



PATHWAYS TO GLORY
Relational Devotional



EXPERIENCING GOD'S GRACE, GOODNESS AND GLORY

On the Arise in Glory website (www.ariseinglory.org) this guide is provided as an interactive online tool. Each section links to a pop-up box providing the same brief description, questions for reflection and Scripture references.

PATHWAYS TO GLORY Relational Devotional
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Relate Heart-to-Heart *with* God

Catch God's Rhythm according to His Plan of Engagement

The early disciples related with and experienced God in a very real and dynamic way. They had a *multidimensional perspective* of the *multidimensional/manifold grace* of God.

This devotional will help you cultivate such a relational and multi-dimensional perspective. It will nurture your devotional life by helping you *intimately relate with God, know the genuine love of God and experience fruitful life in God*. You will connect with God according to the ancient paths in a *real, refreshing and personal way*.

How? God originally designed a series of appointed times and ways for the Hebrew people to engage with Him. While the original outward ways of these celebrations have evolved over time, God imbedded in them *measures of grace concealed* in the old covenant but dynamically revealed as *amazing grace* in the upgraded or new covenant!

On the one hand you will see, as the apostle Paul did, God's greater purposes. He revealed in Colossians 2:17 that these appointed times and feasts are "a shadow of things that are coming, but the body is of the Messiah." As shadows of grace rich in symbolism, they point forward to the one casting the shadow—Messiah Yeshua-Jesus Christ!

He came as the *Light* to illuminate God's truths and reveal how to *apply* God's truths in relevant and practical ways. Seen through His light with spiritual eyes we can see how these appointed ways and *love feasts* serve as visual aids illustrating God's relational plan of engagement; revealing aspects of how God seeks to engage and relate with us so we know Him better and enjoy a more dynamic and fruitful relationship with Him.

Psalms 85:13 relates how His footsteps are our pathway. The PATHWAYS TO GLORY grid or map so to say, captures these special types of engagements in a multidimensional way. As you go, it will illuminate real, refreshing and dynamic ways to relate with God. You will also see how these engagements serve as *rehearsals* foreshadowing an eternal relationship with God.

Each page includes capsule insights on GOD'S PURPOSES, RELEVANCE to life and questions for REFLECTION. Scripture REFERENCES are also provided for additional study and reflection to make your devotion time with God more meaningful and fruitful. The LORD bless you along the journey!

A Dynamic Framework for Spiritual Growth in God's Love and God's Ways
Gain deep insights and experience transformation through the appointed ways God ordained to relate with Him. Follow key topics relevant to your walk with the LORD, and grow in faith and virtue as He leads you in *His paths of righteousness*.

Catch the Broad Vision

See the Overview. See how these appointed ways align with God's process of Creation, Revelation and Redemption.

Follow the Path that Suits You Best

The PATHWAYS TO GLORY guide provides flexibility in approaches, study and engagement with God.

Horizontal Approach

Choose from the 7 horizontal Relational tracks moving across the grid at your own pace.

Vertical Approach

Do a study across the 7 vertical Feast tracks.

Spirit-led Approach

Allow the Holy Spirit to direct you as He leads you along your journey of life, and as specific topics become of particular interest and relevance to you.

Maximizing Fruitfulness

While each horizontal Relational track moves according to God's rhythm and process, you will find deeper insights as you move downward towards the "roots" of the LORD—for He is the hope of glory and the anchor of our soul.


Grace in the Pattern and Process

As you engage with God keep focused on the big picture of His process and pattern. Therein, you will find His grace and redemptive values as you relate with how God is working in your life.

Additional Resources on the Website



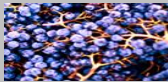




Pathways to Glory Application Guide

Pathways to Glory Relational Devotional

FEAST SEASONS	UNLEAVENED BREAD			HARVEST/WEEKS PENTECOST	TABERNACLES		
APPOINTED TIMES WITH GOD: THE FEASTS OF THE LORD	 PASSOVER	 UNLEAVENED BREAD	 FIRST-FRUITS	 PENTECOST	 TRUMPETS	 ATONEMENT	 TABERNACLES

GOD'S WORK	CREATION OUTWORKING OF GOD'S CREATIVE & REDEPTIVE WORKS			REVELATION GOD'S WORD & SPIRIT	REDEMPTION / RE-CREATION RECONCILIATION · RESTORATION · RELATIONSHIP · REVIVAL		
	FINDING SIGNIFICANCE	Justification	Sanctification	Dedication	Jubilation	Reconciliation	Redemption
DISCOVERING GOD'S PURPOSES	Sacrifice	Cleansing	Gratefulness	Fullness Revelation of Truth Covenant Grace	Proclamation	Affliction Confession Discipline	Rehearse Rest Relate
RECEIVING THE LORD'S GRACE	Crucifixion	Burial	Resurrection	Glory	Triumph	Substitution	Peace
RESPONDING IN FAITH	New Birth	Immersion	Advance	Indwelling and Infilling of the Holy Spirit	Preparation	Law of the Spirit vs. Law of Sin & Death	Fellowship
WALKING IN SPIRITUAL REALITY	Release	Refreshment	Refocus	Independence in God Dependence on God	Reclamation	Reformation	Fruitfulness Recovery Transformation
EMBRACING HIS KINGDOM VALUES	Connection	Communion	Consecration	Consolation Communication Confirmation Conformation	Conquest Congruence	Conviction Compassion	Contentment Community Completion
LIVING LIFE IN THE LORD	I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE	I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD	I AM THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP	I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD	I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE	I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH THE LIFE	I AM THE TRUE VINE

OVERVIEW

FEAST SEASONS	UNLEAVENED BREAD			HARVEST/WEEKS PENTECOST	TABERNACLES		
APPOINTMENTS WITH GOD: THE FEASTS OF THE LORD	 PASSOVER Pesach	 UNLEAVENED BREAD Hag Ha Matzah	 FIRST-FRUITS Yom HaBikkurim	 PENTECOST Shavuot	 TRUMPETS Rosh Hashanah Yom Teruah	 ATONEMENT Yom Kippur	 TABERNACLES Sukkot
BIBLICAL DATES	Nissan 14	Nissan 15-21	Sunday after Passover	50 Days after First-Fruits	Tishri 1	Tishri 10	Tishri 15-22
ACTUAL MONTH (SACRED MONTH) (CIVIL MONTH)	March-April 1 7	March-April 1 7	March-April 1 7	May-June 3 9	Sep-Oct 7 1	Sep-Oct 7 1	Sep-Oct 7 1
LIVING LIFE IN THE LORD	I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE	I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD	I AM THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP	I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD	I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE	I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH THE LIFE	I AM THE TRUE VINE

Getting in Sync with God's Covenant Way

God operates and engages with mankind through an order and framework of a kind of relationship He calls covenant. He illustrated the nature of His heart and way of His covenant through a progressive series of covenants; first with Adam and Eve, then Noah, then Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He established a covenant and a law with Moses, then one with David. As the prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel proclaimed, God said He would seal a *new covenant* written on peoples' hearts.

An important aspect of God's covenant relates to the Appointed Times of the LORD. They serve as a cycle of ways in which God engages with His people. He didn't appoint these encounters to be legalistic rituals, but real dynamic and refreshing ways to relate and interact with Him! Truly, God designed these appointed ways to be perpetual ways of engaging with Him in a very real and relevant manner. Scripture refers to them the Appointed Times of the Lord.

God established seven particular appointed times grouped into

three seasons. Truly, they represent annual cycles of life with relevance to our spiritual and physical lives. Through these appointed times, we see God's overall pattern of Creation, Revelation and Redemption.

