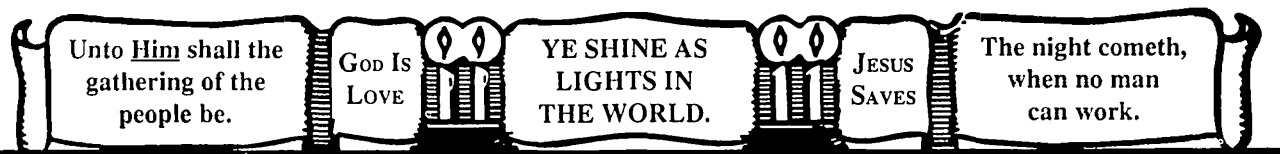


FAITH AND VICTORY

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Discerning the Lord's Body, The Church

By Bro. Harlan Sorrell

Part I

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." I Corinthians 11:28-29. In our time it is common to hear all the various denominational bodies of professed Christendom collectively referred to as the body of Christ. The problem with this concept, however, is that it fails to comprehend the essence of what Christ's body really is. The essence of Christ's true body is directly related to spiritual status, and spiritual meat and drink. Let us now examine the Word of God and examine our own selves to see if we discern the Lord's body and if we are really a part of it.

The Word tells us that the Lord's body is the Church (Colossians 1:18, 24). But what is *the church*? The Divinely inspired apostle Paul exhorts us in Ephesians 4:1-4, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with

longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There* is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." Also in I Corinthians 12:13 he says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

The Bible is very clear about the fact that the Lord only has one body, and that body is sustained and maintained by His own life that flows into it from Himself, through the one Spirit He sent for that purpose. The unity and oneness of God's people is as simple as getting in harmony with and being led by His one Spirit. His Spirit never fails to baptize into one body. God's Spirit causes people to "...come and sing in the height of Zion, and flow together to the goodness of the Lord..." Jeremiah 31:12. By His Spirit we are brought "...to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Hebrews 12:22-23.

The word "body" in all the scriptures quoted above comes from the Greek word "soma," and refers to "the body as a sound whole." The word body in the English language takes on various shades of meaning, but to narrow it down to its meaning relative to these scriptures I will quote the following from Webster's dictionary: "the whole physical substance of a man, animal, or plant; a group of people or things regarded as a

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unit; a corporation; a number of men united by a common tie, by one form of government.”

In the light of the scriptures above and Webster's definitions it is safe to conclude that the body of Christ is a group, unit, or corporation of people united by the operation of the Spirit of God (that being its common tie), having one form of government (that is, Christ's government—see Isaiah 9:6-7), its object being to convey to the world the whole spiritual substance of who Christ is in a physical, visible manner. The body of Christ IS CHRIST manifested in the flesh through the indwelling of His Spirit in human flesh. (see II Corinthians 4:10-11; 6:16, etc.) “He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” and thereby “your bodies are the members of Christ.” (see I Corinthians 6:15, 17.) Yes, we are even members “of His flesh, and of His bones.” (see Ephesians 5:30.) Therefore, no one is part of the body of Christ who does not possess the spirit and life of Christ. And furthermore, no religious system or organization has any place in the body of Christ except the one that is led, directed, controlled and organized by the Holy Spirit in accord with the Word of God. All humanly devised, humanly controlled systems and organizations are excluded from the Lord's body. Christ is the Head of His body, and it's government rests entirely on His shoulder. He has never given that authority to any other.

In Matthew 16:13-18 it is recorded, “When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Also in Luke 10:21-22 we read, “In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to me of my Father; and no

man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and **he to whom the Son will reveal him.**”

Just as Christ and the Father can only be recognized by a Divine revelation, so the church can only be recognized by the same. The body of Christ discovers and embraces itself by Jesus Christ and God the Father being revealed to the human heart and soul through the Holy Spirit. It is upon this solid rock of Divine revelation that the church is built, and the gates of hell can never prevail against that revelation. It is a revelation of spiritual understanding and knowledge. Inasmuch as Christ indwells and inhabits our own spirit, soul and body and we walk in fellowship with Him in the Spirit, we will be able to discern His body. The apostle John said, “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” 1 John 1:3.

