

Keys
to Standing
Strong In Christ



*Knowing
God's Ways*

BECOMING A SWITCH FLIPPER

Power surges are common in many areas of the country. When more electric current flows through a circuit than what it was designed to carry the electric breaker box **switch flips off**. Sometimes we allow the circumstances of our lives to produce doubts in our thinking concerning our relationship with the Lord. Our thinking about being loved, accepted and forgiven by God flips off. Difficult relationships test us. Financial challenges and health problems all are real-life experiences that have the possibility of pulling us down. Often they cause us to doubt God's Word about His unconditional love, acceptance and forgiveness of us. Our mental circuit breaker **flips off!** The Holy Spirit prompts us, by faith, to become "**Switch Flippers.**" Then and only then, will He restore His thinking to us about our afflictions.

The spiritual tension in our life did not start until we were born of the Spirit. When we were born again, we were given new, God-centered desires that began tension between the flesh and the Spirit. Our flesh, our humanity, operated independently of God. There was not any tension then between the flesh and the Spirit. Now that we have become a spiritual people, we are in continual tension between worldly thinking and Godly thinking. By faith and the act of our wills, we can choose to have the Holy Spirit become our "**Switch Flipper,**" thus eliminating stress, worry and tension.

Have you ever thanked God for tension? Tension in our lives means that we are alive in our spirit. No wonder James said, "**Count it all joy when you have various trials and temptations.**" That is where our spiritual growth and stability exist! We grow by learning to operate out of the Spirit's knowledge rather than by trusting our soul's thinking and feeling. As we mature in Christ-centered thinking, we come to a place in life where we know that temptations and trials are an intended part of our life. When

VICTORY THROUGH THE CROSS

these difficult situations unexpectedly happen, we recognize that we are in an hostile engagement for God. The battle is the Lord's. He has chosen to have His Spirit work in and through us victoriously. The battle is won as we choose to have the Holy Spirit **Flip Our Thinking Switch** to His thinking about our challenging life situations.

We need to know that our life-controlling battles are won only when we KNOW that our spirits are dead to sin! That is why we have to know the difference between the soul and spirit. God has not declared your soul or your body completely off limits to Satan. There is only one place that is off limits, our "safe place"! That is our spirit in union with Christ. Satan has no access to our spirits, though he does have limited access to our souls (our minds, emotions and wills). It is amazing that the enemy knows how to keep on showing up where we are extremely vulnerable.

This may be a difficult statement to receive: **Temptation is absolutely necessary in our lives!** When we understand this statement, we begin to see Satan from God's point of view as a necessary prerequisite in our lives for building our faith. ***"But, without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*** (Hebrews 11:6) Satan is alive, powerful and present; however, the Lord Jesus Christ disarmed him at the cross. Colossians 2:15 says, ***"And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."*** The adversary, the prince of this world, no longer has any power over our spirit. It is amazing when we truly understand that he no longer has any power except what we give him. We have been instructed, ***"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."*** (Galatians 5:16) It is then that we stop acting as if he has power over us. Our unregenerated spirit died on the cross with Christ. Our old man is dead and buried. We are dead to sin and alive in Christ Jesus the Lord.

THE BATTLE OF FAITH

Most people want a confirmation of God's truth first. Then they are willing to confess that truth. The world says, "You act holy and we will call you holy." God says, "**Say that you are holy and I will make it become a reality.**" The Father is telling us, "**I AM in you, living My Life through you, as you. I will show you that I AM.**" When we affirm our faith before God, then He will confirm our faith.

Galatians 2:20:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet Not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

This was one of the first Bible verses the Holy Spirit used to give me a better understanding of how to have Christ live His life victoriously in and through me.

Verbal Exercise, Put Your Name In the Blanks

_____ is crucified with Christ: nevertheless _____ lives; yet Not _____, but Christ liveth in _____: and the life which _____ now lives in the flesh _____ lives by the faith of the Son of God, who loved _____, and gave himself for _____.

What we have just repeated is absolute truth! But you do not LOOK dead. You do not LOOK as though you are freed from sin. You do not LOOK like Jesus is living in you. Nevertheless, that statement is the verbal witness out of our inner being. By **FAITH**, we believe that our dead spirit was crucified with Christ and that He put His Spirit within us.