It is a pattern He continuously works through. It is the pattern of His rhythm. *It works the way rhythm and cadence work in music-- a flowing pattern bringing you to rest and peace.* It is the way He designed for our lives to be in sync with Him! They serve to help us relate and engage with God in a truly dynamic and fruitful way!

Truly, everything God does happens within the "the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). God used the agricultural seasons to *illustrate a story—or process—of ways He interacts with us; ways in which the Spirit of God flows to accomplish His purposes.* He, therefore, would have us be more sensitive to His rhythm. Solomon had something to say about this.

To everything there is a season,
A time for every purpose under heaven
(Ecclesiastes 3:1)

And a wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment, because for every matter there is a time and judgment (Ecclesiastes 8:5-6)

God's Way and Rhythm: Creation → Revelation → Redemption

God is always in a mode of creating. His works are redemptive in nature. He revealed Himself first as *the* Creator. He spoke to Isaiah several times (chapters 42:9, 43:19 and 48:6) about the new things He creates. Through the cycle of appointed seasons, we see the outworking of God's process of Creation, Revelation and Redemption.

Through Unleavened Bread, we see God initiating His creative and redemptive process. He separates light from darkness, truth from lies, righteousness from sin—and people from bondage. God creates new things by speaking His Word and breathing His Spirit. The first fruits of what God creates serve as His testimonies and demonstration of His creative acts. In Unleavened Bread, God draws us unto Himself, reveals His plan of peace, and provides for a way to transition and grow a step closer to God.

Through the Appointed Times of Weeks or Harvest—and evidenced in Pentecost—we see God's Word and Spirit revealing and manifesting the knowledge of God, His truth, His power and His glory. We also see God preparing us for a more meaningful experience with Him.

Through Tabernacles, we see God's process come to a state of rest and completion. We see His kingdom order established. We see trials come to a resolution in Messiah's victory. We value God's presence in a fresh way, and come to a place and state of rest, reflection, redemption and restoration; and also preparing us for the next cycle.

Through these appointed seasons we see God connecting heaven with earth; His will being accomplished on earth as it is in heaven. We see God's purposes work through the process of time, and God's kingdom manifesting and revealing itself. We see a way that brings alignment and unification between man and God—our Creator. We see a path leading towards destiny. We also see the LORD in the feasts—in a multitude of ways! Seeing God's pattern and process will help your relationship with God grow in a real, dynamic and refreshing way.

Dates, Seasons and Life's Cycles

Two calendars are reflected in the Bible: a spiritual/sacred calendar and a civil/agricultural calendar. The fact that the 1st spiritual month parallels the 7th civil month and 1st civil month parallels the 7th spiritual month points to a relationship between the two cycles.

The spiritual cycle represents our relationship with God from a spiritual standpoint. The civil cycle was designed around agricultural seasons, primarily reflecting upon our work life.

Our focus, however, is *engaging in relationship with God* and keeping the big picture in mind; how Messiah Jesus has fulfilled the greater purposes of the feasts, making them relevant to our walk with God. Therein we find the manifold grace of God.

Relating With Our Truly Awesome Relational God

God is truly a relational God and desires to have personal relationships with the people He has created. Many people don't think about God as being relational. Too much emphasis has been placed on ritualistic celebrations and rationalizing God through intellectual reasoning. Yet, *God seeks to relate with us from the heart.*

That's why He seeks hearts of trusting faith; or as Jesus put it—childlike faith. As He said: "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." (Mark 10:15) Scholars may seek to define religious doctrines and dogma. God, however, is relational; and created you to relate with Him and engage in a dynamic relationship.

That's why He created this interactive relational devotional; to help you get started relating with God from the framework in which He designed for us to engage and relate with Him. For starters, let's look at some topics which point to the benefits of engaging with God from a relational standpoint.

Finding Significance in Life through Active Relational Engagement with God

At some point most people have thoughts of "making a difference." Whether that difference is in the family, school, work place, community, city or world at large, we base our thoughts on seeing things we don't like and want to change.

We think different thoughts based on how God created us. Some people are drawn to invent or create something new. Some want to have a better family life. Others simply want to do something good or have a positive influence on others.

The truth is that God created us with an internal longing to truly *be* and *feel significant*. We all look for ways to express our self-worth. Some try to create a sense of self-worth through accomplishments; others find it by being part of something. Unfortunately, though, pressures often mount. Conflicts may arise, or we may simply find ourselves on a performance treadmill. So questions arise. "What's it all for?" "Who am I trying to please?"

The pulls of life do work on us. They will drive us—sometimes to extremes. Where to? Whom to? Will we find something to do just feel good about ourselves? Will we seek companionship out of loneliness? Will we find avenues of pleasure as a means of escape? Will we find real freedom? Will we find real peace?

God wired us to find real freedom, peace, joy and significance in Him—His love! Truly, we will find real acceptance and significance in God. Now I don't mean religion, but real LIFE through a relationship with a relational God. Yes, God's love is real. You can experience it.

People may disappoint you. But God cannot. Our expectations of God can also disappoint us if we don't know God's truths. But God's word is true and His Holy Spirit is real and will manifest God's presence in your heart. It's a matter of wanting it and seeking it; seeking relational God.

Experiencing the life of God is a matter of finding God the way He can be found. He shared a simple truth through Moses in Deuteronomy 30:14. He said His truth is very close at hand; in fact "in your heart" so that you can hear it and respond to it.

One primary truth all seek to understand is our purpose in life. The Pathways Devotional will help you engage and relate with God in such a way that you will come to ascertain that in a greater way.

Finding God's Purposes in Life

God created you for a unique purpose. In fact, the very first chapter of Genesis in the Bible says you were made in His image—His likeness. His primary purpose, therefore, is for you to know Him and relate with Him so He will be glorified. Truly, you were made to relate with your Creator; relational God—God Almighty, El Shaddai!

Messiah Jesus came to reveal that "God is spirit." (John 4:24) That's why He added, "those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." It is also why on the very day His disciples were celebrating the Biblical feast of Shavuot—thereafter known as Pentecost—that God released into the hearts of His disciples His Spirit—the Holy Spirit.

It is His Spirit that gives life to mankind. His Spirit also has the capacity to connect and relate with Him on a personal basis.

Receiving God's Amazing Grace

God has shown amazing grace to countless of individuals since He began relating with them. The Bible records a story of how Israel's leader, Nehemiah, expressed gratefulness in engaging with God after the people were allowed to return to their homeland and restore worship in Jerusalem after seventy years of captivity.

LORD God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now... (Nehemiah 1:5-6)

God seeks people to place trusting faith in Him so He may reveal His awesome love and amazing grace. He first revealed His nature and showed His ways through many years of engagement with the Hebrew people as recorded in the Bible.

Moses was faithful to receive God's law and commandments. God revealed the fullness of His grace and truth, however, through our Lord and Messiah Yeshua—Jesus Christ. He has granted free access to the wonderful gift of God's awesome grace and peace to those who place trusting faith in Him. In fact, the Bible reveals how "God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:8)

The Pathways Devotional will help you understand the full value of His grace and partake in its richness.

Responding in Faith to God's Invitation of Life and Peace

God has been extending His heart and hand to those who will place trusting faith in Him since He began relating with them. To Adam and Eve He offered the fruit of His wisdom and eternal life. To Noah He offered an opportunity of safety and preservation of life. To Abraham He offered friendship and a covenant of blessings to future generations who would embrace His kind of trusting faith and way of life.

Over the centuries a countless number of people have accepted God's gracious invitations to enter into relationship with Him. He has revealed through many stories recorded in the Bible His awesome power and amazing love. He has further expressed His desire to relate and engage in active relationship with all His children.

