

# **Hearts and Rems**

## **Proving the Innermost You**

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, [and] from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.

### **Psalm 91**

#### **Spurgeon's Commentary on Psalm 91**

The blessings here promised are not for all believers, but for those who live in close fellowship with God. Every child of God looks towards the inner sanctuary and the mercy-seat, yet all do not dwell in the most holy place; they run to it at times, and enjoy occasional approaches, but they do not habitually reside in the mysterious presence. Those who through rich grace obtain unusual and continuous communion with God, so as to abide in Christ and Christ in them, become possessors of rare and special benefits, which are missed by those who follow afar off, and grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Into the secret place those

only come who know the love of God in Christ Jesus, and those only dwell there to whom to live is Christ. To them the veil is rent, the mercy-seat is revealed, the covering cherubs are manifest, and the awful glory of the Most High is apparent: these, like Simeon, have the Holy Ghost upon them, and like Anna they depart not from the temple; they are the courtiers of the Great King, the valiant men who keep watch around the bed of Solomon, the virgin souls who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Elect out of the elect, they have "attained unto the first three," and shall walk with their Lord in white, for they are worthy. Sitting down in the august presence-chamber where shines the mystic light of the Shekinah, they know what it is to be raised up together, and to be made to sit together with Christ in the heavenlies, and of them it is truly said that their conversation is in heaven. Special grace like theirs brings with it special immunity. Outer court worshippers little know what belongs to the inner sanctuary, or surely they would press on until the place of nearness and divine familiarity became theirs. Those who are the Lord's constant guests shall find that he will never suffer any to be injured within his gates; he has eaten the covenant salt with them, and is pledged for their protection.

Charles Spurgeon  
TOD, V3, pages 88-89

## **WHO DOES GOD ENTRUST WITH HIS RICHES?**

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Matthew 7:6-12

For **dogs** have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked  
have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

Psalm 22:16

## **Dogs and Swine**

Lovers of the Flesh, Those who despise the Spirit and reason only from an appetite for self-indulgence. Those unable to appraise the true value the Spirit, of Purity, of Holiness. Those who view conviction as swarthy rather than sweet.

## **QUESTIONS FOR THE HEART**

Dig down deep, look inside to your most inner sanctum and ask yourself if you are one that God should trust with His richest most glorious jewels? Are you one who delights in the flesh (even in the slightest way) and opposes the Spirit's work (even in the slightest way)? Do you struggle with seeing value in purity, holiness, and uprightness? Is conviction miserable or a sweet reminder of the Love of a Father? Are you for or against the work of God in your life and in the lives of others?

**Seek** – darash (Hebrew) zateo (Greek)

**to pursue after a thing, to seek in order to find, to strive after, to need, to crave, to study and meditate upon**

### **Deeper Spiritual Meaning:**

The action of faith and trust - To depend, to yield, to allow to control, to submit, to surrender, to pursue with love, to desperately want for the grace of God. Seeking is the act of making oneself vulnerable to the Person of God, the control of God, the rule of God, the refinement of God. Seeking is the act of placing oneself upon the operating table of God Almighty in order to discover the fullness of what He desires to plant within. Seeking is the act of desiring God's way over and above one's own way. Seeking is the ultimate expression of holy love, sacred desire, and consecrated passion – the yearning to know God, love God, and share the intimate touch of His Presence.

But if from thence **thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.**

Deuteronomy 4:29

**Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God;** arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the LORD.

**1 Chronicles 22:19**

And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts: **if thou seek him, he will be found of thee**; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

**1 Chronicles 28:9**

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and **pray, and seek my face**, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

**2 Chronicles 7:14**

So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned: for Rehoboam was one and forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. **And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.**

**2 Chronicles 12:13**

And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; **and if ye seek him, he will be found of you**; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.

