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Life, God's Desire for You

Now for some really good news! Long ago, your Creator planned to bring you to fullness of life, to experience an abundance of life, and even to reign in life. This is His desire for you!

- I will put my Spirit within you, and you will come to *life* (Ezek 37:14).
- 'I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him ... Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near,' Says the Lord, and 'I will heal him' (Isa 57:18-19).
- The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have *life*, and might have it *abundantly* (John 10:10).
- ... much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will *reign* in life through the One, Jesus Christ (Rom 5:17).

In this chapter, we will consider how you can more deeply experience God's intended life for you. Because we are talking about spiritual things, not religion or doctrine, we will use our Sacred Text and look at the ancient promises that will help you understand what we are talking about it.

If these ideas are new to you, take it slow and allow these truths to touch your heart. And for some of you who have already begun a spiritual journey, I know you will develop a deeper and more profound understanding of these truths.

- ❖ Intellectual or mental knowledge has no power to bring you more of God's life; it is only when our heart has received the truth that we will experience the power of God's life.

Our True Condition

First I need to help you understand the real nature of our problem. You already know about the beautiful Garden that God created for His man Adam to enjoy and rule over. But because of Adam's failure to listen to his Creator, he lost his right to have dominion over the Garden, and a seed of corruption entered into the human race.

We not only lost our true home in Paradise but also inherited this corrupted seed which has affected every area of our lives. It disrupts our relationships with our families, institutions, churches, governments, and our entire being—body, soul, and spirit.

- For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable [corrupted, ruined, spoiled], but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God (1 Peter 1:23).

As a result, our hearts have been wounded. The corrupted seed destroys our ability to be righteous like our Creator, and it allows the kingdom of darkness and its demonic spirits access to us.

What did we lose?

Here is how the Sacred Text describes our sad condition.

- But this is a people robbed and spoiled; All of them are trapped in caves [holes], or are hidden away in prisons (Isa 42:22).
- We are weighed down with iniquity [guilt, shame, fear, sin, anxieties] (Isa 1:4).
- The whole head is sick, *the whole heart faint*. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is nothing sound in it, only bruises, welts, and raw wounds, not pressed out or bandaged, nor softened with oil. Your land is desolate (Isa 1:5-7).
- You were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience (Eph 2:1-3).

↪ *How has the corrupted seed affected your life?*

Created in the image of God: a spiritual being

It is important that you know this: You and I are essentially spiritual beings, having been created in the image of the Divine Spirit (*imago dei*). We are of the same spiritual order as God; however, we are human spirits and not the Divine Spirit.

But as His fallen created beings, we want to regain our previous dominance and authority in the Garden. We try very hard to regain our lost place and position, using our own control, influence, and power. We are free to do even that.

↪ *Do you have a need to control things around you?*

Cut off from the life of God

Our spiritual being is more important than our natural being. Because of the Fall, however, we are unable to contact our spiritual side to receive divine guidance and direction directly from our Creator.

- Being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart (Eph 4:18).

Sometimes we may feel that we are incomplete, empty, and missing something. Indeed, we are! We're missing the other half of our being, the spiritual part that puts us into contact with the kingdom of God and brings about a sense of wholeness and fullness in our lives.

To recap: So we were born physically alive, but spiritually cut off from the life of God. We had neither the direct awareness of the presence of God in our lives nor the knowledge of His ways. Consequently, we learned to live our lives independently of God according to what our families and culture taught us.

Paradise Lost & Regained

Years ago when I was on a quest for spiritual reality, I read parts of Milton's great epic poem, *Paradise Lost*.⁶⁹ It recalls the biblical story of the Fall of Man: the temptation of Adam and Eve by the fallen angel Satan and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

I spent hours with the poem, searching for answers to my many questions and praying for revelation of its meaning for me. The poem begins with Satan, the "Traitor Angel", cast into hell after rebelling against his creator, God. Refusing to submit to what he calls "the Tyranny of Heaven," Satan seeks revenge by tempting God's precious creation: man.