How shall we respond? How does one engage in real relationship with an invisible God? Now we're not talking about forms of religious practices, but active engagement with a relational God who seeks real relationships.

The Pathways Devotional will identify ways to help you respond in faith to God's invitation to experience an enriched life through active engagement.

Walking in Spiritual Reality

The Bible records countless ways how God's people have experienced His amazing love, witnessed His awesome power, and walked with Him to see His faithfulness throughout the centuries. He has released people from the most horrid forms of bondage, refreshed starving souls and filled them with real joy, provided vision and wisdom to those living in darkness and confusion, imparted peace and hope to the hopeless, and safety and security to the lost.

Truly, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who expresses Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is a real and living God! It simply takes trusting faith: the kind of faith that responds beyond man's natural tendency to *rationalize about* God. That's because God, who is Spirit, seeks to *relate with* His children. Relating with God takes trusting faith to respond to His voice speaking in the inner recesses of the heart.

The Pathways Devotional will provide ways to help you relate and engage with God so that you can truly experience a walk in a broader dimension of spiritual reality.

Being Blessed by Embracing God's Values

The greatest blessings of God are bestowed in the spirit of unity: when there is unity between man and God; and one with another. As David expressed in Psalm 133, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!...For there the LORD commanded the blessing."

For this reason, before He was taken to be crucified, Messiah Jesus framed His last prayers for His disciples on this very concept.

I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; *that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us*, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, *that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one*, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. (John 17:20-23)

What does it really mean to be "*one in Us*" with God? At the heart of the matter is a true union with triune God: Father/Son/Holy Spirit.

We have an awesome opportunity to truly get to *know* God; not necessarily know *about* God, but truly experience His love and know Him—as a friend. In fact, God desires this of us more than anything. Hear His heart speaking through the Hebrew prophet, Jeremiah.

Thus says the LORD:

"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,
Let not the mighty man glory in his might,
Nor let the rich man glory in his riches;
But let him who glories glory in this,
That he understands and knows Me,
That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and
righteousness in the earth.
For in these I delight," says the LORD.
(Jeremiah 9:23-24)

Truly, God wants us to know the loving, caring and creative nature of the Father; friendship and righteousness of the Son; and comfort and wisdom of the Spirit. It's simply a matter of VALUES. The more we desire and VALUE these virtues of God, the more of God we will have in our life; and more blessings we will experience.

The Pathways Devotional will help you apprehend these virtues and blessings in a greater measure.

Living Life in its Fullness: In God's Love and Capacity

People often wonder if God is real; and if so, how to really know God and relate to God—not a religion, but the living God.

The question is; what are you looking for in God? What do you need or want from God? Who do you desire God to be?

He introduced Himself to Moses as "I AM WHO I AM" or simply, "I AM." What a name! He came as Messiah to the Jewish people as Yeshua, meaning in Hebrew, *salvation*; or as commonly known in the Greek, Jesus. So He became Lord and Savior to all humanity who will believe and place trusting faith in Him.

So, what is IN THE NAME? He in fact has many names. The Lord personally used seven names to describe who He is, and who He will be to those who believe:

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE
I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD
I AM THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP
I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD
I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE
I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE
I AM THE TRUE VINE

How to appreciate ALL HE TRULY IS? Believers are filled with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, "He who is *in you* is greater than he who is in the world." (1 John 4:4) Our opportunity is to allow God to transform us as we grow *in the Lord* "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:13)

The Pathways Devotional will help you *connect and tap into to the Lord's greater capacity, and help you grow into the fullness of the measure of your capacity in Him!*

Tapping into Your Capacity in God

God created man and woman in His image—a likeness representing *forms of His identity and capacity*. You have been created with certain God-given endowments and have the capacity to engage in real relationship with your Creator. Within that relationship, you have the capacity to bear fruits according to His likeness and righteousness.

God truly wants to reveal His purposes and plans for you. He desires that you grow into the *fullness of the measure of your capacity in Him*. This was the thrust of Paul's message regarding coming "to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:13) Paul recognized that Messiah—*Christ in us through the Holy Spirit—is the true standard of measure*.

We fall short of developing the fullness of the measure of our capacity in God because we fall short of receiving the fullness of His love and allowing His capacity to grow within us. Truly, God sees a greater capacity in you than you think. He has predestined you "to be conformed to the image of His Son." (Romans 8:29) It takes participating with God, who is able to fill you and release within you greater measures of His likeness than you can imagine!

How? The degree of our fruit-bearing is directly related to the level of our engagement and compliance with God. The more we actively engage with God through prayer and devotion, and respond in faith to the promptings of His word and Holy Spirit, the more the life of God is stirred and stimulated within and around us. We all have such capacity. It is activated and enhanced as we come to know and experience the multi-faceted reality of God.

The Paradigm Shift Bringing Transformation

Paul understood the nature of transition and transformation. He understood it takes a *process*—of progressively turning from our focus of reliance on and capacity of our carnal human nature to that of God's spiritual nature. As Paul revealed, "to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." (Romans 8:6)

Such transformation, therefore, begins with a shift in perspectives; from knowing *about* God through intellectual rational reasoning to *knowing* God through real and dynamic *relational engagement* empowered by His Spirit. Truly, God is relational, and seeks to relate with His creation in such a way.

It's also about shifting our focus *from doing* what we want to do and what the world impresses us to do *to becoming who God created us to be*. When we choose to allow God to take control and *conform us to the image of His Son* He enlarges our capacity to receive the things of His Spirit.

Truly, it is His Spirit that carries His capacity to reveal His love, truth, wisdom and instruction to our heart. It is His Spirit that connects with our spirit in our inner soul to illuminate our vision, comfort our heart, and empower us to grow and walk in His capacity. God wants such a connection with Him! It's a matter of acknowledging and desiring His works to work within us; then asking for it. "LORD, how manifold are Your works!" (Psalm 104:24)

The Holy Spirit will nurture your heart, cultivate spiritual vision and grow measures of His capacity in you to fashion you according to His likeness—His way. He knows how we are wired. He wants us to *connect with His capacity*—the gift of *access* to His awesome and amazing grace. It comes by faith. It's His promise. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, *through whom also we have access by faith into this grace* in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Romans 5:1-2)

Truly, God designed you to relate and enjoin with Him in such manner. In Christ, you are a new creation with a new identity in God! It is a matter of coming front and center before God and participating in His process of allowing His Holy Spirit to dominate your thoughts to reveal and manifest Christ's nature in and through you.

Overcoming Barriers and Blockages

Believers are new creations in Christ and are empowered by the Holy Spirit to walk in His capacity through various gifts and endowments. It takes, however, overcoming some natural barriers and blockages.

One is our self will and the desire to be self-sufficient. When we assert our self-will, we deny God the opportunity to work on our behalf; in essence *restraining* God's capacity in us. God wants to be our source of strength. As we value God's capacity and trust Him we receive His manifold grace manifesting His solutions. This puts God on the throne; not self.

Another blockage is fear, which is the opposite of faith. Fear works against faith. It stifles and restrains faith from being activated and the Holy Spirit from freely flowing in our midst. It acts as a barrier, limiting our capacity to trust; therefore limiting our ability to apprehend the knowledge of God and function in the ways of God. Faith comes from God. Fear doesn't. "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7) God offers us the gift of faith and soundness of mind. We receive the gift when we receive His love and truth. Fear, on the other hand, comes from believing and following falsehoods.