**2 Chronicles 15:1-2**

Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, **and hast prepared thine heart to seek God.**

**2 Chronicles 19:3**

And Jehoshaphat feared, and **set himself to seek the LORD**, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

**2 Chronicles 20:3**

One thing have I desired of the LORD, **that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple . . .**

When thou said, **Seek ye my face**; my heart said unto thee, **Thy face, LORD, will I seek.**

Psalm 27:4,8

Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to **seek thy face**, and I have found thee.

Proverbs 7:15

I love them that love me; and **those that seek me early shall find me.**

Proverbs 8:17

Evil men understand not judgment: but **they that seek the LORD understand all things.**

Proverbs 28:5

**Seek ye the LORD while he may be found**, call ye upon him while he is near:

Isaiah 55:6

Yet they **seek me daily**, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

Isaiah 58:2

And **ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.**

Jeremiah 29:13

For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, **Seek ye me, and ye shall live:**

Amos 5:4

(For after all these things do the Gentiles **seek**;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But **seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness**; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Matthew 6:32-33

Ask, and it shall be given you; **seek, and ye shall find**; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

**Matthew 7:7**

That **they should seek the Lord**, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

**Acts 17:27**

If ye then be risen with Christ, **seek those things which are above**, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

**Colossians 3:1**

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**

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that **they seek a country**. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

**Hebrews 11:13-16**

**Search** (examine closely, inquire carefully)

And ye shall seek me, and find me, **when ye shall search for me with all your heart**.

**Jeremiah 29:13**

**Let us search and try our ways**, and turn again to the LORD.

**Lamentations 3:40**

**Search the scriptures**; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

**John 5:39**

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and **searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.**

Acts 17:11

**Examine** (to enquire carefully, to search out a matter, to prepare evidence for a legal proceeding)

But **let a man examine himself**, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

1 Corinthians 11:28

**Examine yourselves**, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

2 Corinthians 13:5

**Ask** (To inquire of another, to search out an answer)

Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and **ask for the old paths**, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk [therein].

Jeremiah 6:16

**Ask, and it shall be given you;** seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you . . . If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them **that ask him?**

Matthew 7:7,11

And all things, **whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.**

Matthew 21:22

But I know, that even now, **whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.**

**John 11:22**

And whatsoever ye shall **ask** in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall **ask** any thing in my name, I will do it.

**John 14:13-14**

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall **ask** what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

**John 15:7**

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall **ask** of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

**John 15:16**

Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye **ask** not. Ye **ask**, and receive not, **because ye ask amiss**, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

**James 4:2-3**

And whatsoever we **ask**, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

**1 John 3:22**

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we **ask** any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we **ask**, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

**1 John 5:14-15**

**Discern** (to test and prove, to separate out for investigation, to scrutinize, to distinguish between good and bad)

**Judge** (to examine, question, and discern)

**Inquire** (to seek out an answer, to examine thoroughly)

## **God Bexaviors**

To seek and search for Holiness is an expression of the God-Life within

- God Seeks
- God Searches
- God Asks
- God Examines
- God Discerns
- God Judges
- And God Inquires

For the Son of man is come to **seek** and to save that which was lost.

**Luke 19:10**

For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both **search** my sheep, **and seek** them out.

**Ezekiel 34:11**

Shall not God **search** this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

**Psalms 44:21**

**Search** me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

**Psalms 139:23**

I the LORD **search** the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

**Jeremiah 17:10**

The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.

**Proverbs 17:3**

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.

**Proverbs 21:2**

And **he that searcheth the hearts** knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

**Romans 8:27**

**Examine** me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

**Psalm 26:2**

**Note:**

Our effective seeking, searching, asking, examining, discerning, judging, and inquiring of God, His Word, and His Kingdom is only possible as far as we ourselves are willing to be sought, searched, asked, tried, examined, discerned, judged, and inquired of.

## **Heart and Reins**

Hebrew (Libbah Kilyah – Heart and Kidneys)

Greek (Kardia koi Nephros – Heart and Kidneys)

The center of all spiritual life; the axis of the will and desire; the seat of all thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavors; the middle of man's being and thus the fountain of everything good or bad that proceeds from his life.