Milton gives a vivid account of "Man's First Disobedience" before offering a guide to salvation. It begins like this:

*"Of Man's First Disobedience, and the Fruit Of that Forbidden Tree,
whose mortal taste Brought Death into the World, and all our woe."*

↪ ***Notice the word, woe. What woes have you experienced?***

Later in *Paradise Regained*,⁷⁰ Milton offers us hope of finding Paradise again.

*"I who e're while the happy Garden sung, By one mans disobedience lost, now sing
Recover'd Paradise to all mankind, By one mans firm obedience fully tri'd
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foil'd
In all his wiles, defeated and repuls't, And Eden rais'd in the vast Wilderness.
Thou Spirit, who ledst this glorious Eremite (a solitary person)
Into the Desert, his Victorious Field Against the Spiritual Foe, and broughtst him thence
By proof th' undoubted Son of God, inspire"*

↪ ***Does this renown piece of poetry written by a blind man help you understand what happened in the fall and give you hope?***

God's promise: life

Long before we were born, God promised to do something about our condition, to give us access to a new paradise, i.e., the kingdom of God.

- 'I will put My Spirit within you, and you will come to life and I will place you on your land. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken and done it,' declares the Lord (Ezek 37:14).
- Do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? Or What shall we drink? Or What shall we wear? For all of these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all

⁶⁹ An epic poem written by John Milton when he was blind. Published in 1667, considered to be one of the greatest poems in the English language. It tells the biblical story of the fall from grace of Adam and Eve (and, by extension, all humanity) in language that is a supreme achievement of rhythm and sound. When he began *Paradise Lost*, Milton was in mourning and in private grief for the death of his second wife. He attempts to comprehend the loss of paradise – from the perspectives of the fallen angel Satan and of man, fallen from grace. Even to readers in a secular age, the poem is a powerful meditation on rebellion, longing, and the desire for redemption.

⁷⁰ Published in 1671 by John Milton.

these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you (Mt 6:33).

The writers of the first three gospels use the phrases “the kingdom of God” or “kingdom of heaven.” However, in the fourth gospel, John uses the phrase “eternal life.” Kenneth E. Hagin⁷¹ says it essentially means the same as the kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven.

God Sent His Son

God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, who is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15), and anointed Him with the Holy Spirit to open our eyes, heal us, free us from bondages, and bring us to fullness of life. Jesus did three things while on earth: heal the sick, cast out demons, and teach the good news of the kingdom of God.

- Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put forth My Spirit upon Him ... to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, and those who dwell in darkness from the prison (Isa 42:1, 6-7).
- The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18-19).
- And Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people (Matt 4:23).

Jesus healed the sick

He came to heal us on every level of our hurting human nature, resulting in an interior transformation on every level of our being. *Healing* is a word rich in meaning and speaks to completion and wholeness.

Healing is an integral part of the Gospel itself. It is an essential part of the basic Gospel message. Jesus healed *because* He was God, not to *prove* He was God. If you read the Sacred Scriptures, you will see that He healed out of compassion. This was His strongest motivation for His actions.

Oral Roberts⁷² notes that “the healing Jesus brings is more than spiritual, more than mental, more than physical. His healing is to make us whole, healthy in soul, mind, body, and healthy in our relationships, in our attitudes, our habits, our way of life, all the days of our life.

⁷¹ Rev. Kenneth E. Hagin (1917–2003) is known as the “apostle of the Word of Faith movement.” A dynamic preacher, teacher, and prophet, his teachings are filled with vivid stories that show God’s power and truth working in his life and the lives of others.

⁷² A Choctaw American Charismatic televangelist, Oral Roberts (1918–2009) was ordained in both the Pentecostal Holiness and United Methodist churches. He is considered to be the godfather of the charismatic movement and has authored more than 120 books, including *If You Need Healing, Do These Things!* (1947).

“He came into this world to release us from our fears and frustrations, from our spiritual, physical, and mental illness, and to make us whole again. Jesus is the complete deliverer from the hurts and ills of life.”