Real transformation, therefore, occurs as we truly surrender aspects of our human nature to the nature of the life of the Holy Spirit. As we do this, we allow the power of the risen LORD to arise within, filling our heart and transforming the mind, bringing it into greater alignment with the mind of the LORD. This is how our capacity *in Christ* grows. This was one of Paul's greatest messages. He had a passion to *be found in the LORD*, and to "know Him and the power of His resurrection." (Philippians 3:8-11)

Yes, you will face trials of all sorts to test your faith. The world system opposes God in every way. It will confront God's truths and take every opportunity to "cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ." (Colossians 2:8) These things hold you in constraint, restraining the life of God from manifest itself. It takes strong trusting faith in God's word and active engagement with His Spirit to resist the opposing influences of the world and live in God's liberty.

Being Who God Created You to Be

Since we were created in the image and likeness of God, we have been given a measure of God's capacity. This includes compassion, conscience, creativity, communication and ability to process knowledge. One way God sees us is in relation to *how that measure has been developed*.

Our tendency is to focus on our physical attributes, abilities and desires; not the things that God—who is Spirit—focuses on. God would have you focus on developing the spiritual endowments He deposited in you as well as His character and virtues so you can bear His fruits outwardly. Truly, He sees us in a different light, and desires to cultivate His nature and capacity in us. Will we allow God the opportunity?

One Bible character who tried to hide below the radar was Gideon. He came from a family that he considered to be amongst the weakest, and he considered himself to be the lowly one of the house. As soon as the Angel of the LORD found and approached Gideon, He exclaimed, "The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!"

Gideon surely didn't look like a mighty man of valor; quite the opposite. Gideon was a man of little hope. After he expressed his skepticism and doubt, however, the LORD responded with still more encouragement, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?"

Go in this might of yours? Who was the Angel kidding? God disregarded Gideon's fear, doubt, despair and insecurity. He gave Gideon a bold assignment because He knew Gideon could go in *His capacity!* All he had to do was trust God and follow instructions. That's all God asks us to do. That was the key lesson Paul learned directly from the mouth of the LORD. "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9)

That's our opportunity; to allow God to transform us so we can grow into the fullness of the measure of His capacity in us—so He may be glorified through us. It happens as we actively engage with Him. The **PATHWAYS TO GLORY** Relational Devotional is just one simple tool to help you along the journey. May the LORD bless you on the path.



TRUTH AND PURPOSE

Bondage comes in many forms. Some things keep us in constraint by restraining our freedom externally. The most subtle forms of bondage, however, are the things that *bind and blind us internally*; like bad attitudes, unforgiveness, pride and lust for things. The Bible calls these things sin. We try to justify or redeem ourselves stand in self-righteousness but that doesn't work with a holy God who created us. God used the story of the deliverance from the bondage the children of Israel experienced in Egypt to reveal the greatness of His love and serve as a visual aid of His greater plan of redemption.

Passover was originally inaugurated to mark and remember Israel's deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. God heard the cries of the people, and determined that it was time to do a creative, redemptive act. In reality, He revealed a new way of bringing people into relationship with Him. Anybody seeking redemption, restoration and a relationship with God can benefit from understanding the greater significance of what Passover represents!

And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have *remembered* My covenant. Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am the LORD; I will *bring you out from under the burdens* of the Egyptians, I will *rescue* you from their bondage, and I will *redeem* you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. (Exodus 6:5-7 NKJV)

A lamb without blemish was sacrificed, and its blood was washed over the doorposts of the home, marking the house "off limits" for the angel of death that struck the first born of Egypt.

RELEVANCE

In a similar fashion, the LORD led a sinless life, and was crucified the same day the Passover was celebrated. He served as our permanent substitute for the lamb, justifying our standing before God and redeeming our life from the bondage of iniquity—our sinful tendencies.

The LORD revealed truth and gave meaning to this sacrifice-- His sacrifice. He demonstrated God's love in a new way! *He became the way, the truth and the life!* In Him, you have *new life!* Regardless of your past, God sees you as a new creature. He has accepted you, loves you, values you and wants to give you a new sense of self-worth and purpose.

He wants to do a new thing in you! Accepting and receiving the fullness of the pour of God's love and justification for your righteousness, and gaining enlightenment of a new standing and personal relationship with God *opens the way to discovering the fullness of your significance in life.*

REFLECT AND RELATE

The LORD taught us to pray, "May your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven." (Matthew 6:10 JNT)
In what areas do you need to see God's redemption, or deliverance from a particular type of bondage?

This could be anything; an addiction, bad habit, besetting sin, form of oppression, state of mind, bad situation, etc. Take your case to God in prayer. Let God's Holy Spirit lead you in His Word. Let it work in your heart. Receive the saving and sanctifying grace of the LORD's deliverance in faith. Continue to talk to God about the issue.

As He helps you through, He will bring you to a level of peace and understanding. The LORD is your deliverer! The Holy Spirit is your teacher and source of real empowerment and life of liberty.

One final note: as it relates to eternal life, are you sure that you would be justified before God as righteous, and be eternally at peace with God in heaven?

I encourage you to read John 3:16-21 and Romans 10:6-10. Then read and meditate on John 14-16; and receive the prayer the LORD prayed for you in John 17.

REFERENCES

Psalms 18; Exodus 12; Leviticus 23:1-5; Matthew 26:17-25; Romans 1:16-Romans 5; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8



Often misunderstood, sanctification is the process whereby the love and grace of God is activated by the power of the Holy Spirit to cleanse and strengthen you to fulfill God's purposes. Through the process we have an opportunity to find our greatest significance in life.

The appointed time of Unleavened Bread was established to begin the day after Passover, lasting seven days. Special care was taken to remove all leaven (yeast) from the house. God had a lot to say about the leaven: anyone eating any leaven would be cut off from the congregation of Israel (Exodus 12:15), *whether a stranger or native*; it shall not be seen among you (13:7); "You shall not offer the *blood of My sacrifice* with leaven" (Exodus 34:25 NKJV). Even in the New Covenant, the LORD specifically exhorted the people several times to beware of the leaven of the religious leaders as well as Herod.

What's the issue with leaven? It's a fermenting substance; a turbulent form of bacterium that is permeating and pervasive in nature. It spreads like a cancer or virus, contaminating, polluting and corrupting what it touches. It therefore, is used as a metaphor for sin and falsehood. As it spreads, it compromises and destroys what is true, good and otherwise pure. It prevents the love of God from flowing freely within us.

RELEVANCE

The LORD fulfilled this celebration, being sinless. He was pure, filled with a full measure of the Holy Spirit, and demonstrated a lifestyle free from sin. He has once and for all fulfilled the requirement of this law. All in the LORD are not only justified before God, but *sanctified (cleansed from sin) in His name*.

So, why was Unleavened Bread prescribed for seven days, whereas Passover is a single-day event? While redemption was accomplished by a single blood sacrifice, we appropriate that sacrifice and pursue a life-long process of *being continuously sanctified and purified (washed in the LORD's love!)*, growing into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:13). This entails:

- Studying and meditating on God's Word, allowing it to breathe life and change our attitudes and behaviors
- Engaging with God in prayer, receiving the Holy Spirit's inward conviction, instruction and guidance
- Responding appropriately, turning from harmful influences, changing our mindsets and motivations

- Expressing God's love by serving others to keep focus off of self and onto God's greater purposes

This was what the apostle, Paul, had in mind in teaching the disciples to, "keep working out your deliverance with fear and trembling for God is the one working among you both the willing and the working for what pleases him." (Philippians 2:12-13 JNT)

We begin to activate this grace as we receive the pours of God's love; and receive His strengthening and cleansing of the Holy Spirit. Be refreshed in His love and infilling of His Spirit!