Every time that there is any doubt about your affirmation, you can repeat, by **FAITH**, what God already has confirmed to you in Galatians 2:20. I don't LOOK like it, but I am. I do not think that I am, but I am. **Speak it out loud!**

THE HOLY BUT

The “**Holy But**” always changes our perspective on a situation from external to eternal. Most of us want to escape difficult circumstances, because we do not know how to operate the **HOLY BUT**. Many people live after the word **BUT**. Go out and listen to people talk. Most everyone lives after the **BUT**, whether they are Christian or not. It is not what is said before the **BUT**, rather it is what is said after the **BUT** that they really believe. Example:

“Bob is a nice guy. We are lucky to have him as a pastor. But....”

- “But he talks too much.”
- “But his sermons are a bit dry.”
- “But my mother was sick and he never visited her.”

We Christians often put the wrong thing before and after the **but**. We put the “God talk” before the **but** and our difficult situation or feelings after the **but**. We say things like:

- “Well, I know that God loves me, **but** it does not seem like it. Everything is falling apart.”
- “I know that God is my sufficiency, **but** I do not have what I need.”
- “I know that God promised me wisdom, **but** all I have is confusion.”

When we put God after the **but**, where He belongs, we call it the **Holy But**. When we put the difficult life circumstances after the **but**, we are living IN the circumstances. They have control over us. The only thing that we can hope for is a change in our difficult life situations. Satan does not care how much God-talk we use, as long as we put it before the **but**. The **Holy But** is a bridge. It moves us from the difficult life situations that we are experiencing to faith in Christ living in us and through us. If we did not have the negative in life, we would never exercise faith. We do not deny the negative, because it is real, and it is what prompts us to move into faith.

Examples of **But** After the Negative

- “I feel awfully weak, **BUT GOD IS MY STRENGTH.**”

LIVING AFTER THE BUT

- “I’m sorrowful, **but** God is my peace.”
- “I’m in pain, **but** Christ is my sufficiency.”
- “I want to watch this TV show, **but** Christ in me wants to take time to listen to this person’s hurts.”

The **Holy But** moves us from the level of soul-thinking and feelings (which are perfectly normal reactions to life’s situations), to the level of spirit, to faith, to Christ’s being in our response to the situations through us. The situation is the same, but we have shifted our thinking to our inner-spirit being.

Understanding that the Christian life is Christ’s living His Life in our spirit as us provides confidence for us to respond to difficult life situations rather than fearfully to react to them. Apart from Christ, we cannot respond to life circumstances differently from anyone else. To operate the **HOLY BUT**, we have to put life’s stuff first and God’s truth last. We cannot always change life’s stuff/afflictions, but we can change whether or not we see God taking us through the situation. The Apostle Paul understood the **HOLY BUT**. He wrote in his second letter to the Corinthians (4:7-10):

“We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God, and not of us.

- ***We are troubled on every side, BUT not distressed;***
- ***perplexed, BUT not in despair;***
- ***persecuted, BUT not forsaken;***
- ***cast down, BUT not destroyed;***

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.”

Paul was living after the **but**. He put his troubles in front of the **but** and God’s perspective after the **but**. That did not change the fact that he was experiencing affliction. He was troubled on every side, **but** he trusted that God was in the situation with him.

MINISTRY QUALIFICATIONS

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.”

Just because we know the truth and live from the truth does not mean that the external situation is going to change; *however, we are changed*. The **HOLY BUT** moves us from our difficult life circumstance to the solution. The solution is a person, the Lord Jesus Christ, the God of all comfort. He comforts by moving us from without to within, from the outer to the inner, from the temporal to the eternal.

The temporal stuff, our life-dominating problems, truly are happening. We do not want to try to get people to deny their problems. Why try to get them to deny situations that God has engineered in order that He might comfort them? Why not, instead, help them to see the comfort that comforted you when you were in the situation that God engineered to fix you? Everyone else is giving them techniques to try to cope with their problems. But they still are in their circumstances, without God’s comfort. You may be the only one who sees what God sees, who knows the comfort that comforts people when they are afflicted, perplexed, persecuted and struck down.

Our **qualifications for ministry** are that we have been comforted in our tribulations and are able to comfort others with the same comfort with which we have been comforted by God. We receive God’s comfort when we agree with what He says about who we are. We are “holy and blameless in His sight.” (Ephesians 1:4) He repeats this fact in Colossians 1:22, “We are holy and blameless and beyond reproach.”