Jesus came to give us fullness of life

I like the following Scriptures! Here Jesus is stating the mission and purpose of His life, His reason for being: To give us life, to bring fullness of life to you and me! Then this God-man makes the staggering statement that *He* is the life.

- I came that they might have life, and might have it *abundantly* (John 10:10).
- I am the way, the truth and the life: no one comes to the Father except through me (John 14:6).

Defining abundantly

The Greek word for abundant [*perissos*] means superabundant (in quantity) or superior (in quality); by implication, excessive. In using this word *abundantly*, Jesus is speaking about the quality of life he is offering us.

Jesus came to give us “eternal life”

In the following Scriptures, be sure you notice the promise of “eternal life.”

- And this is the promise which He Himself made to us: *eternal life* (1 John 2:25).
- For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have *eternal life* (John 3:16).
- For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is *eternal life* to everyone who believes (Rom 6:23).

What is eternal life?

At this point, it is essential that you take a deeper look at the meaning of “eternal life.” It means much more than you may have been taught.

Defining “eternal”

Consider the meaning of the Greek word for eternal: *alonnos*. It literally means *perpetual*, including *present* and *future* time; never ending, or continual. It begins now!

- ❖ Did you notice that *eternal* includes this moment, now as well as the future?

Defining “life”

Now look at the Greek word for life, *zoe*. Here we learn that *zoe* refers to life as a principle, i.e., the state of possessing the property of life such as vigor, liveliness, animate, vivacious. In the absolute sense, life as God has it!

A dictionary describes “life” as the state characterized by the ability to get and use energy; to reproduce, grow, and respond to change.

- ❖ In Part Two, we will focus on the characteristics and qualities of life and death.

What does eternal life mean to you?

Now, after looking at the definitions of *eternal* and of *life*, the question is, what does the phrase *eternal life* mean to you? How would you explain it? Remember in Chapter 2, we said waking up requires that we ask questions about what we have been taught.

Growing up in an evangelical church, I understood that receiving Jesus Christ into my heart meant I would go to heaven when I died – a kind of fire insurance – and of course I wanted that.

Once I began to seek God with my whole heart, the Holy Spirit opened my eyes to see that “eternal life” means something far more than that. It has something to do with God’s life being available to me in the here-and-now.

Here is how Kenneth E. Hagin explains it: “Some people think that eternal life is the life they will have when they get to heaven, but eternal life *is* the life of God. It is the God-kind of life. Eternal life is the nature of God, which comes into our spirit to recreate us and make us a new creature, to change our nature.”⁷³

↳ *What has eternal life meant to you?*

We Need a Spiritual Awakening

Because God is a spirit and our spirit is dead, we cannot know and experience God’s kind of life in our natural condition. We need a quickening or an *awakening* of our human spirit.

Jesus refers to it as being born again (*from above*). The reality of the inflow of the divine life of God cannot be experienced without this new birth or conversion experience. This is the key that opens the door, so that through faith in Jesus Christ we can draw water from the river of life.

- Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him and he with me (Rev 3:20).
- But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to *eternal life* (John 4:14).

For the new birth to occur, we must we repent (*change our direction*), turn towards God, and through faith (*confidence & assurance in our heart*) ask His Son, Jesus Christ, to forgive our sins and to come to dwell into our hearts.

When we do this, we literally receive the Spirit of Christ, and as a result our own human spirit is quickened and made alive. Because Jesus paid the price for our sin, the barrier of sin between God and us is totally removed. We are reconciled with God and belong to Him. The door to our heart is open and the light of the Spirit of Christ has come into it!

⁷³ Rev. Kenneth E. Hagin (1917–2003), Talk on YouTube.

- Unless one is born again [*from above*], he cannot see *the kingdom of God* ... unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:3, 5-6).
- But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him (Rom 8:9).

Real, authentic Christianity offers us experiences with a living God. The following paragraphs describe some of the things that happen when you experience a spiritual rebirth through faith in Jesus Christ.