When Jesus Christ was in the world, the world perceived Him to be but another man among men. But the thing that made Him the real Christ was His Divinity. Although “He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.” (John 1:10.) Jesus was the real Christ because He was indeed that “holy thing” that was conceived of and anointed by the Holy Spirit. (Luke 1:35; John 1:32-34.) When Joseph and his mother, Mary, brought Him to the temple in Jerusalem, there were only two people, out of the many hundreds that frequented that place, who recognized who He really was. They recognized Him because they were in tune with the Holy Spirit and the Spirit bore them witness by revelation. (see Luke 2:25-38.) To the rest of the folks there, He was just another baby boy.

It is the same with Christ's body, the church, today. It is perceived by the world as just another church among churches, another sect among sects, its system as just another religion among religions. To the Jews it was but “the sect of the Nazarenes.” (Acts 24:5.) But the thing that makes the church the real church, the body of Christ, is its connection with Divinity. Although “the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not,” (1 John 3:1) the church is indeed the real body of Christ because it is conceived of, anointed and led by the Holy Spirit. (John 3:3-8; 1 John 2:27; 4:13; Romans 8:14.)

In Ephesians 2:18 it is stated that through Christ we all "have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Those who truly access God by the Spirit gain the revelation of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Thereby they are able to discern the body that is conceived, led and organized by Him. Christ's sheep recognize and know His voice. (John 10:4-5.) There is but one fold and one Shepherd, and "unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." (Genesis 49:10.) All who are gathered unto Him become spiritually quickened with Him, and they all are raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Him. (Ephesians 2:1-6.) Sharing this heavenly fellowship with Jesus in the Spirit makes these spiritually quickened ones all of one heart, soul, and mind. "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." Hebrews 2:11. They have their ears tuned to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches (congregations). (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.) There is no discord or confusion when and where people sit in heavenly places in Christ and are connected with, tuned to, and led by His Spirit.

Please read I Corinthians, chapter 12, and then read Ephesians 1:3-4, 10-23; 2:13-22; 3:14-21; 4:1-16 and II Corinthians 6:14-18. In reading these passages it becomes very clear that the body of Christ is the actual habitation of God and Christ here on earth through the Holy Spirit. Christ's body, the church, is the manifestation of God in human flesh. The animation of His body is the Spirit that proceeds from God. Every member of the body is born of the Spirit (John 3:3-8) and is set into the body as it pleases God. As each member follows on to drink of that Spirit of which he or she is born and made part of the body, fully consecrating his or her personal body and soul to the will of God, he or she becomes "sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (II Timothy 2:21.) He or she will then receive "unction" or "anointing" from the Spirit that inspires, illuminates, teaches and interprets the Word of God. And that which each member learns from this anointing is all truth – never a lie included. (I John 2:20, 27.) The revelation of understanding that comes from the Spirit's anointing causes both sons and daughters of God to prophesy (Acts 2:17-18), that is, "speak under inspiration" and "by illumination and motion of the Spirit." (see "prophesy" in the Greek Dictionary of the New Testa-

ment and "prophet" in Smith's Bible Dictionary.) There is no respect of gender with God relative to the spiritual gifts He wills to bestow on the various members of Christ's body for its edification and profit. When it comes to the Spirit's manifestation "there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28.) This promise is "unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:39.) "And all thy children (both male and female) shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established...This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD." Isaiah 54:13, 14, 17.

By the Spirit every member is set into Christ's body, individually gifted and endowed according to the will and purpose of God for the overall benefit and profit of the entire body. The whole body is alive with the presence of Christ flowing in and through each member by the Spirit. Thereby God (whose fullness dwells in Christ – Colossians 1:19) is "through all, and in you all." Those who are inspired and directed by the Spirit to prophesy "...speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort," and "...ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." I Corinthians 14:3, 31. Thus "the whole body...according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." All its growth, advancements or increases are "with the increase of God" (Colossians 2:19). "The churches...were edified; walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." Acts 9:31. Christ's body only increases where God increases.

Christ's body is not a loosely flung, segregated body, disjointed and in opposition with itself in various areas of doctrine and practice, but on the contrary it is "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth." Its focus is the "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." It clearly reflects "the knowledge of the Son of God" here on earth. In it men and women are "able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," and "be filled with all the fullness of God." Any religious body that does not meet this criterion is not the Lord's body.

(Continued on page twelve.)