**LIVING FROM BEING PERFECTLY NATURAL,
COMPLETELY PRACTICAL AND INTENSELY SPIRITUAL**

God breaks through our intellectual barriers and speaks His confirming Word to our spirits: ***“The eternal real you is a spirit that is living in a body that has a soul. You are not a liability to Me. You are an asset to Me. But it is not you. I AM living in you. I have chosen to touch your world by living through you.”***

There is no reason to mistrust or fear our humanity anymore. We can accept it, because we know who is alive in us. God has revealed to us what life is all about. He has counted us faithful to be His inheritance.

God is pleased to love through us just as we are. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, ***“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we would walk in them.”*** (2:10) We are His workman right now. Yes... God in us... We can reach another person with the Gospel of the Grace of God right now in our spiritual development. Next year we will be somewhere else spiritually and He will use us then. But He can use us right now, everyday, wherever we are in our walk with Him. He uses us right where we are because there is someone out there who could not receive us if we were any deeper. This person can receive us right now where we are. He sends that kind of person to us continuously.

It is amazing when God sends someone to us. We might think that we do not have an answer for people, but they will pull God’s Spirit out of us. They will pull God’s answer out of us. We are God’s vessels living from being **perfectly natural, completely practical and intensely spiritual**. No matter how we look externally, we are His workmanship right now. Everything we do, whether work or play, is His opportunity to speak through us. We are ambassadors for Christ. God is making His appeal through us. He is just using our mouth. The burden is off of us. He is talking through us. It sounds like us, but it is the Spirit of the Lord God in us.

OVERVIEW OF OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, ***“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”*** In Christ, we are made an entirely new creation, just as God created the heavens and the earth originally. He made them out of nothing. So He does with us. He makes an entirely new self. When we are in Christ, we are ***“partakers of the divine nature.”*** (2 Peter 1:4) God Himself, in the person of His Holy Spirit, takes up residence in our hearts. We are in Christ and He is in us.

In our new identity in Christ, we no longer are slaves to sin (Romans 6:6), but we are reconciled to God (Romans 5:10). Our new identity in Christ means that we have the same relationship with GOD THE FATHER that Christ has. We are His children. God has adopted us as sons. We are able to call Him **Abba Father** (Romans 8:15-16). We are both joint heirs (Galatians 3:29) and friends (John 15:15) of Christ. Instead of fearing Him as judge, we have the great privilege of coming to God as our Father. We can approach Him with confidence and ask of Him what we need (Hebrews 4:16). We can ask for His guidance and wisdom (James 1:5) and know that nothing will take us from Him (Romans 8:38-39). We also rest in His authority and respond to Him with trusting obedience, knowing that obedience is a key part of remaining close to Him (John 14:23).

One of the greatest blessings about our identity in Christ is growing into the spiritual maturity that truly reflects our new Christ-centered relationships (Philippians 1:6).

Galatians 2:20

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

Unforgiveness is the single, most popular poison that the enemy uses against God's people, and it is one of the deadliest poisons a person can take spiritually. It causes everything from mental depression, resentment, bitterness to a wide variety of major health problems. God sent His Son Jesus to die for our sins, so that we may be reconciled to Him, without spot or blemish. He asks that we give others the same forgiveness that He purchased for us.

When we keep God's commandments and love, accept and forgive one another, we validate our love for the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:21) and show that we abide in His love! John 15:10 says, ***"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."***

WHAT A MAGNIFICENT BLESSING FORGIVENESS REALLY IS!!!

1. In your own words define Forgiveness. _____

2. Who completely forgives our sins? (Eph. 1:7 & Col. 1:13 & 14)

3. What is the Biblical principle of forgiveness toward others?
_____ (See Ephesians 4:32)
4. How does an unforgiving attitude affect our vulnerability to Satan's working in our lives? _____
"Be angry, and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath nor give place to the devil." (Ephesians 4:26-27)
"Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still." (Psalm 4:4)
5. Please, read Matthew 18:21-22 and explain the lesson on forgiveness that you receive from the Scriptures.

HOW TO FORGIVE: UNDERSTANDING OUR WORTH

Refusing to forgive leaves an open wound in our souls that festers into bitterness, resentment, and depression. For our own good, and the good of the person who hurt us, we simply must forgive. We choose to forgive so that we may grow in grace and enjoy the presence of God's goodness without feeling the weight of anger burning deep within our hearts.

6. What indication is there that we might end up with physical and emotional problems when we do not claim our forgiveness from God? (See Psalm 32:1-4 below).

