

Introduction

Chastening

When we respond to the gospel and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit a massive transformation takes place within us but we soon discover that not all of our negative character traits got transformed at that time. A major work that God does in the life of every believer is to lead them out of all their ungodly attitudes and behaviour patterns.

My son, despise not thou the chastening (correction) of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked (told off) of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth (corrects), and scourgeth (disciplines) every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening (correction), God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth (corrects) not? But if ye be without chastisement (correction), whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards (illegitimate), and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence (respect): shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened (corrected) *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening (correction) for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. [Heb 12:5-11]

A formal word for this correction process is sanctification. The root meaning of this word is to be set apart. So to be sanctified is for your life to be set apart for God alone, so that you are obedient to all that He desires for you. The most agreeable result of this is that our lives become full of His love, joy and peace as all the old fears, grief and strife fall away.

The sanctification process leads us into spiritually maturity. It releases us from our fears and sets us free to love. Like growing up physically it does takes time but unlike growing up physically, it requires our cooperation for progress to occur; but if you fall in love with God and follow Him wholeheartedly it does not take very long. Sadly some believers give up and then there are those that just refuse while complaining it is just too difficult or even impossible. Many are willing but get discouraged by continually falling back into sinful ways. It is hoped that what follows will make it clear how anyone can be set completely free from our old negative character traits through all that Jesus did on the cross and in His resurrection.

God desires for us all to be cleansed, healed, strengthened and set free deep inside. This cannot be done using our natural strength but only through the power that Jesus Christ made available to us when He died and rose from the dead. Thankfully we receive these things by faith in God and not through the efforts of our own will power, which we all know does not work. Therefore the glorious freedom that comes with sanctification is available to **anyone** who will learn how to receive it.

New Nature

We put on a new life style by putting on the nature of God.

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious

promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. [2 Peter 1:2-4]

The Enemy

There is a war going on inside everyone who seeks to put on God's nature. Our biggest enemy is ourselves but we have another enemy who if we are not careful can hinder our progress. In a physical war apart from actually killing someone if you want to put them out of action you have three basic options. You could either:

- 1) **Wound** their body from the outside.
- 2) **Disease** or poison them internally.
- 3) **Bind** them up or enclose them in a prison.

In the spiritual realm the Devil strives to do the equivalent of all these three things to everyone of us. Praise God that Jesus came into the world to rescue us and undo all the Devil's work. How to be set free in each of these three areas is the subject of this book. It may be helpful for some to understand the 'Nature of Man', which is discussed in Appendix Two. The reality of the Devil and demons is discussed in Appendix Three 'The Demonic'.

The Wounded Heart

The Devil has no morals he often first attacks us when we are so young that we have not developed the skills to defend ourselves. He ensures we get abused through being terrorised, rejected and controlled so that our inner man becomes wounded.

The Dis-eased Heart

Physical wounds if not treated carefully can become infected. Likewise if our inner wounds are not dealt with correctly they become infected and they become the breeding ground for depression, bitterness and all manner of spiritual diseases or dis-eases. These dis-eases cause us to feel pain within and this pain dominates so that we do our utmost to comfort or pretend it is not there. We can get really good at this and sometimes our wounds become completely unrecognised even by ourselves. Despite this they will have trained us to be scared of further pain so we act selfishly and get so addicted to it so that we land up making some very ungodly choices in our lives.

The Ensnared Heart

A snare is a trap for catching an animal. It can be a huge net or as simple as a small fishing hook. In the realm of our hearts every sinful choice we make gradually takes our lives from under God's blessing and protection so that we become defenceless to the schemes of the Devil and we become ensnared in ungodly attitudes and behaviour.

The Yielded Heart

The first step to full recovery is to fully surrender ourselves to God.

The Restored Heart

God saw our predicament and provided for us a way of recovering from all these things.

God's character is so pure and full of true love it almost causes Him and us a problem. Pure love is not able to force its own desires on somebody else. God is not able to change us without an invitation to do so. Before we can ask Him to change us we have to understand what God is offering to us. Jesus said:

If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. [John 8:31-32]

It is as we present every detail of our lives to God that he is able to change our lives.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies (whole being) a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. [Rom 12:1-2]

The Victorious heart

Having yielded to God for Him to restore us and make us whole and complete again we need to learn how not to trip up and fall back into harmful ways. We are then in a position to reveal God's love to the world and bring others into the freedom we have found.

This Introduction is a summary of the truths that this book sets out to present. I pray that you will be set free to love, more and more, as you work through it.