REFLECT AND RELATE

How clean do you feel before God? How loved do you feel by God? Are there ways you find yourself justifying your righteousness, or standing before God? Do you ever feel condemned by others, and/or the need to defend your works or self-worth to others?

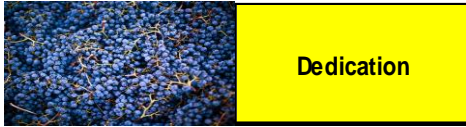
If so, there may be some areas God wants to cleanse in your life. You can't vindicate yourself and have peace. Only God can give you true peace. Allow the Holy Spirit—God's Comforter—to minister God's love and cleansing work in you.

Are there known areas of sin in your life? Earnestly ask God to show them to you. He will be faithful to reveal to you—as your heart remains inclined toward Him, and is prepared to receive His truth in His love. For, with *His love*—which is unconditional—comes His mercy. Embrace David's prayer in Psalm 51:1-3.

Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to Your lovingkindness;
According to the multitude of Your tender mercies,
Blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.
For I acknowledge my transgressions,
And my sin is always before me.

REFERENCES

Exodus 12:15-20; Leviticus 23:6-8; Psalm 24; 26:8-12; 119:1-40; Romans 3:21-5:20; Galatians 2:11-3:25; James 2:14-26; John 17:17-19; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 Corinthians 7:14; Hebrews 10:5-18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Colossians 1:21-23



God instructed the children of Israel to celebrate First-Fruits after coming into the Promised Land and reaping the benefits of its harvest. On the one hand, First-Fruits marked a way to dedicate the harvest, or fruits of our efforts to God. It represents gratefulness to God, and provides for a special way to express devotion and loyalty to Him.

On this day, God also directed the children of Israel to begin counting 50 days to offering a new grain offering. This commemorates the 50 day journey from the deliverance of the bondage of Egypt to the receiving of God's 10 Commandments and revelation of His covenant at Sinai.

It serves to remind us that redemption was not truly complete until receiving God's covenant. Taking the time to count each day and meditate on the reality of God prepares our heart and mind to truly receive fullness of truth and revelation of the love and knowledge of God.

RELEVANCE

The reality of the coupling of the deliverance, or salvation and redemption experience with God's Covenant Word is emphasized in the very first words of the Gospel of John.

In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. (John 1:1-5 NLT)

What a great affirmation this is of:

- The unity, divinity and incarnation of the Word and Son of God
- The eternal nature of God and His Word
- The value of truth as a reality of liberty in God
- The superiority and sovereignty of God's Word as the eternal Light of Life over every contrary power that pales in comparison

The LORD lived as a man, taking on our human nature. He dedicated His life in devotion and obedience to the Father, saving ours from spiritual death. In fulfillment of the appointed time of the love feast, the LORD rose on the 3rd day after Passover, the very day of First-Fruits. In His resurrection, He, therefore, became the first fruit of the LOVE OF GOD as well as human race to experience the resurrection of the new life! Those born again in the LORD follow in His footsteps. We also have opportunity to celebrate this love feast on an ongoing basis in faith as we dedicate our lives—our hearts and minds first—and service and duty to glorify God; and as a result, reap the fruits and benefits of His harvest.

REFLECT AND RELATE

In what ways do you express your gratefulness to the LORD for dedicating His life to save yours?

In what ways do you establish dedicated times to study God's Word and reflect on God's business?

REFERENCES

Leviticus 23: 9-14; Proverbs 3:9; 1 Corinthians 15:20



Shavuot—Pentecost is unique in its significance:

- It marked the end of the barley harvest, and beginning of the wheat harvest—or “fullness” of the harvest;
- It marked the day the Torah, or covenant law was given to Moses.
- It marked the time the Holy Spirit fell upon the LORD's disciples

Celebrated 50 days after Passover, this feast has special significance. This time served to link the deliverance from the bondage of Egypt to the giving of the Torah, or God’s covenant law. It, therefore, serves as a reminder that the redemption from bondage was not fully complete until God's people had received the fullness of God's covenant.

RELEVANCE

Since 50 also signifies a time of jubilee according to the covenant (legal cancellation of debts, indentured relationships and restoration of land), this feast represents the shadow of a special time of jubilee.

Following the LORD's resurrection, the disciples had been spending time with one another in prayers and devotion. While they were celebrating this feast, a sound from the sky like the roar of a violent wind came and filled the whole house where they were. The disciples experienced a new and huge pour of God's love as they were “filled with the Spirit,” as recorded in Acts 2.

On Shavuot—Pentecost—their lives were transformed by the Holy Spirit! In their devotions and celebration, God's Word connected with His Spirit and brought completion—or fullness—to the revelation of God's covenant. It therefore, brought fulfillment to

Isaiah's prophecy expressing the *fullness of God's covenant*. (Isaiah 59:21)

They also came to a new understanding of God's love and what the LORD meant by “a fountain of water” that would spring up within and bring refreshing new life.

Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. (John 4:13-14)

Our understanding of our significance in life becomes magnified once the reality of the love of God and Holy Spirit's infilling becomes real to us. In fact, it will change your life! It's a matter of growing into the fullness of this revelation as you continue to receive refreshment and truth from the Holy Spirit.

REFLECT AND RELATE

In what ways do you celebrate—and express gratefulness—for the magnitude of the covenant grace gifts God has given you—His Word *and* Spirit; especially the gifts of the Spirit? (see Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12-13)

What new values has God impressed you to embrace this season?

What new vision has God imparted in you to give you greater insights?

What virtues of Christ have you received to walk in the new life in Him?

REFERENCES

Leviticus 23:15-22; Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Exodus 19; Acts 2; Acts 19:1-7



Trumpets (also Rosh Hashanah; Head of the Year) was designed to serve as a "wake-up call" to bring God's people into alignment with Him ten days before the solemn Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). It was to begin a period of reconciliation with God; specifically "Ten Days of Repentance" or "Days of Awe" which culminate in Yom Kippur.

The trumpet (ram's horn, or shofar) was also used to alarm the people and prepare them for battle. It, therefore, serves to arouse us and call us to arise in spiritual awakening!

In addition, trumpets were used to proclaim the entry of a king. Therefore, we likewise boldly proclaim the LORD, Messiah Jesus King of the Universe, and honor His kingship and authority over all creation.

RELEVANCE

John the Baptist came immersing people in water to "prepare the way of the Lord." Messiah Jesus fulfilled this love feast and came as King of Kings! In His resurrection, He conquered the power of evil and spiritual death by defeating the enemy of our souls, Satan, the devil and spiritual adversary. He opened the way to truly know and appreciate the reality of the love of God.

On the cross the LORD declared, "It is finished." The finished work of Jesus permanently opened the door to GRACE and granted ACCESS to God's greater capacity of life through the Holy Spirit! In Him we are reconciled to God for all our shortcomings. We are reminded, however, that Satan hasn't given up the battle and his role of temptation and affliction. Hence, Jesus taught believers to pray, "lead us not into temptation." So Paul was diligent to remind the community of faith that we fight a very real spiritual battle, and

to therefore, continue to "fight the good fight of the faith." (1 Timothy 6:12)

We, therefore, continuously celebrate the inherent meaning of Trumpets as we receive the pour of God's love and allow the Holy Spirit to convict our hearts, confess revealed sins, and prepare our heart to wage spiritual warfare; fighting against temptations to sin, standing on God's Word in faith, and receiving the LORD's victory over the power of sin and death.

Paul also reminded believers that having being reconciled to God, the LORD has given us the "ministry of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:18). We apply this ministry daily in our union with the LORD, endeavoring to be continuously reconciled-- in alignment-- with God and man. In such a way, we maintain peace with God and our fellow man.