### **Deeper Spiritual Meaning**

The sacred part of man – God's portion, His habitation, His temple within the fleshly body, His ruling center. The Heart and the Reins (aka – the Caul and Kidneys) are the governors of the Life (blood) of the Body, circulating it and purifying it for the health of the overall body. The Heart and the Reins are the innermost sanctum in which the moral trajectory of man is defined. If Light shines in this hidden center, the King is allowed to reign in majesty from the throne of man's soul, and man abides in the grace and power of God sending forth a purified Life into every corner of the Body. This is how God intended man to live, thrive, build His Kingdom and bring Him glory. If man refuses the searching, convicting, and purifying Light of Christ then the heart will remain under the control of the Flesh and the principle of Sin and thusly bear fruit in man's life of pride, selfishness, and deceit. God searches hearts, He tries the kidneys, He tests and examines this inward chamber, for the purity of this inner palace is absolutely mandatory to a truly godly life.

### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY ON THE HEART AND REINS:**

The Caul and the Kidneys is frequently used in the Old Testament as a sacrifice unto Jehovah. The Caul and the Kidneys parallels the Heart and the Reins. The Caul is a redundant piece of liver right near the heart, while the reins are

a synonym for kidneys found at the top of the abdomen near the back . . . The Heart and the Reins is man's very center, the place of his truest being, the domain of his eternal dimension – his soul, This is the inner sanctuary where the spirit of man is awakened, this is a place of the deepest passions, the deepest emotions, the drive of the human creature . . . The Reins are the organ that purifies the blood, the heart is the organ that circulates the blood – both are directly connected with the idea of Life in the Body. If the reins are removing impurity, then the heart is pure, commissioning the Life throughout the entire body. If the heart is circulating the Life, then the reins can eliminate the impure elements, thus creating a healthy being. The two organs work in tandem.

**Eric**

(Kilya) kidneys, reins. RSV translates as heart, mind, or soul whenever KJV uses reins as a figurative term. Refers to the twin organs located in the lower back, the function of which is to filter impurities from the blood. With the fat they were of special significance in certain Hebrew sacrifices. When used figuratively, the term refers to the innermost aspects of the personality.

**Theological Wordbook  
(Vol 1, page 440, #983a)**

The choicest wheat in Deut 32:14 is referred to as "the fat and the kidneys of wheat", thus demonstrating how the fat and kidneys signifies the "choicest" portion of the sacrifice.

**Eric**

Kidneys being a symbol of the innermost being. This is probably so since in dismembering an animal the kidneys are the last organ to be reached. As a result it is frequently paralleled with the heart.

**Theological Wordbook  
(Vol 1, page 440, #983a)**

Before all the other intestines there are the kidneys, placed on both sides of the lumbar vertebrae on the hinder wall of the abdomen, of which the Scripture makes such frequent mention, and in the most psychically significant manner. It brings the tenderest and the most inward experience of a manifold kind into association with them. When man is suffering most deeply

within, he is pricked in his kidneys ("reins"). When fretting affliction overcomes him, his kidneys are cloven asunder (Job 16:13; compare with Lam 3:13); when he rejoices profoundly, they exult (Prov 23:7); when he feels himself very penetratingly warned, they chasten him (Psalm 16:7); when he very earnestly longs, they are consumed away with his body (Job 19:27); As the omniscient and all-penetrating knower of the most secret hidden things of man, God is frequently called the Trier of the hearts and reins; and of the ungodly it is said, that God is far from their reins (Jer 12:2), that is, that he, being withdrawn back into Himself, allows not himself to be perceived by them.

**Franz Deliizsch**  
(TOD, page 264, Vol 2)

He trieth the hearts – the secret thoughts  
And the reins – the inward affections

**Charles Spurgeon**  
(TOD, page 69, Vol 1)

Reins – from the sensitiveness to pain of this part of the body, it was regarded by the Hebrews as the seat of sensation and feeling, as also of desire and longing (Ps72:21, Job 16:13, Job 29:27). It is sometimes used of the inner nature generally (Ps 16:7, Jer 20:12), and specially of the judgement or direction of reason (Jer 11:20; Jer 12:2).