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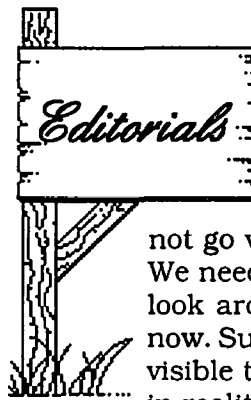
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We are surrounded by many precious things that bring fulfillment, blessing and meaning to our lives. It is the wonderful mercies of God that abound all around us, and one need

not go very far to see these things. We need only to open our eyes and look around at where we are right now. Surely the Lord's handiwork is visible to you wherever you are, for in reality we cannot find a place on

this earth that the work of His hand is not visible. His creation is declared in the images formed by the most powerful telescope, as well as the most precision microscope, however neither are required to witness the masterpieces of the Great Architect and Creator of Heaven and Earth.

During this season of the year a lot of our thoughts and time revolve around our families and those we love who are dear to us. This is good, for each one is a special creation of the Lord that is precious in His sight and each one can be a unique blessing in return.

When considering what is precious to us our mind often goes to "things" of monetary value. This is not unique to us for it has been that way since the early days of mankind. Consider this verse from Genesis concerning the time that Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for his son, Isaac. "And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things." Genesis 24:53. Silver and gold, accompanied by fine clothing, have been held in high esteem since nearly the beginning of time and people have sacrificed much to obtain them. Some have held them in such esteem that they sacrificed their lives and even lost their own souls for them. (Achan. Joshua 7:20-21.) It is a grave mistake to allow them to come between us and the Lord and be disobedient to His perfect plan for our lives. What the Lord allows us to have we should receive with thanksgiving, knowing that they are blessings that come from His loving hand, and not set our affections on them, for there are other things that are much more precious than silver and gold.

In Deuteronomy when Moses was giving his blessing to the children of Israel before he died, he listed some things that were precious concerning Joseph. "And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD be his land, for the precious things

of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath. And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren." Deuteronomy 33:13-16. To think of the precious things of heaven, the sunshine, the rain and even the snow, in their seasons and in the right balance, are a true blessing of God. When the climate is right and one plants their field with good seeds, then there is a harvest that yields an abundance of luscious fruit and wholesome grains. This is a wonderful blessing that only God can give. We have all eaten some of these delightful fruits and vegetables and we should thank God for them. Moses continued on to enumerate the precious things that come from the mountains and the earth. Many various types of metals and minerals come from the earth and it is the source of all the materials we use to build houses, office buildings, cars and all manner of machinery. Man even has a list of what they call precious metals which include silver and gold. Then from the earth are the gemstones the diamonds, rubies and sapphires all rare and precious, and all are a testimony of God's marvelous glory. While all of these things are so valuable in the eyes of man, there is something Moses listed that is more precious than all of the other things mentioned. Notice what else he said, "...and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush:..." If one has the good will of Almighty God, they should be a changed person. No longer is there a need to be a tightwad or stingy person if you have His favor! He is the source of everything. It is time for people to handle their earthly possessions more lightly and freely as the Lord would direct them, and to cherish their Source more dearly. He is, by far, the most precious.

Would you like an example of someone who had a right perspective on this glorious principle? Then consider the widow that Elijah went to in time of a serious famine. This widow was preparing the last of her meal to make a final cake of bread before she and her son starved to death. Elijah asked her to make him one first. One would not willingly do something like that unless they had respect unto the favor of God. Or, consider the woman told about in the four-

teenth chapter of Mark who had such great love for Jesus, "And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head." Mark 14:3. This lady considered Jesus so precious that her expensive ointment could only be given to Him. She "...brake the box." She was taking none of it back home with her. All of it was to be given to Him. Jesus did not overlook this kindness. Those around her failed to see how important Jesus was to this woman and thought it was a terrible waste, but no! It is not a waste if it is given to Jesus with a pure heart. This woman found a precious Savior that can manifest His loving favor for eternity.

The psalmist declared, "...all my springs are in thee." Psalms 87:7. The source of our life and the source of our abundance all issue from God, and those who have a proper perspective on this Source and have found His loving favor are a happy people!

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:" I Peter 1:18-19. The blood of Christ is precious to us because it is what purchased our redemption and cleansed us from our sins. Only when our sins are banished by His precious blood can we find favor with God. While we know that God gives temporal blessings to all people, the wicked as well as the righteous, it is through Christ's blood that we can have a fellowship with God that will give us an entrance into His righteous kingdom.

