

Answers to the Questions in *The Choice*

Answers to Chapter One Questions

1) Describe real Christianity. What is it that makes us genuine and authentic? (Personal question.)

Real Christianity does not mean being perfect or sinless, but simply knowing how to relinquish ourselves to God so that He can live His "perfect" Life out through us (1 John 4:7-8). Real Christianity gives us the freedom to be who we really are and yet, still show forth Christ--with no masks or facades. Real Christianity is where what we are thinking and feeling on the inside is what is showing forth on the outside. It's being able to reflect Christ, in spite of our circumstances. Real Christianity frees us from our past and frees us to live and love as God desires.

A real Christian is simply one who chooses to surrender himself to God--all his thoughts, emotions and desires--and allows Christ to live His Life out through him (Philippians 1:21). He is one who lives the truth. In other words, he doesn't say one thing and then, do another. He is one whose words and deeds match (Galatians 5:25). He is not trying to "act like" or "be like" or "talk like" Jesus, He is simply choosing to let Christ live His Life out through him (John 10:10). A real Christian is one who first loves God with all his heart, mind and soul, so that God can enable him to love others as himself (John 13:35). What makes this person real and genuine is that it's God's Life--His Love and His Wisdom--that is showing forth from his soul, not his self-life (Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:24).

2) How is God's Life any different from our own human, self-life? How do we receive Christ's Life in our hearts? (Personal question.)

God's Life is made up of His supernatural Love, Wisdom and Power (1 John 4:8). He gives us this Life as a gift when we ask Christ into our hearts to be our Savior. Only those who have personally received God's gift of Life--Jesus--into their hearts, possess God's Life (John 3:3-5; Romans 5:5; 10:4-11).

Human life, on the other hand, consists of our own natural love, thoughts and abilities, and is contrary to everything 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 talks about. There is nothing supernatural about it. We all have human life. We are born with it. Whereas, we only receive God's Life when we ask Christ into our lives.

1 Corinthians 13:2 tells us, "If I have not God's Love [Life], [we are] nothing."

3) Personal questions.

4) Why doesn't Christ's Life automatically flow from our hearts if we are Christians? What prevents this from occurring?

Christ's Life comes forth from our hearts only when we totally surrender ourselves to Him. This "filling of the Spirit" does not happen automatically. It all depends upon our moment-by-moment choices. Faith choices (non-feeling choices) allow God's Life to freely come forth from our hearts; emotional choices (feeling choices) usually quench His Spirit. So, choosing Life is a daily choice, sometimes even a moment-by-moment choice. Scripture tells us that we must daily "present our bodies as a living sacrifice," otherwise we will have "no part of Him" (Romans 12:1; John 13:8; Matthew 7:26-27).

5) What is the "key" to genuinely living Christ's Life and how do we do this?

The key to genuinely living Christ's Life is making "faith choices," non-feeling choices to do God's will regardless of how we feel or what we think. It's saying "not my will, but Thine" (Luke 22:42) and allowing Christ to live His Life out through us. Thus, God is the One doing the loving and the living, not us. And all He requires of us is The Choice to allow Him to do so (1 John 3:16). Thus, only our will is involved, not our emotions or our thoughts.

6) Personal questions.

Answers to Chapter Two Questions

1) Why is it so important to personally know that God loves us? (Personal question.)

It's critical to know that God loves us because then, we won't fear what He might allow into our lives. We will have the confidence and the trust to continually abandon our lives into His care and know that, regardless of what we see or feel, He is faithful and trustworthy.

Before we can go further and learn how to love God and others, we must first know that He really loves us. In other words, we can't surrender our lives to someone if we don't think that they love us. Knowing God loves us is important because it is the foundation of our faith (Malachi 1:2a; Matthew 10:29-31; Romans 8:29-30; John 3:16; 1 John 4:10; Luke 12:7).

2) Why is it easier to make good decisions when you are confident of God's Love? (Personal question.)

When you know that someone loves you, you feel safe with them and have confidence that you can accomplish your goals. And it's the same with God; when we know that He loves us, we'll have the confidence to step out in faith and do whatever He has called us to do (Isaiah 43:2-4; 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 John 4:18). Knowing we are loved affects every choice and every action that we make. When we are unsure of His Love, however, we won't have a solid foundation on which to build our lives and thus, every decision we make will be affected by this uncertainty.

3) How does God communicate His Love? Why can't we count on our circumstances to show us His Love?

God communicates His Love to us in a variety of ways: through reading His Word, through other people, through His Spirit bearing witness to us and through our circumstances.

The reason we can't always depend upon our circumstances to show us God's Love, is because sometimes He uses difficult situations in our lives to teach us His most precious lessons-- how to have unshakeable faith in Him and intimacy with Him. Even though the circumstances make it look like God has abandoned us, in reality, He never will leave us or forsake us. But, looking to our circumstances alone can be misleading.

If we are really looking for Him, we will see God's handprint of Love everywhere. No matter what our circumstances are and no matter how we feel, He will let us know that He loves us.

4) Describe how knowing God loves us gives us our security and identity. (Personal question.)