**William Lindsay Alexander**  
*Kitto's Cyclopedia*

The seat of the lower animal passions; the "heart" as comprising not only the higher affections, but also the will and the conscience. He thus desires to keep nothing back; he will submit himself to the searching flame of the Great refiner, that all dross of self-deception may be purged away.

**J.J. Stewart Perowne**  
(TOD – page 420, Part 1, Vol 1)

The "reins" and the "heart" are often mentioned together, as denoting the whole moral constitution of man.

**Vines Expository Dictionary**

## **The Music Room**

**The Heart is like a Music Room** – grand instruments lie about the great room. The instruments themselves are not good or bad, righteous or unrighteous, godlike or satanic, they are either pure or impure, and that differentiation hinges on which musician the soul lends its instruments to. The Spirit unto Righteousness, or the Flesh unto Sin and death.

The first step upward is to take the decision of abiding in Christ seriously and make it your every moment's focus. The first step downward is to take it lightly, and deem the instrument room a non-exclusive room for the enjoyment of many.

Before Christ arrives, the room is overrun with the flesh. No matter the design and desire you may have to restore the room to its rightful use and allow God once again to play upon the harps and lyres, the flesh holds a position of control. The Law of Sin is preeminent in the room, meaning the flesh holds the trump card in every hand. It is the flesh who plays upon the instruments of man's personality, bringing about a picture of either the heights of human glory or human debauchery, but in either case only a picture of Sin, of Self-advertisement, and of the produce of the flesh.

What Christ accomplished was a remedy for the state of the soul/heart. He has removed the flesh's ugly stranglehold over the heart. When we, in faith, ask God to enter our heart as Savior, King, and Lord, nothing can stand against His authority and His power. But he can only enter as far as we allow. Thus commences the great battle of the soul, the great battle over the inner life of man. If we continue to yield and allow God His rightful place, he purges every last vestige of fleshly control and establishes His Kingdom in totality. But if we stop short and attempt to keep ourselves on the throne, God will merely have set us free, but we will remain in the chains of the flesh and Sin.

We will be mastered by something, either sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness. We will have faith in something, either in ourselves unto destruction, or faith in God unto a transfigured life which brings glory and honor unto Christ. We must lose faith in our Self in order to gain faith in Christ in us. We must relinquish our hold in order to realize the fullness of the effect of Christ gaining foothold and establishing His Holy

Kingdom within. Who has the stronghold on my heart – me or Christ? If it remains me then the flesh will remain empowered. But if it be Christ, the flesh will be embalmed and silenced within, skulking to the far corner of my existence, and hogtied with the bands of disregard and contempt.

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This deceiver persuaded the first man Adam that man could play the Grand Piano of human personality without God – and just as *well* as God! He pointed out the great advantages of being free from the restrictive presence of the Holy Spirit, whose absence, far from detracting from human experience, would undoubtedly enhance it, for man would then be able to pick and choose his own tunes; tunes that needed only to be in harmony with *himself* and certainly not in harmony with God! Far from *losing* life by losing God, man would *gain* life in an entirely new dimension – enjoying things which tasted even better than they looked, and which would make him wise – as wise as God! Indeed man would become his *own* god, and what could be better than that?

**Ian Thomas**

**The Mystery of Godliness, p232**

However, at least Adam was on his own now and could have a crack at that Grand Piano! What he did not know, however, was that while he was talking to the Lie (that Deceiver called Satan), one of the Lie's sons (for he is the Father of Lies) had slipped into the Music Room!

Later, when Adam looked into the Music Room, there he was, sitting at the Keyboard thumping away at the notes, and producing the most excruciating noises, all out of harmony with each other and with everyone else! His name was The Flesh – and man has never been able to get him away from the Grand Piano since! At least, not on his own!