"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:" II Peter 1:1. Our faith is precious! Why? For without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith makes all the difference in our lives. It separates the Saint from the sinner and gives access to the precious blood of Christ which was shed to atone for the sins of all mankind. It is the missing link in the chain of salvation that causes many to stumble and miss out on what God has in store for them. While the eloquently worded prayers of the intellectual flutter in the air hopelessly unanswered, the prayers of a destitute widow wing their way straight to the

heart of God in Heaven. Prayer may be the key to answers from God but without faith the lock won't turn. Faith is the difference between an active, vibrant, working, dynamic experience of salvation and a worthless dried up form of religion. May God help us to have more of this precious ingredient in our lives so we don't become a religious prune whose profession is vain. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have **access by faith** into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Romans 5:1-2.

Our soul is a most precious gift bestowed upon man by God. Jesus, Himself, identified the value of a soul. He said, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matthew 16:26. This priceless gift is in our hands and we must give spiritual nourishment to it so it can be healthy and vibrant. It must be purified by the blood of our Savior and sealed by the infilling of the Holy Spirit. We must guard it from the influence of evil spirits and keep it free from the malignancy of anger, bitterness and envy. Seek the wisdom of God, which can only be found in His Word, and is valued above fine gold. Allow His Word to instruct and educate our soul and it will be kept safe for eternity.

While there are many things that could be listed in this article that are precious, there is one Godly attribute that it would be remiss to omit. That attribute is love. It was because of God's love that Jesus came to this earth in the form of a man. It was love that caused Him to submit to the will of His Father and suffer the cruel death on the cross. And since God forces no one to serve Him, it is love that we respond to when we seek to please God. Love is the prevailing theme of salvation. The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians instructs us in the way that Godly love behaves itself. It blesses our life and is reflected to those around us. Love is the ingredient that makes our relationships with others a joyful experience and is the bond that unites homes and families.

There is a story that illustrates the power and blessing of love demonstrated by a child. It seems that a father harshly reprimanded his young daughter for wasting a whole roll of gold foil wrapping paper to wrap a single Christmas present. Times were hard and he was infuriated by his daughters wasteful actions.

However, the next morning his daughter brought the package to her father and said, "Here daddy, this is for you."

As the father took the present from his daughter he felt ashamed about how he had overreacted to her the previous day. However, his anger quickly flared again when he opened an empty box that was childishly wrapped, Raising his voice he said, "Don't you know when you give someone a present there is supposed to be something inside it!"

The little girl looked up at her father with her big brown eyes streaming with tears and said, "Oh, Daddy, it's not empty. I blew kisses into the box. All for you, Daddy!"

The father's heart melted. He took his little girl in his arms and begged her forgiveness. It is said that he put the gold box by his bed where it stayed for many years. Whenever he was discouraged, he would take out an imaginary kiss and remember the love of the child who had put it there.

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We are thankful for the Lord's blessings upon this work in the past year as well as for the many years that the *Faith and Victory* paper has been published. God has carried us through many difficult times and we appreciate His faithfulness and also for the Saints who have supported us through the years. May the favor of the Lord continually rest upon His people.

Many who have supported this work have already finished their earthly labors and are gone to await their eternal reward. As many of our readers know, we are living in uncertain and financially difficult times and these conditions are also having an impact on this work. Supplies for the publishing work are expensive, postage and utility rates are continually increasing, and the cost of doing business in this country are at an all-time high. The net result of these changes have created a shortfall in the available funding that we are looking to the Lord to move on the hearts of His people to provide. We also consider the need for the publication of the *Evening Light Songs* book to be a high priority. With these issues in mind the Faith Publishing House board of trustees recommended that we begin publishing the *Faith and Victory* paper on a bimonthly basis to help focus more of our resources of time and funding on the publication of the song book. We request an interest in your prayers that the Lord will help us know how to serve Him in a more efficient way in the difficult times we are living.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey
wemurphey@yahoo.com



IL—Please remember me in prayer. I have some serious physical needs.

—Sis. Norma Tiller

KY—Please pray for me, I have some physical problems I am asking the Lord to heal.

—Sis. Kay Griffett

VA—Please pray for me, I have leukemia which has been compounded by a painful case of shingles and other physical needs.

—Bro. Roger Anderson

TN—Remember Bro. David Runion in prayer. He is suffering from depression and accusations of the enemy.

Philippines—Remember Bro. Paterno Tangunan in prayer, he has recently suffered a series of heart attacks.

OK—Continue to pray for Bro. Delmar Wilkins. He has a serious physical condition that is causing him to regularly suffer intense seizures.

LA—Remember Sis. Genevieve Carver in prayer. She suffers much sciatic nerve pain.