Knowing God loves us gives us our security and our identity because His Love is unconditional and the only foundation upon which we can build our lives. His Love is the only thing that will never be taken away from us. Everything else, no matter how good, safe, loving or wonderful it is, can be taken away. Our only safe foundation is the Love of God.

Many of us, however, look to the conditional loves of others, to our physical appearance and to our accomplishments for our identity. Complete fulfillment can only come from a personal and intimate relationship with God. As Philippians 4:19 states, "only God can supply all our needs." Thus, only God's Love can be the total provision for our identity and our security (1 Corinthians 3:11; Psalm 73:25).

5) What do we do to sabotage our confidence in God's Love? How can we restore our confidence in His Love?

We sabotage our confidence in God's Love all the time. We do it by quenching His Spirit. We do it when we hide our real feelings of fear, resentment, bitterness, etc., and when we don't deal with them as God desires. Once we learn to completely surrender these thoughts and emotions to God, then we can, once again, begin to experience His genuine and forgiving Love.

Answers to Chapter Three Questions

1) What does it mean to love God? Why is this so important to know and understand? (Personal question.)

Loving God means being totally giving over to Him--totally surrendered to Him. It means binding our wills and our lives to Him so that we become one (Matthew 22:37-39; 1 John 4:17a; Philippians 1:21a; Deuteronomy 11:22; 30:20; Joshua 22:5; Luke 9:23). To love God is not an emotional feeling, but choosing to become an open and cleansed vessel by relinquishing all our thoughts, emotions and desires that are contrary to His, so that His Life can come forth (John 12:24).

This is critical for us to know and understand, because we can't really learn to love others, until we have first learned to love God (1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 4:19, 21). Only God can make loving others possible. However, again, this totally depends upon our own willingness to set ourselves aside so that God's Life can come forth.

2) What is The Choice that we are constantly faced with as Christians?

The Choice that we are constantly faced with is either to live the Christian life in our own power and ability, or, to submit ourselves to God, become an open and cleansed vessel and let Him live His Life out through us (Deuteronomy 30:19). One way leads to hypocrisy and being two-faced; the other to genuineness and transparency.

3) If we can't really fix or repair our own self life, what are we to do with it?

It's impossible to fix up or repair our self-life. No matter what we do or try, it will always be flesh. What we must do with it, is kill it or crucify it (John 12:24-25). We must live our life through God's Power and His Spirit, not through our own natural thoughts and emotions.

The way we crucify our self-life is by recognizing it, confessing it, repenting of it and then, giving it to God. God, then, promises to remove it "as far as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12). Surrendering our lives to God is the only way we can stay open and cleansed for God's Life to flow through us (1 John 4:17).

4) Personal questions.

5) What are the steps to loving God? Do we have to "feel" like doing these steps when we make the choice to give ourselves to God?

The steps to loving God are written out for us on page 103 of *The Choice*. The prayer that corresponds to these steps is written on page 105. Basically, we are to recognize the negative things (the thoughts emotions and desires that are contrary to God's Word) in our lives. Then, we are to confess them and turn around from following them. A part of this step is to unconditionally forgive anyone who has wronged us. Next, we are to give over to God all that He has shown us and ask Him to purge these things from us. Finally, we are to read God's Word and replace the lies we have been believing with the Truth (1 Peter 4:2).

We definitely do not have to feel these choices (Mark 9:24; John 10:18). God has given us the authority and the power (Philippians 2:13) to say, "Not my will, but Thine," regardless of how we feel (Matthew 26:39).

Going through these steps daily is the only way we can stay open and cleansed, so that God's Life can be seen through us (Ephesians 5:18).

6) What is it that gives our lives meaning and purpose? (Personal question.)

The only thing that really gives our lives meaning and purpose is learning to love God, and then, learning to love others. This is the whole reason God has called us in the first place--to be channels of His Love, not only experiencing it for ourselves, but also passing it along to others (1 Timothy 1:5; 1 John 3:14; 4:11-12). 1 Corinthians 13 confirms that "without His Love, we are nothing."

Answers to Chapter Four Questions

1) In today's world, how is it possible to have the proper God-confidence and Christ-esteem that God wants?

The only way we can attain proper God-confidence is by personally knowing that He loves us (Isaiah 49:16; 54:10; Hebrews 13:5c; Romans 8:35; Psalm 37:23-24; 103:11; 1 Corinthians 13:8). This is the only foundation that will give us the confidence to lay our wills and our lives down to Him and allow His Life to flow through us. As a result of knowing that He loves us, we will begin to "like" what we say, what we do and how we act because it will be God's Life through us and not our own. This is what will bring us the proper Christ-esteem that He wants (Isaiah 30:15c; Proverbs 3:26; 14:26; Psalm 65:5b; Galatians 6:14; Colossians 1:8-11; 1 John 4:17).

2) What is the difference between the Biblical word love and the secular word like? (Personal question.)