**Ian Thomas**

**The Mystery of Godliness, p233**

## **The Consecration of the Heart and Reins**

Offering up the most sacred part of your existence unto God

And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul that is above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar.

**Exodus 29:13**

### **Note:**

God covets the innermost portion of our existence. And if we are to function as His priests, in His house, we must not only consecrate our bodies for service, but our hearts and reins for refinement, purification, and as the dwelling place of the Living Christ, an altar within the temple where the Consuming Fire of God inhabits and the Living Flame never dims. Within the Old Testament there are 11 references to submitting the "Caul and Kidneys" unto God as a sacrifice, and here we find it first mentioned as part of the ceremony for priestly consecration. This is a picture not merely of God's desire to reclaim the center of man's existence, but also that He would give us a new Heart, a new source of Life, a new spring of affection, a new passion, a new mind, a new kingship over our soul – and this new "Center" would be the Life, the Person of Jesus Christ.

Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous **God trieth the hearts and reins.**

**Psalm 7:9**

Examine me, O LORD, and **prove me; try my reins and my heart.**

**Psalm 26:2**

**I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins,** even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

**Jeremiah 17:10**

And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that **I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts:** and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

**Revelation 2:23**

### **Note:**

When we become honest students of ourselves, we will readily admit that we are each capable of the most despicable deceit and immorality. And it is that honesty that moves us to cry out to God, "Try me, examine me, search me – if there be anything, anything at all within me that is

hindering your Grace from rescuing me, please, please Lord, shine your Spirit light upon it. Let me see clearly the state of my soul, so that I may not delude myself into a false life, an empty spirituality, and a hollow form of godliness." May God expose our secret thoughts, and bring to light our mischievous natures, that we would not feel secure anywhere but in the arms of Grace and in the abiding Life of Christ. Expose our flesh as a liar and a cheat, so that we cease listening to its counsels and being enticed by its promises of pleasure. Lord, we embrace your sweet conviction, your loving push toward purity in our innermost beings. Please, try our hearts, prove our reins, and until they glisten transcendent with your purity and glory – and until we reach the heights of holy perfection, never stop refining and pruning – for with every fleshly loss a greater more satisfying heavenly victory is gained.

## **The Anatomy of Moral Failure**

Unlocking the mystery of how great men or women fall?

People know what's going on with other people. So, we are wise if we live our lives as if there are no secrets. If we have nothing to hide, then there's nothing for people to discover, and we're clean. Living as if there is no such thing as a secret will keep you from all kinds of pain and suffering, and it will open the door for you to receive God's love more fully. Live as if there is nothing to hide and you will maintain innocence.

Ted Haggard – 2003

### **Track One – The Path of Exhaustion**

- Clouded from the Source of Life (overworked, overtired, distracted with the care's of life), or ease of life, prosperity of life begins to numb spiritual dependence)
- The intensity of Physical battle rises and the perceived intensity of Spiritual Battle diminishes

### **Track Two – The Path of Prosperity**

- Clouded from the Source of Life (worldly successes, ease of life, applause of men, begin to numb spiritual dependence)
- As this prosperity, ease, and comfort of life increases and often the sense of self-sufficiency increases and the felt need for God dependency decreases proportionally.

### **The Two Paths Converge at the State of Vulnerability**

In either case, whether through stress or through comfort, an unconscious detachment from God is created leaving the subject vulnerable once again to his flesh. The life is sustained through

abiding in the grace and Life of God. However, a life instantly becomes susceptible the moment it ceases abiding and begins functioning with self as its source once again.