Access to the kingdom of God – paradise

The coming of Jesus Christ ushered in a change. The temple was destroyed and a new possibility for relationship between God and us arrived. God was in man; we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, the house of God. Jesus preached that the kingdom of God was near and could be experienced within us. Now each one of us can benefit from an inward relatedness to God.

- Jesus was going about ... proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness (Matt 4:23; 9:35).
- He began going about from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God (Luke 8:1).
- If I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you (Luke 11:20).

The finger of God means an expression of God's power (Exodus 8:19; 31:18). In Matthew 12:28, Jesus makes the same statement but replaces the finger of God with the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is the means by which God's power is expressed and actualized on earth." – Brad Long⁷⁴

↳ ***How do you seek for the Kingdom of God? Where is the Kingdom of God to be found?***

What is the Kingdom of God?

The Pharisees wanted to know when the Kingdom of God was coming. Jesus answered and said it is not coming with observation "nor will they say, 'Look here it is' or 'There it is.' For behold the Kingdom of God is 'in your midst' (*within*)" (Luke 17:21). In the early church, "*in*" was invariably translated "*within*" (also many modern Bible translations).

The Kingdom of God is...

- The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17).
- The Kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power (1 Cor 4:20).

⁷⁴ Rev. Dr. Brad Long is Executive Director of Presbyterian-Reformed Ministries International (PRMI). In 1991 he pioneered the Dunamis Project, a series of six intensive equipping events that focus on helping people to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in ministry.

- My word and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power (1 Cor 2:4-5).

Can be experienced as an inner reality

The Kingdom of God brings a growing sense of peace, joy, righteousness, and power of the Holy Spirit. It is an inner reality that produces changes in our inner being. These changes affect our psychological reactions, behaviors, and thoughts, causing us to become more righteous. It resolves our guilt, powerlessness, and helplessness.

According to Dr. John A. Sanford,⁷⁵ “The kind of Christianity that Jesus and Apostle Paul proclaimed was never meant to be confined to creed to be recited, to a ceremony, to a system of social ethics, or only to a social bill of rights, but they proclaimed it as Divine, vital life-giving power that can be tapped. A source of inward power by which we can be made strong and whole.”

Because we have the kingdom within our own souls, we can experience an inward connection to God. Each of us can experience spiritual reality in a personal dimension and enjoy our own relationship with God.

The kingdom of God is an inner, spiritual reality that we intuitively can know directly through our soul and also in our personal experiences such as visions and dreams. Inside each of us an inner reality is waiting like a hidden treasure for us to discover it. Everyone can access this inner realm to gain levels of experience that go beyond the dimensions of our senses and reasoning power.

Signs of the new birth

The first sign of the new birth is that we know God intuitively, for our spirit has been quickened. Inspiration originates with the Holy Spirit in our spirit. We have experienced a spiritual birth – the spirit within us comes alive, is quickened, and suddenly we know it to be true.

- For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, Abba! Father! (Rom 8:15).
- The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ (Rom 8:16).
- The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord (Prov 20:27).

A true Christian is one who has seen, heard, sensed, and lived Christ, witnessed God's resurrection power. – Father Tony de Mello⁷⁶

↪ ***Do you recognize the witness of the Holy Spirit within you?***

⁷⁵ Dr. John A. Sanford (1929–2005) was an American Episcopalian priest and Jungian analyst and author of *The Kingdom Within* (1970). He is the son of Agnes Sanford, the mother of the inner healing movement.

⁷⁶ Father Tony de Mello (1931–1987), Indian Jesuit priest and psychotherapist, was considered one of the foremost mystical theologians in the 20th century.

God's Spirit joined with our spirit

In the born-again experience, it is not just our spirit anymore, but God's Spirit becomes joined with our spirit, creating that new creation in us. In fact, our spirit doesn't function very well until it comes into union with God's Spirit; this is how we become sons of God.