REFLECT AND RELATE

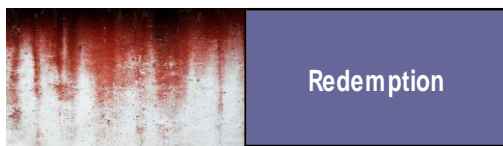
Our worship prepares the way for God to minister to our heart through His Word and Holy Spirit. In what ways do you prepare your heart to receive God's truth and love?

Forgiving others sets us free from our own feelings of guilt and condemnation. Are there any people you need to forgive?

Sometimes it's difficult to reconcile our differences with others. Somebody has to take the first step. Are there people you need to be reconciled with? Ask the LORD for courage, and you will receive it.

REFERENCES

Leviticus 23:23-25; Joel 2:1; Matthew 3:3, 5:24; Romans 5:10, Matthew 5:24, 6:14-15, 2 Corinthians 5:13-21



The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) was prescribed as a day of confession to cleanse the soul from sin. "For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever." (Leviticus 16:30-32 NKJV)

It was the one day of the year when the high priest would go into the tabernacle, behind the veil into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkle the blood of the covenant sacrifice over the Mercy Seat. From within the cloud of God's glory over the ark, God would see the sacrificial blood as evidence of man's atonement of sin; reversing His judgment to mercy.

RELEVANCE

The LORD Messiah Jesus came as more than our High Priest! His blood was poured out as a sacrificial love offering forever reversing God's judgment of sin for everyone who calls upon His name, believes in the heart, and receives His redemption.

But when the Messiah appeared as *cohen gadol* (high priest) of the good things that are happening already, then, through the greater and more perfect Tent which is not man-made (that is, it is not of this created world), 12 he entered the Holiest Place once and for all. And he entered not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of his own blood, thus setting people free forever. 13 For if sprinkling ceremonially unclean persons with the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer restores their outward purity; 14 then how much more the blood of the Messiah, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself to God as a sacrifice without blemish, will purify our conscience from works that lead to death, so that we can serve the living God! 15 It is because of this death that he is mediator of a new covenant [or will]. Because a death has occurred which sets people free from the transgressions committed under the first covenant, those who have been called

may receive the promised eternal inheritance. (Hebrews 9:11-15 JNT)

So this is a special time to appreciate the Lord's redemption by receiving the pour of His love through the Holy Spirit-- to enter into a new dimension of His grace-- and experience the *new life of the Spirit!*

Therefore, having been *justified by faith*, we have *peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have *access by faith into this grace* in which we stand, and *rejoice in hope of the glory of God*. 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces *perseverance*; 4 and perseverance, *character*; and character, *hope*. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the *love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us*. (Romans 5:1-5)

In receiving the pour of God's love through the Holy Spirit, you have opportunity to *receive the great gift of access* (v. 2) into a huge dimension of grace-- and *walk in* a variety of grace gifts of the Holy Spirit-- as the Holy Spirit wills and grants such gifts (see Romans 12:4-11). Along with those grace gifts you can expect to experience the glory of God!

REFLECT AND RELATE

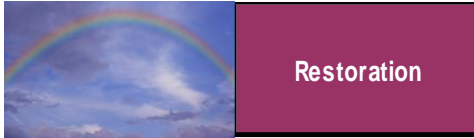
How might you express greater gratefulness for the victory over sin and death that the LORD has won for you?

What new safeguards or attitudes can you establish to help you resist the powers that tempt you to sin so you can keep a clear conscience and experience Christ's love, redemption and victory?

Read slowly and meditate on 1 Corinthians 12-13. Ask the LORD to reveal to you the fullness of the dimensions of the grace gifts described in the passage.

REFERENCES

Leviticus 23:26-31; Psalm 51; Matthew 4:17; Acts 2:38; 3:19; Romans 5; 1 Corinthians 12-13; Hebrews 2:14-3:6



Life will take us through times of loss and despair. Such things cause us to lose our peace and joy. God, however, is in the business of restoration! He takes pleasure in seeing His children experience various kinds of restoration-specifically our peace and joy! The love feast of Tabernacles serves to illustrate the significance of how God provides ways of restoring joy; and how He has planned for future joy in His presence-- in earth as it is in Heaven.

God appointed the feast of Sukkot, Tabernacles, to serve as an eight-day celebration at the end of the harvest season to mark a time of rest, remembrance and reflection on God's divine sovereignty and providence, His goodness and power. It also remembers the forty-year period during which the children of Israel were wandering in the desert living in temporary shelters until the time came to enter the Promised Land-- or better yet, *Promised Life*. In pointing forward to an eternal relationship with God, Tabernacles serves to give God's people hope "until the times of restoration of all things" (Acts 3:21).

RELEVANCE

As Jewish pilgrims have ventured back to the land of Israel to realize God's promises, and the world's pilgrims have ventured to America in search of the new world or a new life-- people have looked for ways to express gratitude towards God for His faithfulness and hope for future restoration.

Messiah Jesus expressed the love of God in a grand new way. He satisfied the debt for our sins. He redeemed us from dead works. He lifted the burden of guilt and condemnation. He invited all who believe to be joined with Him, receive His peace-- and hope for new dimensions of restoration.

"Come to me, all of you who are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30 JNT)

During this special time we reflect on God's goodness and amazing grace. We also have opportunity to receive a fresh pour of His love through the Holy Spirit to carry us forward to experience further times of refreshing and restoration-- for our good and His glory.

REFLECT AND RELATE

How much rest time do you devote to remembering and reflecting upon all that the LORD has accomplished for you, and all the ways God has blessed you?

In what ways do you apply the LORD's yoke and truly rest in His love?

What specific times can you appoint in your day and week to devote to resting in God's love, reading His word, and receiving His encouragement, peace and refreshment?

REFERENCES

Leviticus 23:33-44; Psalm 63:6; 77:6-12; 119; Matthew 11:28-30; Hebrews 3:7-4:13



Sacrifice is the beginning of spiritual growth. It's about forfeiting something of value for something of greater intrinsic and eternal value. Through the process, we allow God to teach us something significant about the meaning of love, life and relationships with Him and others.

In Bible times, during the Passover feast a lamb without blemish was sacrificed to represent redemption from bondage. God instructed the Hebrews to celebrate the deliverance from bondage in Egypt by telling the story of all He did during a special Passover meal.

More than simply *telling* a story, however, this special celebration models a Hebraic way of *fathering children*. It fosters a special time of *engaging* them in active discussion to help them *process and reflect* upon thoughts; coming to an understanding of why and how things happen, or *cause and effect*. By explaining *what* happened, *why* and *how* God did what He did, and discussing the *fruits of the experience*, we are able to *impart* a way of *relating* with God and getting to *know Him*—His ways and character.

RELEVANCE

This in fact was how Messiah Jesus taught and nurtured His disciples. He helped them come to understand God's love in a greater way, connecting and relating the stories of the Scriptures—the Law and Prophets—in a meaningful and relevant way to real life.

The Amplified Bible does a great job relating this in Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:18-19. He prayed that people would fully grasp the love of God and apprehend, "what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of it]; [That you may really come] to know [practically, through experience for yourselves] the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge [without experience]; that you may be filled [through all your being] unto all the fullness of God [may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself]!"