### **The Small Stumble**

It's not always small, but it is often the small trip that leads to the bigger ones. This is especially true amongst Christian leaders. They represent a higher standard, a higher way of living – they are supposed to be a picture of purity and holiness. But a small stumble is all it takes to begin to erode their foundation. The moment they became vulnerable and ceased abiding, the enemy marked them for attack, and then he waited for just the right moment to move in. The first step downward is “trifling with sin” – in other words, taking it lightly, as if it really weren't as harmful as everyone seems to think. The subtle justification worms its way into a mind speaking with its sultry voice, “Come on, you deserve it. You've been a good kid, so why don't you have a lollipop.” Or it tries a different tact, “It's important to find out what everyone else is talking about, what's so special about this thing anyway, after all, just think how much more effectively you could reach your audience if you understood how they were sinning.” Or the infamous lie, “Didn't Paul say that where sin abounds, grace much more abounds – so come on! Allow God to show His grace, to prove his love.” Then there is the doozy of all doozies, “This won't hurt you! You are above it, mature enough to handle it – sure, it might send other believers into a downward spiral, but not you – you are a leader, a model of strength, a picture of God's power to overcome!” Satan has a thousand lies up his sleeve, but every last one of them is intended for one simple purpose – to cause the stumble. Because Satan knows that a stumble often leads to his control.

### **The Inner Cover-up**

What's a Christian leader to do? If he/she actually confesses the little indiscretion he/she would appear weak, hypocritical, even slovenly in their spiritual state. Wouldn't it be better if everyone only saw a strong, confident, super-spiritual visage rather than found out the truth? What would the spouse think? Wouldn't admitting this indiscretion damage my kids perception of me as their parent and thusly their perception of God? My congregation would begin to treat me as just an ordinary Joe/Josephine “with problems” rather than as the spiritual leader I'm commissioned by God to be. The inner cover-up happens all the time, and it is the single most damaging stage of the process. God asks his people to confess their sins one to another. Confession allows light to be shone on the problem so that it can instantly be corrected and remedied. Stumbles will happen and there is Grace when they do, but the Inner Cover-up closes out the Light and stymies God's Grace from doing its rescuing work within the heart and life of a believer.

### **The New Justifiable Habit**

It starts with a small stumble, the stumble is justified and covered-up and its memory is stashed in the far corners of ones existence. But as a result the weakness was never brought into the light and allowed to have Christ's strength applied to it, so it remains a human weakness without a divine power to offset. Another stumble occurs, and now since the first stumble was covered-up, it makes it all the more imperative to keep this one covered up as well. Mind you, these need not

be large or gross sins, even the smallest sins can be the foundation of large moral breakdowns if they are not dealt with in a proper manner. Over time these small stumbles begin to equate to a larger spiritual stronghold in one's life – a stronghold that there seems to be no spiritual remedy against. Often, at this stage of the process, the leader's belief system can often subtly alter to create a "pseudo-biblical" mentality that defends his/her actions or behaviors. In fact, these small stumbles are no longer even deemed stumbles, but rather, a necessary glimpse of God's grace in the daily life of the leader to remember that he/she is merely an awful sinner and no more. This is the point where many leaders gravitate towards the Ragamuffin message of Grace and spurn the clear Biblical teaching on the "enabling power of God."

### **The Slow Erosion**

If this behavior pattern becomes habitual, it sets the stage for even greater indiscretions, which previously the leader was a great distance from. Moral failure doesn't happen overnight, it is the slow breakdown of dependence on God and a desensitizing to His correcting voice. The flesh seeks access at every junction of the human existence – the flesh hates to be quarantined and loves his free expression. As time passes, certain restraints the leader always kept tightly upon him/herself are loosened and more latitude is given in his/her interactions with the opposite sex and with times of isolation. In and of itself, these don't prove a moral breakdown, but when a leader is already vulnerable they provide merely the opportunity for the take-down.

### **The Bigger Cover-up**

What started as a little scrape of the spiritual knee, has now become a much greater animal. In fact, if the leader's current behavior were to now be exposed it would lead to loss of position, potential loss of spouse, rejection of children, loss of all respect from loved ones all over, and mud on the face of Christ. It is now more imperative than ever that this information doesn't get out. Even lying to loved ones can now be justified as a protective device for their souls, their well-being, and their perception of God. When in fact, as we all know, there is still only one remedy for the awful situation and that is confession. The light has to be brought to the situation. Better to have the light brought by God in the presence of mature Christ-minded believers than over the airwaves by one who detests everything about Christ.