Standing Prayer Requests

Sis. Agnes Burleson
 Bro. Gary Burleson
 Sis. Gladys Cashio
 Sis. Helen Carson
 Sis. Genevieve Carver
 Sis. Elizabeth Corteway
 Sis. Waneta Creel
 Bro. Terry Dawson Sr.
 Bro. Mancil Doolittle
 Sis. Guy Domin
 Sis. Dorall Forbes
 Bro. Dan Gellenbeck
 Bro. Troy Gentry
 Jaden Howard
 Sis. Patsy Jordan
 Sis. Earnestine Jordan
 Sis. Karoline Kessler

Bro. Mark and Sis. Darlene Knight
 Sis. Evodna Marler
 Sis. Virginia Myers
 Sis. Elsie M. Offerman
 Bro. Vernon Robinson
 Bro. David Runion
 Bro. Edward and Sis. Gloria Taylor
 Sis. Imogene Taylor
 The Mitch Taylor family
 Sis. Norma Tiller
 Bro. Delmar Wilkins
 Sis. Jan Wood



LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

VA—Dear Bro. Willie: I'm hesitant to write my first article in the *Faith and Victory* paper that points out what I think to be an omission by another regular contributor, Sis. Charlotte Husky, in her article of last October. Her article was titled, *The Truth About Sin*, and it was an excellent article except that I thought something important was missing.

I read the article through twice to make sure I didn't overlook something, but I couldn't find what I was looking for. This line troubled me: "Every person can choose to control his personal lusts and refuse evil, or choose to indulge in his sinful desires and thereby transgress God's moral laws." Also she wrote, "God did not create helpless men and women who cannot resist evil." This sounded to me like we have the power within ourselves to sin or totally resist evil. To some degree I certainly agree with what she wrote, but I also feel that something very important was missing.

This is what I did not find in her article. The Apostle Paul in the seventh chapter of Romans said, "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.... For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.... O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Romans 7:15, 19, 24. I believe he was describing perfectly the man or woman that was justified but not sanctified. He was saying that only the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives through sanctification is sufficient to deliver us from the addictive power of sin and satan.

J. W. Byers in his article in last May's paper says about the sinful nature, "It clings to life with remarkable tenacity, and it is not within the power of man alone to put it to death. It has so entwined itself into our affections that they and each of their objects must be absolutely yielded up to death, even the most sacred treasures of the heart so that the true work of purity may be perfectly wrought within us."

Clearly the Holy Spirit through the second work of grace, sanctification, is what empowers us to be glorious overcomers. We do not possess that power within ourselves. If this was somehow implied in the referenced article and I missed it, please point out what I missed.

—Bro. Roger Anderson

(Dear Bro. Roger Anderson: Thank you for bringing to our attention the omission in my recent article "The Truth About Sin." I totally agree the Holy Spirit is necessary to live completely victorious over sin. My personal testimony is that the Holy Spirit, has been my grace and power to resist sin for many years.

There are also those who have not been taught about sanctification whose lives are acceptable to God which we know has to be above sin, as in Romans 5. A person's conscience enlightens him or her of their errors when they sin. Many times people in this situation (*not having proper teaching*) seek God for power to overcome sin and are successful in doing so. In this aspect, every person has the choice to resist sin and live holy.

Yes, we are hopeless and helpless against the power of satan without help from God. Thanks for bringing this to our attention. I'm sure it will help some struggling person who is trying to obey God's holy commandments without having the Holy Spirit as their aid. —Sis. Charlotte Huskey)

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MO—Bro. Willie: ...One of my greatest blessings this year has been the healing that the Lord has given to my back. As many of you know, I've had some pretty serious back trouble for quite some time. Beginning a year ago in August, it began to get really bad. I got to the point that I could hardly do any strenuous work at all, not even riding a mower, without serious complications. A chiropractor wanted me to get an MRI to see just what I was dealing with. I did, and it revealed that I had degenerative discs as well as three slightly bulged discs. I often found it difficult to make it through an 8-hour workday,

and I was constantly pressing against pain and an aching back. I could neither sit nor stand for very long periods. My most comfortable position was laying flat on my back in bed, which I had to do a lot of. Just going out on the lake in a boat fishing last June put me in bed the next day. There were times when feelings of despondency would come over me, and I would think, "It looks like I'm never going to get any better or be able to enjoy life or do much from here on out – I'm probably going to end up having to quit work and get on disability.