The LORD celebrated this feast at what is referred to as "the last supper." He surprised His disciples by adding a new element to the celebration. When it was time to say the blessing over the bread, He said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Over the wine He said, "Drink

from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:26-28 NKJV)

The LORD became *the* Passover sacrifice. He sacrificed His life that we may have everlasting life. He *revealed a new dimension of God's love--* and hoped we would come to *receive a new dimension of the pour of His love.*

So we participate in His sacrifice and resurrection by not only partaking in this celebration-- or communion-- but *experiencing the joy and glory of walking in His liberty and love.* One way we do is by shifting our focus from our self-centered interests to caring about and serving the needs of others.

Paul, therefore, declared, "Do nothing out of rivalry or vanity; but, in humility, regard each other as better than yourselves — 4 look out for each other's interests and not just for your own." (Philippians 2:3-4 JNT)

This principle was also in view in exhorting believers to, "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:1-2 NKJV)

The more we become interested in and focused on the interests and needs of others—and how we can share God's love by contributing to their lives—the more we will discover our greater purposes in life. It is out of our serving others that we truly experience the joy and glory of the LORD.

REFLECT AND RELATE

How do you look for ways to express God's love, and live in a sacrificial manner, looking out for the interests of others?

What things do you reflect upon, wondering why things happen how they do, and how things might be able to be changed?

REFERENCES

1 John 3:16-24; Ephesians 5:1-2; Titus 2:6; 3:14; James 3:13-18



Being clean is a key principle of God. Beyond merely being clean on the outside, God looks for us to be clean on the inside. He, therefore, gives us opportunities to see areas within our heart and mind that need cleansing from sin; for sin impairs our relationship with a holy God. Unleavened Bread, therefore, serves to represent times of spiritual cleansing before God.

The scriptures prescribed that all leaven was to be removed from the home. Why leaven? It is a fermenting substance; a turbulent form of bacterium that is permeating and pervasive in nature. It spreads like a cancer or virus, contaminating, polluting and corrupting what it touches. It therefore, is used as a metaphor for sin and falsehood. As it spreads, it compromises and destroys what is true, good and otherwise pure. It prevents the love of God from flowing freely in us and through us.

RELEVANCE

The LORD's blood erased our slate from the handwriting of God's judgment, "cleaning" our account from the debt of sin. We celebrate His cleaning of our "spiritual house," our bodies, by receiving the pour of His love and refreshing of the Holy Spirit. His grace and strength helps keep our hearts and minds clean, meditating on His words and noble and righteous thoughts, and resisting the temptations of the world—vain desires, pride and pulls of the world.

So we need to be watchful. Beyond the external things that can destroy our physical bodies, we can allow our spiritual condition to deteriorate from the inside—by harboring destructive attitudes, like bitterness and judgment; and maintaining selfish motivations and pursuing self-centered interests and agendas. That's why the LORD declared, "There is nothing outside a person which, by going into him, can make him

unclean. Rather, it is the things that come out of a person which make a person unclean!" (Mark 7:15 JNT)

God wants us to walk in integrity—values based on what is sound, true and right. That's why Paul reasoned; "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Corinthians 5:8) In other words, be doers of the word in deed and in love.

Paul taught how our body is the temple of God's Spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:19) It, therefore, behooves us to keep ourselves clean on the inside by reading, meditating, and digesting God's Word, communing with Him by the Holy Spirit, and confessing and turning (or repenting) from revealed sins.

REFLECT AND RELATE

In what ways do you endeavor to keep your heart refreshed and clean before God?

In what ways do you hurt yourself by harboring wrong attitudes of the heart?

Are there any things you do on a regular basis that may cause harmful attitudes to persist?

What falsehoods might you be holding onto or trusting in that could be preventing you from receiving truth from God?

REFERENCES

Psalm 19:7-14; 24; 51; 119: 1-40; Matthew 5:8; 21-29; 12:33-37; 13:18-23; Mark 7:17-23; Ephesians 4:17-32



Gratefulness

The time of First-Fruits was prescribed to foster a way to express gratitude for God's grace by giving back to God—or giving forward to others—a portion of the first fruits of our labors. It serves to remind us of our dependence on God and need to trust Him for more. It also helps us practice good stewardship and faithfulness, and suppress tendencies to hoard out of greed, lust or fear of lack.

RELEVANCE

David truly had a heart of gratefulness. He acknowledged God as sovereign, and therefore, His source and sufficiency. In Psalm 24, he declares, "The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness." (Psalm 24:1 NKJV)

First-Fruits gives us an opportunity to appreciate God's love and dedicate ourselves to focusing on preparing our hearts and minds to receive new things of God; new opportunities and even insights God would offer us this season.

Peter further affirmed that God has given to us "everything we need for life and godliness, through our knowing the One who called us to his own glory and goodness." (2 Peter 1:3 JNT) For this reason, the LORD taught about the blessings of giving to others from a heart of gratefulness; and in faith, believing that God would multiply whatever you give.

"Give, and you will receive gifts — the full measure, compacted, shaken together and overflowing, will be put right in your lap. For the measure with which you measure out will be used to measure back to you!" (Luke 6:38 JNT)

Giving to others truly prepares the heart to receive back from God. Out of gratefulness and in faith, we therefore, dedicate a portion of the first fruits of what God has given to us back to Him; not in mere duty or obligation, but in love.

REFLECT AND RELATE

In what ways do you freely give back to God a portion of the first fruits of what He has given to you?

What are some ways you can bless others as God blesses you?
How do you demonstrate your trust in God's provision for the future?

REFERENCES

Matthew 19:21; 25:37; Luke 3:11; Acts 20:35



Shavuot—Pentecost was prescribed to mark the fullness of the harvest. It also marked the time to celebrate God's Word, as Moses was given the Ten Commandments during this time.

More than representing the Law or commandments, however, Torah in reality represents God's divine *instruction, truth and revealed wisdom*.

As Moses read to the people, they declared, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient." (Exodus 24:7 NKJV) They, therefore, rededicated themselves to following God's Word, and renewed their faith in God.

Pentecost, therefore, serves to remind us to *pause and value the new revelation of God's love* expressed through Messiah Jesus-- and poured out through the Holy Spirit. It brings us to celebrate and be grateful for the illumination of God's Word by His Spirit. The greater harvest we reap is new light-- new insights from what is happening around and through us so that we may grow in wisdom and discernment and be a blessing to others, glorifying God.

RELEVANCE

It was during this feast that the disciples received the new pour of God's love-- as they were first filled with the Holy Spirit. As much as the LORD fulfilled the Feast of First-fruits by being the first fruits of those resurrected in the newness of life redeemed by His sacrificial blood, the infilling of the Holy Spirit represented the *fullness of God's new covenant revealed*; and also marked the re-dedication of the believer's life from a walk under the *law of sin and death* to a *walk of the Spirit*—under the *law of the Spirit*. (Romans 8:2)

For this reason, Paul declared, "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law." (Galatians 5:18 NKJV) In other words, you are not in subjection to the system that results from perverting God's law into legalism.

In order to maintain the vitality of the Spirit, Paul further exhorted the disciples to be *continually filled with the Spirit*. (Ephesians 5:18) This is accomplished by regular reading and meditation of God's Word, and communing with God, praying in the Holy Spirit. It also involves reaching and releasing outward towards others—giving away what God has given to you, so He can refill His reservoirs within you with more of His substance!

REFLECT AND RELATE

In what ways do you continuously renew and rededicate yourself to God?

How do you refresh your thoughts and opinions?

How open are you to new revelations of truth God would offer you? Are there any areas of your life where your frame of reference may be somewhat legalistic?

Are there any opinions that you have that might be a bit too dogmatic?

What new values has God impressed you to embrace this season? What new vision has God imparted in you to give you greater insights?

What virtues of Christ have you received to walk in the new life in Him?