I have read of a young lion whom nothing could awe or keep down but the eye of his keeper. With the keeper you could come near him, and he would crouch, his savage nature all unchanged, and thirsting for blood – trembling at the keeper's feet. You might put your foot on his neck, as long as the keeper was with you. To approach him without the keeper would be instant death. And so it is that the believer can *have sin* and yet *not do sin*. The evil nature, the flesh, is unchanged in its enmity against God, but the abiding presence of Jesus keeps it down. In faith the believer entrusts himself to the keeping, to the

indwelling, of the Son of God; he abides in Him, and counts on Jesus to abide in Him too. The union and fellowship is the secret of a holy life: "In Him is no sin; he that abideth in Him sinneth not."

**Andrew Murray**  
(AIC, 151)

[To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.]  
Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou might be justified when thou speaks, and be clear when thou judges. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desires truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. For thou desires not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delights not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

**Psalm 51**

This is the most deeply affecting of all the Psalms, and I am sure the one most applicable to me. It seems to have been the effusion of a soul smarting under the sense of a recent and

great transgression. My God, whether recent or not, give me to feel the enormity of my manifold offenses, and remember not against me the sins of my youth. What a mine of rich matter and expression for prayer! Wash, cleanse me, O Lord, and let my sin and my sinfulness be ever before me. Let me feel it chiefly as sin against thee, that my sorrow may be of the godly sort. Give me to feel the virulence of my native corruption, purge me from it thoroughly, and put truth into my inward parts, that mine may be a real turning from sin unto the Savior. Create me anew, O God. Withdraw not thy Spirit. Cause me to rejoice in a present salvation. Deliver me, O God, from the blood-guiltiness of having offended any of thy little ones; and so open my lips that I may speak of the wondrous things thou hast done for my soul! May I offer up spiritual sacrifices; and oh! Let not any delinquencies of mine bring a scandal upon thy church; but do thou so purify and build her up, that even her external services, free from all taint of corruption or hypocrisy, may be well-pleasing in they sight.

**Thomas Chalmers**

See how one sin calleth to mind many thousands, which though they lie asleep a long time, like a sleeping debt, yet we know not how soon they may be reckoned for. Make sure of a general pardon, and take heed of adding new sins to the old.

**John Trapp**

As gold, by fire, is severed and parted from dross, so singleness of heart and true Christian simplicity is best seen and made most evident in troubles and afflictions. In prosperity every man will seem godly, but afflictions do draw out of the heart whatsoever is there, whether it be good or bad.

**Robert Cawdray**  
**(TOD, V1, P1, 420)**

David says, "I shall be whiter than snow." But how is this possible? All the dyers upon earth cannot dye a red into white; and how, then, is it possible that my sins which are as red as scarlet should ever be made as white as snow? Indeed such retrogradation is no work of human art; it must be only his doing who brought the sun ten degrees back in the dial of Ahaz: for God hath a nitre of grace that can bring not only the redness of

scarlet sins, but even the blackness of deadly sins, into its native purity and whiteness again. But say it be possible, yet what need is there of so great a whiteness, as to be "whiter than snow"? seeing snow is not as paries dealbatus, a painted wall, white without and foul within; but it is white, intus et in cute, within and without, throughout and all over; and what eye so curious but such a whiteness may content? Yet such a whiteness will not serve, for I may be as white as snow and yet a leper still; as it is said of Gehazi that "he went from Elisha a leper as white as snow;" it must be therefore whiter than snow. And such a whiteness it is that God's washing works upon us, makes within us; for no snow is so white in the eyes of men as a soul cleansed from sin is in the sight of God. And yet, a whiter whiteness than this too; for being purged from sin we shall, induere stolam album, put on the white robe; and this is a whiteness as much whiter than snow as angelical whiteness is more than elemental.