But when I attended the Monark Springs camp meeting in July, I decided it was time to *bring my case to the Lord* and be anointed and prayed for, as instructed in James 5:14. So on Tuesday, the day of fasting and prayer, I went forward and asked to be anointed and prayed for on behalf of my infirmed back. A group of ministers gathered around me, anointed me with oil in obedience to the scripture above, then laid their hands on me and agreed in prayer for my healing. After the first brother led in prayer, another felt inspired to continue in prayer. There was something about that second prayer that just seemed to penetrate my very soul. He prayed that God would give me a special inspiration of faith to receive my healing. After prayer was offered I didn't feel any different in my body, but felt inspired in my heart that God was going to do something

A day or two later I began to feel a tingling/itching sensation up and down my spine. As the days passed by I began to notice that my back felt stronger and wasn't aching nearly so much. During the week following the Monark camp meeting I took off work to get things ready for our camp meeting here at Myrtle. There was so much work to do on the grounds! There was a lot of weed-eating to do, and I knew that was one thing that, for the past year, would put me in bed in a hurry. I got up the morning I had planned to do the weed-eating job and, as I was standing at the bathroom sink shaving, I heard a song begin ringing in the back of my mind. It was saying, "Brighter days are sweetly dawning, Oh, the glory looms in sight! For the cloudy day is waning, And the evening shall be light." An inspiration from the Lord immediately came into my heart, telling me that brighter days were ahead for me, and that the cloudy day of my infirmity was waning. The brother who led in the second prayer for me at Monark had prayed that the Lord would give me just this kind of inspiration. As I felt the inspiration that morning I

remembered his prayer. Oh, how real our God is! Like the scripture says, He is not far from every one of us, and can be found by all who seek and feel after Him (Acts 17:27). We can seek Him for every need we have in life. He has the very hairs of our heads all numbered (Matthew 10:30) and *He pays attention to the details of the petitions we make to Him!*

I went out that day and did several hours of weed-eating on the campground with little adverse affects. My back has continued to improve ever since, gradually getting stronger and feeling more normal. I can now both sit and stand without much discomfort. I still have a little aching on some occasions, but it seems to be lessening as time goes on. I was even able to go out on the lake in a boat in October and fish with no adverse affects. God has confirmed His promise to me, and I am enjoying those "brighter days." I just can't thank Him enough! **I do thank Him every day.** It is such a blessing to be able to get out of bed each morning and be pain free, as well as to be able to turn over in bed without feeling a stabbing pain in the lower back. All praise to our faithful and loving God!"

—Bro. Harlan Sorrell

AL—Dear Saints: Thank the Lord for all His goodness! I want to share what the Lord has done for me. Almost two years ago I overworked my shoulder joints trying to complete a painting project too quickly. I thought that over time these joints would get better, but instead they got worse. A year ago from this last Monark, my faith was inspired to be anointed and prayed for. The Lord healed my left shoulder in just a short time, thank the Lord! But my right shoulder continued to get worse. By early December of that year I was in constant pain and could barely lift my right hand to my head. But the Lord was so good to me in the midst of this affliction. The Lord helped me to keep my house up, and I was still able to do my own hair. He also helped me to be able to sleep at night despite the constant pain. There were only two nights that I had trouble falling asleep. One night I called for prayer and the Lord gave me a touch. The other time, my pain level increased immediately after going to bed, so I determined to pray in bed for awhile before calling for prayer, but I fell asleep while praying. Isn't God good!

Over time my pain levels started coming down. In February I started having whole days without any pain. I did exercises faithfully to try to loosen the joint, but progress was very slow.

I was thankful though for every little bit of improvement as tasks became easier to do. In April, life seemed to become so busy that I often left off the exercises, but my range of movement increased more and more! I can only give God the credit for it! At this time I can lift my right hand straight up over my head; I have very little restriction at all and am basically pain free. Praise the Lord! He has been so good to me! Pray for me that I will remain true to His name.

In Christ,

—Sis. Sarah Herron

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WV—Dear Workers at the Lord's Print Shop: Greetings of Christian love and victory from West Virginia. Thank you so much for your prayers, love, visitations, concern and correspondence during our recent illness and recovery. Yes, it has been a long year, but the Lord has been so faithful and it is still a big miracle to be allowed to survive the near fatal brain-stem stroke. I am much slower now, but the race is not to the swift but to the steady as you go.