We need to see that we are a spiritual Christian because we are in touch with the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God, not another spirit.

- But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit [with Him] (1 Cor 6:17).
- Might become partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4).

We become a new creation

When you receive the Spirit of Jesus Christ, you receive a new seed, one that has no corruption in it. This righteous seed joins with you and brings about a "new creation." You are united with Christ and His life that is indestructible and eternal in nature. This life wants to touch every part of your being and bring about a growing freedom and wholeness within you.

Faith is involved in this new creation. We need to start believing we are a new creature, that the old things have passed away, and they have lost their power over us.

- For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is through the living and abiding Word of God (1 Pet 1:23).
- For if anybody is in union with Christ, he is the work of a new creation; the old condition (*old things*) has passed away, a new condition (*new things*) has come (2 Cor 5:17, *Williams New Testament*).

We now have the potential to become fully what God created us to be – man and spirit combined into one new being. This one new being happens as soon as we have that conversion experience, but we don't come into the full awareness of it for many years – this consciousness is not something that happens overnight.

↳ *Why is Jesus called our elder brother?*

However, some people find it difficult to believe this because of their struggles with old sinful behaviors. The problem is that it often takes us a long time to believe it, because the old nature from Adam just doesn't want to lose control.

Restoration begins

Our Heavenly Father promises us that, if we allow it, if we go to Him, He will cause something new to happen inside of us. Old things will begin to pass away, and everything will become new.

Gradually restoration will happen. It doesn't depend upon us trying harder but upon faith in the power of God. It occurs because we allow the indwelling life of God to work in our lives, to transform us deep on the inside.

- The kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; and this is smaller than all other seeds; but when it is in full growth, it is larger than the garden plants, and becomes a tree, so the birds of the air come and nest in its branches (Matt 13:31-32).
- The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened (Matt 13:33).

We now belong to God

We have been adopted into the family of God, His royal family.

- And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' Therefore, you are no longer slaves, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God (Gal 4:6).
- But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God (1 Pet 2:9-10).

We enter into a partnership with His Son

- And you were dead in your trespasses and sins ... but God being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (Eph 2:1-5).
- God is faithful, through whom you were called into *fellowship* [*koinonia*] with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor 1:9).

The Greek word for fellowship is *koinonia*. Partnership! It means you became a partner with Jesus Christ, and as partner you have access to all that He is: His name, His victory over sin, death, and the deceiver.

Go to Jesus Christ

If you want to become more fully alive, you must go to Jesus Christ.

- You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life (John 5:39-40).

Here is what I prayed when I desperately needed to know a living God: "*Heavenly Father, I want to accept Jesus Christ, your divine Son, as my Lord. I ask you to forgive me of all my sins. I now reach out and accept for myself what Jesus did on the cross when He bought and paid for all my sins, and I now choose to receive Him into my heart. I now belong to You. I have a heavenly Father.*"

Once I welcomed the divine Son of God, Jesus Christ, into my heart, I contained the very life of God in me. A few years later, I discovered I could not be destroyed by even the death of our son because of the life of God within me.

One of the best things that ever happened to me was when I learned to say continually, "Eternal life is in me. The life of God, the thing that makes God God is dwelling on the inside of me" – Kenneth Copeland.⁷⁷

Christianity has the only real solution to your problems

One basic distinction between Christianity and the many other religions is that Christianity goes beyond a simple code of ethics, a list of rules and laws that one must follow, and offers direct, spiritual experiences with a loving God.

We not only know about God, we experience Him. God has sent His Holy Spirit into our hearts, crying "*Abba Father*" so that we can have a direct on-going love experience with Him.

Through faith in His Divine Son, Jesus Christ, we become a new creation. And through the indwelling Spirit of God, genuine restoration happens. Other religions don't offer us this.

Most of the other religions teach that we can change by perfecting ourselves. If we just try hard enough, obey enough rules, belong to the right group, and behave ourselves, then we can change.

But in Christianity, God offers us something much better: a new heart and spirit – and a transformation of our inner identity.

- Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you (Ezek 36:26).
- To him who over comes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone (Rev 2:17).

Here is what Ellis Potter, a former Buddhist, said about why he became a Christian: "I was in Zen [Buddhism] and then I became confronted with the reality of Christianity through meetings in 1976 with Francis Schaeffer. And I became convinced that Christianity was more true, more satisfying, more absolute, more accurate, and more lively ... so then I became a Christian." After his conversion experience, Potter became a minister, missionary, and international lecturer.

Devout Christians, Corrie ten Boom and her sister discovered in the holocaust camps that they could experience God. Her sister said that when they get out of the camp, they must go and tell the world this truth. God can be experienced! We can settle for a religious system, or we can experience the reality of it.

✦ *How have you experienced God?*

People hunger to do more than just believe the right things. There is a hunger for some experience of God in their lives. — Dallas Willard⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Kenneth Copeland is an American televangelist and author associated with the charismatic movement. The organization he founded in 1967, Eagle Mountain International Church Inc., is based in Texas. Copeland's sermons are broadcast across the US and worldwide on the Victory Channel.

⁷⁸ Dallas Willard (1935–2013) was an American philosopher also known for his writings on Christian spiritual formation. "What Makes Spirituality Christian? Conversations with Dallas Willard," *Christianity Today*, March 6, 1995, 16-17.

God Desires You to Become Fully Alive

According to our Sacred Text, God planned for us to become fully alive no matter our age. We were designed to have vigor of body, mind, and spirit throughout our years, to keep the light in our eyes.

Once we receive the Spirit of Jesus, we contain the Light of the world. When Jesus walked on earth, He told His followers that we don't need to walk in darkness anymore.

- I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life (John 8:12).

As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being – Dr. Carl Jung

Fruitful into old age

Even though our body does grow old, our human spirit was never constructed to run down. It is we who allow this to happen.

- Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; Who pardons all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases; who redeems your life from the pit ... who satisfies your years with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle (Ps 103:2-5).
- With a long life I will satisfy him and let him behold My salvation (Ps 91:16).

Caleb's story

In the Old Testament, Caleb is a great example for us. It says he followed the Lord fully when he was young. Along with Joshua, he went to spy out the Promised Land and came back with a good report, even though other ten spies brought back a negative report. Because of this, Caleb was blessed by the Lord in the following years.

When he was 85, Caleb said to the Lord, "I am as strong now as when I was 40, and I want to take another mountain!" And God said, "Yes, go for it."

- I was forty years old when Moses ... sent me to spy out the land, and I brought word back to him as it was in my heart ... Now behold I am eighty-five years old today. I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me ... give me this hill country ... Anakim were there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the Lord will be with me, and I shall drive them out as the Lord has spoken (Josh 14:7-13).

We can flourish like a palm tree

Even in our old age, we can flourish like a palm tree full of sap. Sap is the life fluid of a plant.

- The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh, full of sap, and green (Ps 92:12-14).

Remember the phrase "*a river of the water of life*" in our Key Scriptures in Chapter 1? Now look at this Scripture again and notice that the tree of life is bearing fruit. Do you want to be fruitful even as you grow older?

- And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit (Rev 22:1-2).

Stir up the calling of God

No matter our age, we can be reactivated by God to fulfill the divine dream we are carrying. Our friends or family might laugh and say, "You are going to do *what*? You are going to go *where*? At your age?"

- Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary (Isa 40:31).

God's anointing can rise up within us to take new mountains or do new exploits if we stir up the purpose of God inside our spirit, to get back to what God called us to do. Ken Copeland reminds us to stir up who we are in Christ Jesus. Say, "Praise God, I can go back to my first love!"⁷⁹

"I have eternal life in me, now. I am forgiven and I forgive everyone who has hurt or come against me. That eternal life is illuminating my mind and my spirit. It's healing my body and delivering me from the onslaughts of darkness. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Eternal life is giving me the very wisdom of God Himself. I have the eternal life of God in me!" – Kenneth Copeland⁸⁰

Our friend Rev. Herman Riffel took off for a ministry trip all the way to New Zealand when he was over 90. When I remember him, I think, *if Herman could do that, why can't I go to Europe again. I am only in my 9th decade.* But the voices of our peers who are ill or dying around us and our children are in our ears: "What will you do, if this happens?" they ask.