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity. When I kept silent, my bones grew old. Through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me. My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. (Psalm 32:1 & 2)

7. Are there any people whom you need to forgive? Please write there names. _____

8. ... Is justifying other people's behavior forgiving them?

... Is asking God to forgive them forgiving them?

... Is explaining away their behavior forgiving them

... Is forgiving forgetting?

... Is it asking their forgiveness?

... Is forgiving people denying that you have been hurt by them?

... Is going to them and telling them that you forgive them?

NO! This could cause more problems. They could become angry, bitter, etc.... Forgiveness is none of these.

Forgiveness is a decision based on the act of the will, done by faith before God, in which we give up the right to hold another person accountable for the wrong they have done to us.

You may want to consider asking God to forgive you for harboring unforgiveness within your hearts.

It is important that we understanding the Trinity's role in forgiveness. Christ's role was to die for our sins. God the Father's role was to accept Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf and to forgive us. Today, the Holy Spirit's role is to enable us to do those things in the Christian life that we cannot do in our own strength, namely to forgive others because God has forgiven us.

Forgiveness does not mean that we recant or deny the fact that what happened to us was wrong. Instead, we roll our burdens onto the Lord, knowing that He will provide us with His thinking about the situation. He will comfort us, strengthen our faith and increase our spiritual maturity. Rolling our burdens onto the Lord—that's the secret of the Christian life and the secret of how to forgive. Trusting is depending on him instead of ourselves. It is a hard thing to do but not a complicated thing. It is the only way we can truly forgive. Learning how to forgive others is a challenging responsibility in the Christian life. It goes against our human nature/natural man.

Forgiving is a supernatural act of which Jesus Christ was capable. When we are hurt by someone, we want to hold a grudge. We want justice. Sadly, we are not trusting God with our affliction.

As believers, you and I are forgiven children of God. We have been lovingly adopted into His royal family as His sons and daughters. Our true worth comes from our relationship with Him, not from our appearance, our performance or our net worth.

THE BOMBSHELL



**I cannot change another
person by direct action;**

**Only God can do that. I can
be changed only by the
power of God's grace.**

**Others have an tendency to
being changed in reaction
to my being changed.**

PLEASE, MEMORIZE THE BOMBSHELL!

THE BOMBSHELL

The Bombshell is a wonderful detachment tool that greatly assists a person to overcome emotionally destructive and/or abusive verbal and physical behavior. We cannot effectively change another person's character defects by manipulation or criticism. We can be changed by the power of God's grace! Only God is able to change another person's heart!

When we give up the right to change another person by our direct action, it is as though a **Bombshell** were dropped into a large lake. We witness many wonderful positive ripple effects from within our heart attitudes. When we detach from trying to change another person, the Lord begins to effect His change within our thinking about the situation. His unconditional love affirms us of His acceptance and forgiveness for us and for those He has brought into our lives. We never are told to try to change another person but rather to be examples of Christ likeness.

Romans 5:1-11 tells us that God saves people even though they are yet sinners. He does not leave them in their sins, but rather, forgives their sins and imputes/credits to them the righteousness of Christ (Romans 4). By grace He brings them into the family of God and starts the process of transforming them into the image of Jesus Christ (Roman 8:28-29).

The Scriptures teach a very different method of change and growth than the world teaches. God's method for change is outlined in Scriptures such as Ephesians 4:22-24, in which we are told to **put off** the **old self**, **put on** the **new self** and be renewed in the spirit of our mind. Specific application of this principle will depend upon the problem that we face.

PLEASE, CONSIDER MEMORIZING THE BOMBSHELL!

LIVING FROM YOUR TRUE CENTER

BY
SARAH YOUNG

Learn to Live from your true Center in Me. I reside in the deepest depths of your being in eternal union with your spirit. It is at this deep level that My Peace reigns continually. You will not find lasting peace in the world around you, in circumstances, or in human relationships. The external world is always in flux — under the curse of death and decay. But there is a gold mine of Peace deep within you, waiting to be tapped. Take time to delve into the riches of My residing Presence. I want you to live increasingly from your real Center, where My Love has an eternal grip on you. *I am Christ in you, the hope of Glory.*

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. — Colossians 3:15

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of the mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. — Colossians 1:27

1 Corinthians 16:13

**“Be on your Guard;
Stand Firm in the
Faith; Be Men of
Courage; Be
Strong.”**

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