I am learning the value of the Scripture, "And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it,..." Isaiah 30:20-21. Our afflictions teach valuable lessons. I remember Bro. Darius Gibson telling of a vision in which he came to a sheer cliff and he was looking for a way to get around it when he heard a voice saying, "this is the way all of Saints have gone" and he said, "this is the way I want to go too." As he reached up, a peg appeared out of the mountain—then another, and he began climbing toward a bright light, his last battle.

May the Lord grant unto us His grace to face anything the Lord permits to be in our path. "God's will never lead you where His grace cannot keep you." "Ever Keep Heaven in View." I am getting stronger emotionally for which I am very thankful. I am now able to get around without assistance and I appreciate your prayers for me. Psalm 34:19 says, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all." "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." I Thessalonians 5:24. May the Lord bless each one for your faithfulness. May we see the end of this Christian race with victory in our souls.

Your brother in Christ, —Mancil Doolittle

SC—Dear Bro. Willie and Saints: We just wanted to write and praise our dear Lord for all He has done for us. He has been so faithful and continues to grow more precious to our hearts. We want to thank each one for every prayer that has been prayed for us. My dear mother added my name to the Standing Prayer Requests list several years ago, at a time that I was very ill. Through all of our afflictions and needs, God has been so faithful to touch me, my dear husband, and our precious son so many times throughout the years. We praise God for every touch He has given each one of us, and we continue to look to Him for the complete healing of our needs. Thank you for every time you have lifted our names in prayer. It has meant so much to me to know that our names were being called out to our Heavenly Father, and we hope He will bless each one who has carried a burden for us and cared about our needs.

We want to praise God for sparing our lives and the life of my dear mother, also. She recently underwent one of the most serious afflictions of her life. We almost lost her on September 3rd, my 45th birthday. The devil tormented me so much and told me that she would die and it would be on my birthday. But, God came in and did a Divine miracle and spared her to us, for which we will forever praise Him. The devil is a liar, has been from the beginning, and the truth is not in him. Dear ones, it pays to serve the Lord.

I still remember the night I gave my heart to Him at the altar in the chapel at Enid, OK when I was ten years old. My Papaw, Bro. William McCoy had moved to OK from OH where he had pastored the Dayton congregation for many years. Mom, Dad, and I had gone to visit him in Guthrie where he lived after he remarried, and we had all gone to Enid for a revival meeting one night. The sweet Holy Spirit dealt with me so strongly that I was compelled to go to the altar and yield my heart to the dear Lord. That night changed my life forever. He has been my constant stay, and I have never regretted going to that altar. He is mighty to save and mighty to keep...through the darkest, most foreboding moments of your life. "When all around my soul gives way, He then is all my hope and stay." I praise Him for leading me in all of life's decisions and for directing me to the most precious husband. God leads us so sweetly together, as we walk hand in hand serving Him. We have now been married for 23 years.

I could never thank Him enough for the gift of our precious son after longing for a child of

our own for 12 1/2 years. The devil lied to me and told me we would never have our own child, but again, he is a liar. God can do "...exceeding abundantly ABOVE all that we can ask or think...." Ephesians 3:20. Zachary loves Jesus so much, and he is such a blessing and inspiration to us every, single day. At the beginning of this year, I had an intense desire to really KNOW Jesus. I have served Him for many years, but I just longed to really know Who He is on a more intimate level. I didn't realize when God inspired me to pray this way what it would take to really KNOW Him. We sing the song "Where He Leads Me I Will Follow," and in each verse we promise to go with Him all the way...through the waters, through the garden, to dark Calv'ry, etc. But, do we REALLY realize what we are singing? What we are promising? Are we willing to go with Him to all of those places in our individual lives? In order to really know Him, there is a price to pay. It will take dying out to ourselves and being willing to suffer the reproaches of the cross.

On one particularly trying day, I was praying and telling the Lord how I just could not take any more. Then I heard the gentle voice of my Savior ask, "NOW, do you know Me?" He immediately brought to my mind my earnest prayers at the beginning of 2011 to really know Him. This year we have entered some of the fieriest furnaces of our lives, but we can say with the Apostle Paul, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed..." II Corinthians 4:8-9. "The anchor holds, though the ship is battered..." Thank the dear Lord. He is always there. He is a very present help in every time of need. We are encouraged and determined by God's grace to press the battle on. It is our desire to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Revelation 14:4. Please do continue to remember us in your prayers. We love each and every one, and we can say with all honesty that we have nothing in our hearts against anyone on this earth. Dear ones, we cannot afford the "luxury" of unforgiveness, bitterness, and hatred. We must love even when we are misunderstood and injured. We cannot afford to give up now. We are so near the end, and Jesus is coming very soon. We've come too far to turn back now. Oh, may the dear Lord help us all to be ready for that day!