So we live out our lives like the 10 spies who because of fear and lack of faith lived out their lives in the wilderness, saying, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us" (Numbers 13:25-33).

But let's remember Abraham, the father of our faith, and his wife Sarah, who conceived a child in their old age. If we listen to the Lord and do what He says, we can still conceive and live to see our Isaac born ... our impossible dream!

- ❖ We are never too old to achieve our dream!

Draw up the living water within us

In his book *The Kingdom Within*, Dr. John Sanford explains how to stir up the life of God within us. He compares our soul to being like a well. If the well is not used regularly, the well dries up because the tiny underground rivulets that normally supply the water close up. If we do not draw up the living water of God regularly, allowing it to flow into our consciousness, our soul will dry up too.

⁷⁹ Kenneth Copeland, *Stir Yourself Up* (2015).

⁸⁰ Copeland, *Stir Yourself Up*.

To lift water from a well, it takes a long rope. Sanford suggests that the teachings of Jesus are one way to draw up the living water: they are like a long rope that enables us to connect to our inner depths, to the Spirit of God's life within us.

- “Everyone who drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in a him a well of water springing up to eternal life” (John 4:14).

My Story

Drawing up living water

A few years ago, I had a life-threatening accident. My husband accidentally backed the car into me and de-gloved my leg, requiring numerous surgeries in few weeks' time. On the long ambulance ride to the hospital, my spirit sang aloud and praised God all the way. I *knew* I was a going to live and that my work was not done. It was an incredible supernatural experience.

Shortly before this accident, I had dreamed the following:

I was an elderly woman lying in a hospital bed; a piece of my long white hair dangled down into a large jar of water.

At the time, the dream didn't mean much, but looking back, I see the powerful message the Lord was sending me through this dream. No matter what I go through, I can draw up living water through faith in a living word from God – like sap does for living plants.

- ❖ Hair is a symbol of thoughts and attitudes.

Birth of a new baby

Recently I dreamed that my husband, Gerald, was pregnant, expecting a baby.

The baby was due that day. When we came to the hospital, I saw a car out the window, with some people in it, coming to see Gerald. I think to myself, “Oh no, it is not good for so many people to visit right now, because the baby is coming today.”

Then an unknown man holds up a newborn naked son, dangling him out in front of me. I say to myself, “I am 80 years old, and I have a new child to raise at this age! Oh my!”

As I awoke, I knew what the baby was a symbol of. It was time to give birth to an idea the Lord had dropped into my spirit a month earlier. We were to produce audiovisual recordings – podcasts – that can be downloaded from a website and played on a smartphone or a computer.

At this late age in life, it seems like a huge project. But if we continue to draw up the living water within us, we can raise our new child.

- Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (John 7:37-39).

Reflection Points

- ◆ Can you remember a time when you felt like you came close to or touched Paradise?
- ◆ If I asked you, where is Jesus, how would you answer?
- ◆ How do you draw up the living water into your consciousness?
- ◆ Meditate on the words of the Master: *“Everyone who drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in a him a well of water springing up to eternal life”* (John 4:14).

Your Response

- ⇒ Log any new insights you received in this chapter.
- ⇒ In what ways do you experience God?
- ⇒ Record in your journal any experiences you have had with God.
- ⇒ Can you explain what is meant by “eternal life?”
- ⇒ Why did the Israelites have to wander in the wilderness for forty years before entering their promised land?
- ⇒ Stir up the eternal life that’s in you by confessing aloud Kenneth Copeland’s quote.
- ⇒ Draw a picture of a well within you. What condition is it in? Is it open and flowing with water or is it all dried up?