Agapao is the Greek word for "love" and it means what we totally give ourselves over to, what we bind ourselves to and what we wholeheartedly commit to (Deuteronomy 11:22; 30:20; Joshua 22:5; Luke 9:23). This kind of love depends upon our choice, not our feelings or our understanding. Even as Christians, we naturally give ourselves over to ourselves, not God. Intuitively, Christians love themselves (some pridefully give themselves over to self; others are consumed with themselves in a self-hate or self-abasing way). Nevertheless, they love (agapao) themselves. This is the root problem to begin with and what God is trying to change in all of us.

The secular word "like" means what we have affection for, what we take pleasure in and what we enjoy. This type of love is based upon our feelings and our emotions. Even though we are Christians, many of us really don't "like" ourselves. And the reason is, it's not really Christ's Life coming forth through us, but our own self-life. Once we learn how to exchange lives with Christ, so it's His Life coming through us and not our own, we will be amazed at how much we like what we do, say and how we act.

3) What does it mean to be an extension of God's Love or His Life? How can we do this if we, ourselves, are hurting? (Personal question.)

Being an extension of God's Love simply means passing God's Life on to others (1 John 4:12; Romans 13:8; 1 Corinthians 10:24, 33). It means being His voice, His arms and His legs. It's being willing to surrender our lives to Him and allowing Him to live His Life out through us. Again, this completely depends upon our moment-by-moment choices.

4) Personal questions.

5) What is the other part of God's character that must go along side of His Love? How can we love people in our lives who have hurt, betrayed or wounded us? How can we love our enemies?

God's wisdom is what must go alongside of God's Love (Psalm 32:8; Matthew 10: 16). If not, then it's not really God's Love at all. God's wisdom is what teaches us how to walk in God's Love wisely. God's wisdom teaches us which type of love to use in any particular situation--God's long-suffering Love or His merciful Love.

The only way we can love those who have hurt us or betrayed us, is by surrendering ourselves to the Lord, giving Him our justified hurts, and then, depending upon His Love and wisdom to relate to those people.

Making The Choice to stay an open vessel, regardless of how we feel or what we think, is how God expects us to love our enemies, the unlovable and the untrustworthy (Luke 6:27-38; Matthew 5:44-48; Proverbs 25:21-22; Romans 12:14, 19-21). Humanely speaking, this is impossible. When we love God first, however, He then will give us His Love for these people. God always has love for these kinds of people, He just needs us to be an instrument of that Love.

Answers to Supplemental Study Questions

1) Describe the difference between our heart and soul? Why is this so important to understand? Where does our self-life come from? (Personal question.)

Our heart is the place where God's Life--His Love, wisdom and power- is brought into existence by His Spirit (Proverbs 4:23; 14:30a; John 7:38). This is "Christ in us, our hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). Thus, this supernatural Life is totally pure and holy because it's God's (Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26-27).

Whereas, our soul is the expression of our thoughts, emotions and desires. Our soul is like a neutral area that can either be filled with God's Life from our hearts (John 7:38; Ephesians 5:17-18), if we have made the right choices, or self-life, if we have gone by our feelings (Galatians 5:19-20; John 5:31; Ephesians 5:29; Philippians 2:21; 2 Timothy 3:2, 4).

Knowing the difference between our heart and soul is vitally important because often we get these two areas confused. How encouraging it is for us to know that we have God's Life in our hearts ready to go at all times (Colossians 1:27b; 1 John 4:8b; John 4:24), depending upon our choice. Understanding the distinction between heart and soul helps us to make the appropriate choices to allow Christ's real Life to come forth.

Self-life comes from the hurts, resentments and bitterness that we have never properly dealt with, but rather stuffed in the hidden chambers of our soul (Proverbs 18:8). This debris is triggered when we make emotional choices to follow what these things are telling us (James 1:14-15; Romans 7:17-24), rather than follow what God is saying.

2) How should you deal with negative thoughts and emotions you thought you had previously taken care of? (Personal question.)

Should violent reactions occur in response to something you thought you had already dealt with, it's vital that you, once again, go over the steps to freedom found in Chapter 3. The important thing is to ask God to reveal any "root causes"--any hidden thoughts and emotions about that incident (Deuteronomy 7:20; Job 12:22; John 8:32, 36; Romans 6:6-7; 1 Corinthians 4:5). It's possible you dealt only with the symptoms in that situation and not the root causes. You might never have really confessed and repented of those things. Do it again, and be free of these things altogether.

3) Why does hypocrisy occur?

Hypocrisy occurs simply because we continue to make "emotional choices" to follow what we think and feel, over what God is prompting us to do. Emotional choices quench God's Life and force us to function on our own love, wisdom and power. The cause of this is that we really don't understand "how" to get God's Life in our hearts out into our lives. This is the reason we often live two lives--Christ's Life in our heart and self-life in our soul.

4) If we can't fix or correct our self-life, what are we to do with it? Personal question (see page 103 and page 105).

The answer is simply "kill it" (John 12:24-25; Mark 8:35). We are to crucify all our own thoughts, emotions and desires that are contrary to God's and that are not of faith. And we do this by, moment by moment, acknowledging them, confessing them, repenting of them and giving them to God. God, then, will be faithful to take them "as far as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12) and fill us with His Spirit (Ephesians 3:19; John 1:16).

5) Personal questions.