In the love of Jesus,

—Bro. Kevin, Sis. Cheryl, and Zachary Smith



Nelva Stanley, age 79, of Carterville, MO, went to join her Lord at 9:35 a.m. Thursday, September 22, 2011, at her home following an illness. She was blessed to enjoy her last few weeks in the warmth of her family's loving care and they were blessed with being able to care for her and make many precious memories.

Nelva began her earthly journey on May 17, 1932, in Saginaw, MO. She was the last surviving sibling of seven children born to Asa and Dessa Gibson. Nelva married Lincoln Stanley on March 26, 1949. He preceded her in death on May 30, 1988. She also was preceded in death by her parents and six siblings.

Nelva was a very sweet and caring mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Her family was a big part of her life and she enjoyed giving herself to them, and spent much time in prayer for them. She was an avid collector of angel figurines, liked garage sales and embroidering.

She was a beautiful lady, making the world a more beautiful place in which to live. As you all know, Nelva was easy to love and made everyone feel loved. This was manifested in her profession as a health caregiver. She served in this capacity for several years both in hospitals and "In home health care," finally working for Oxford Health Care for ten years, retiring in 2005. Nelva's health started rapidly declining early this summer, but she met these challenges gracefully, never failing to say, "Thank you" to her caregivers.

She was a member of the Church of God in Webb City. Nelva met the Saints during her father-in-law's illness in 1959 and was so taken by these people she began her walk with God. In the '60's when the whole family got very ill, she had pneumonia and told of a dream she had, she felt herself climbing a stairway headed up to Heaven, and flanked on each step were angels. She never reached the top. God sent her back to care for her family. The Saints cared for all of them during this time and Nelva fell in love with these people and made her consecration with the Church of God. She took her children to church services and camp meetings. When the grands and great-grands came along she would

often take them to Sunday School and Children's church.

Those left to celebrate her life are her four children, Sue Bertrand and husband, Mike, Doyle Stanley and wife, Carol, Dwight Stanley and Joann, and David Stanley; 12 grandchildren and 32 great-grandchildren.

Services were held at Hedge Lewis Funeral Home in Webb City on September 26, 2011 with Bro. Daniel Adams officiating and eulogy by Bro. Ed Johnston. Officiating at the internment in the Saginaw cemetery was Pastor David Patrick.

Note of Thanks

The family wishes to express their gratitude for the faithfulness of the Saints during this time, especially for the prayers and labors of love so willingly given. Mom has finished her journey up the ladder and gone home. She will be missed greatly by all.

—The family of Sis. Nelva Stanley

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Discerning The Lord's Body, The Church

(Continued from page three.)

Just as God made the human body to operate in perfect harmony as signals flow by nerve impulses from the brain to every member, telling each member just how and when to move and act, thus motivating and directing the body in an organized and objective manner, so it is with the body of Christ. Signals flow from the Head, Jesus Christ, by the impulses of the Spirit to every member and joint of His body, thus it is motivated and directed in an organized and objective manner according to the purpose of God. Christ's body is just as organized and objectively motivated as is a sound, healthy human body because of the actual connection every member has with Christ through the Spirit. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Rom. 8:14. Our vision, perception or discernment of the Lord's body will be proportionate according to our fellowship and communion with the Lord in the Spirit. Where there is a loss or lack of this, there will be a proportionate loss or lack of discerning the body of Christ. Backsliding, apostasy and sectarianism are the inevitable results.

God Is For Us!

By Sis. Lana Johnson

*Is your heart feeling bruised and battered?
Does it feel like it's bleeding and torn?
Keep your eyes on the one thing that matters.
Grace from God helps pain to be borne.*

*He loves you and is for you,
So in times when you feel afraid,
Cast all cares and all hurts upon Him,
For your needs the price has been paid.*

*It's a blessing to trust in Jesus!
To be able to hope in His Word!
He's our rock, foundation, and anchor,
Just hold on and have faith in the Lord!*

*A life for God is all that's worthwhile.
The one thing that has true meaning.
He won't fail in our burdens and trials,
If on Him in our heart we keep leaning.*

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