**Sir Richard Baker**  
(TOD, V1, P2, 416)

In the Hebrew language there are two words to express the different kinds of washing, and they are always used with the strictest propriety; the one, to signify that kind of washing which pervades the substance of the thing washed, and cleanses it thoroughly; and the other to express that kind of washing which only cleanses the surface of a substance which the water cannot penetrate. The former is applied to the washing of clothes; the latter is used for washing some part of the body. By a beautiful and strong metaphor, David uses the former word in this and the second verse: "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin;" "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." So in Jeremiah 4:14, the same word is applied to the heart.

**Richard Mant**  
(TOD, V1, P2, 416)

## **Questions for the Heart**

- Are you willing to allow God's searchlight into your heart and your reins? Not to expose just the extreme things, but to expose even the small irritated looks, the rolling of the eyes, the snide comments, the bad attitudes, the gossipy tidbit, the look that should have been avoided. It's the small things that prepare the way for the larger things. The heart

must be trained to do well in showing Christ in these small, seemingly insignificant moments, because those are truly the moments in which a life is built to showcase His glory through the bigger trials.

- Are you willing to deal harshly with the stuff inside your soul that “doesn’t seem **that** bad”? Often times junk is toted around inside our souls because, “compared to other people, it’s not really that bad – and I don’t want to look like a shmuck by bringing it out into the open.”
- Are you willing to allow God to teach you His attitude toward sin? Ask yourself, “How much do I detest sin? Do I secretly enjoy it? Do I attempt to justify my fleshly habits under the guise of being more fun-loving? Do I hate it?” Your inner gauge on sin determines which direction you are really heading spiritually in life. Where there is an affinity for sin, there is also an extra-measure of vulnerability toward sin.
- Do you tremble at the responsibility you bear as a leader, as an example? As a representative of the Holy God of the Universe, trembling at the thought of bearing the Holy Name is spiritually natural in a life that fears God. It is a danger sign if there is even the slightest measure of flippancy in ones portrayal of God’s holy Life to this earth.
- Do you think you have a stronger resistance to temptation than other believers? It’s possible you might, but it’s also possible that as a result of your inner confidence you will allow yourself to be wedged into situations that your soul will be unprepared and ill-equipped to handle. The best solution for temptation is to “get away as fast as your little feet can carry you.” Don’t ever stick around and try and prove your inner fortitude. Tensile strength is for handling life’s challenges, not life’s temptations. The only weapon any of us have to stave off temptation is something called stupidity. And God, in no uncertain terms, requests us never to use stupidity as our solution to this great fight.
- Are you willing to let God search you? Are you willing to let God try your innermost motives, test your innermost thoughts, and bring light to your most mischievous secret doings?
- Are you in, or are you out? Are you willing to live out a version of Christianity that forces you to always stay honest with your inner life? Or are you only willing to live out a version of Christianity that is surface pure, surface love, surface clean, and surface life? If you only want surface, then Christian ministry is the last place you should be. For in the end, the surface believers don’t just destroy their own souls, but the souls of many who trusted them to show them an authentic Christ.

- Are you willing to confess your failures and bring them into the light? As painful as it might be, the restorative power of the Spirit's light beam upon the soul is spiritually invigorating and beautiful. Most moral stumblings should be dealt with on a more private basis with a spiritual confidante in your life. Yet, there also are stumblings that affect a larger group of people and must then be dealt with in the larger sphere. Are you willing to go to your spiritual confidante or go to the larger group and confess your failings and allow God's Grace to wash, heal, and correct the inner twisting of your soul?
- Are you willing to change habits, behavior patterns, lifestyle quirks, opposite-sex interactions, bedtimes and wake times, your alone time structure, your "let your hair down" activities, and even your ministry position if necessary to securely fix the Holy Christ-Life to the bedrock of your soul?