REFERENCES

Joshua 1:8; Colossians 2; Galatians 5:1-6; Romans 8; Philippians 4:8-9; 1 Timothy 4:12-16



Proclamation

Trumpets (also celebrated as Rosh Hashanah; Head of the Year) was designed to serve as a "wake-up call" to bring God's people into alignment with Him ten days before the solemn Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). It was to begin a period of reconciliation with God; specifically "Ten Days of Repentance" or "Days of Awe" which culminate in Yom Kippur.

The trumpet (ram's horn, or shofar) was also used to issue a *proclamation of a new order of kingdom business* so all would hear loud and clear. God still speaks today and seeks those with hearts to receive His love, ears to hear and a conscience to trust and obey!

RELEVANCE

Trumpets were also used to proclaim the entry of a king. Therefore, we likewise have the opportunity to boldly proclaim the message of salvation and Messiah Jesus as Lord and King of the Universe. Besides doing so in word, we honor His kingship and authority over all creation through noble actions conducted in humility that honor and glorify God.

David kept a soft heart before God, and maintained a practice of self-examination to stay right with God. "Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; Try my mind and my heart." (Psalm 26:2 NKJV)

For this same reason, Paul admonishes us to examine ourselves before participating in the Lord's communion. "So let a

person examine himself first, and then he may eat of the bread and drink from the cup; 29 for a person who eats and drinks without recognizing the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself." (1 Corinthians 11:28-29 JNT)

REFLECT AND RELATE

It what ways do you proclaim-through language and actions-the LORD your God?

How do you maintain the discipline of self-examination?

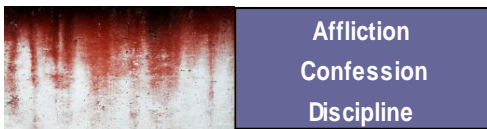
How do you allow the Holy Spirit to convict your heart so you can receive God's love and the grace of His mercy?

In what ways do you allow the Holy Spirit to change your inner attitudes so you can come into compliance with God's ways and by God's grace, change outward behaviors?

In what ways can you represent the LORD by boldly proclaiming His name?

REFERENCES

Psalm 51:7-10; Galatians 6:4; James 4:7-8



The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) was prescribed to afflict one's soul by fasting, confessing sins, and repenting before God. This provides for making amends with God, and reconciling one's standing before God.

Messiah Jesus became our atonement. We have opportunity to receive His love and the amazing grace of His redemption by appropriating His atonement, the forgiveness of our sins-- and walking in the joy of the LORD!

RELEVANCE

Paul provides instruction on this subject.

In the same way, consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive for God, by your union with the Messiah Yeshua. 12 Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal bodies, so that it makes you obey its desires; 13 and do not offer any part of yourselves to sin as an instrument for wickedness. On the contrary, offer yourselves to God as people alive from the dead, and your various parts to God as instruments for righteousness. 14 For sin will not have authority over you; because you are not under legalism but under grace. (Romans 6:11-14 JNT)

The LORD's atonement is settled forever! He has *discharged* us from the debts and penalties of sin and wiped away all the spiritual requirements for righteousness that were-and could ever be-set against us. In union with Him, we are set free from all traces of guilt, condemnation and shame!

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. (Colossians 2:11-15 NKJV)

As we confess to the LORD revealed sins or ways we have fallen short of God's best, we receive the pour of God's love and the LORD's atonement and reconciliation. We then have the opportunity to receive the comfort and strengthening of the Holy Spirit; and adopt new measures of discipline to help us walk in the *new light* we have received.

God does expect us to learn from our mistakes and implement discipline and walk in an intentional way to avoid things that distract and defile us; and keep us distanced from God. In such a way we allow the LORD to *keep us in the grace of His grip*; keeping us from bad decisions and harmful practices that perpetuate negative fallout and destructive cycles.

We also can't forget that God allows trials and suffering to test or prove our faith to develop patience (James 1:3 and 1 Peter 1:6), discipline and strengthen us (Hebrews 12:1-17), cultivate perseverance, character and hope (Romans 5:1-5 and 2 Corinthians 4:7-12) and demonstrate the LORD's strength through us (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

REFLECT AND RELATE

How do you appropriate the LORD's atonement in your life?

Do you know in your heart that the LORD has performed total atonement for you, exchanging His life for your death to sin?

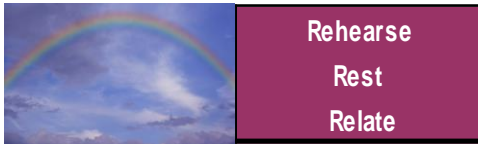
Are there some areas where you still condemn yourself?

Have you allowed the Holy Spirit to wholly set you free, and receive the LORD's work and word discharging you from the debts and penalties of sin?

What measures of discipline do you think you can apply and implement in your life to help you walk in the new light you have received?

REFERENCES

Psalm 119:57-176; Romans 1-6



God appointed a special time to give His people the opportunity to rest from the pressures of life and catch a vision of His greater purposes; the Feast of Sukkot-Tabernacles, a *great love feast* you might say. He appointed it to be most joyful celebration, lasting eight days. It was originally prescribed to remind the children of Israel how they dwelt in booths, or small temporary shelters during the wilderness journey.

It serves a greater purpose today by facilitating a special time to receive the fresh pour of God's love and reflect on the love and goodness of God and all He has done this year-- then look forward in anticipation of *new things in the season ahead*.

RELEVANCE

Tabernacles marks a time of rest from the toils of our labor. It also marks a time to relate with one another about God's goodness, and reflect upon His amazing grace and mercy. At the same time, Tabernacles serves to remind us that our earthly life is just temporary. A permanent life with God will be our eternal Promised Land-- or Promised Eternal Life. We should, therefore, guard ourselves from materialism and maintain a life of wisdom and balance.

Those who have received the redemption of Messiah Jesus have opportunity to enter into His permanent and eternal rest—peace with God! For, He has redeemed us from the curse of dead works that cannot justify us before God. We, therefore, celebrate His fulfillment of this feast by gathering in fellowship with other believers, reflecting on His amazing grace, and relating with one another the testimonies of His interaction in our lives.

We also look forward to a time of celebrating the LORD's return; and permanent fellowship at His banquet table in heaven. We, therefore, have an opportunity to celebrate with great joy—or rehearse for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb-- and time of Messiah's return and glorious eternal reign.

REFLECT AND RELATE

How do you celebrate your peace with God?

With whom do you rest and reflect on God's goodness, His grace and mercy, and share testimonies of His interaction in the lives of fellow believers?

REFERENCES

Leviticus 23:33-44; Acts 2:46, Colossians 2-3



God prescribed a particular day to slaughter a lamb in remembrance of the deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. He called this appointed time the LORD's Passover. Messiah Jesus was crucified the same day the Passover was to be celebrated. He became the permanent sacrificial substitute to redeem mankind from the curse of the law, heal us from the effects of our tendency to sin, and reconcile us back to a right-standing relationship with God.

In this, He fulfilled the prophecy recorded in Isaiah 53:5. "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed."

RELEVANCE

In receiving His love and the work of His crucifixion, we appropriate the punishment He suffered for our sins, which separated us spiritually from God. As we personally identify with the LORD, we also identify with the *new life* He lives in us by the Holy Spirit, which is the source of our grace in Him. In that grace, we are no longer under the power of the curse of the law.

When the Messiah was executed on the stake as a criminal, I was too; so that my proud ego no longer lives. But the Messiah lives in me, and the life I now live in my body I live by the same

trusting faithfulness that the Son of God had, who loved me and gave himself up for me. 21 I do not reject God's gracious gift; for if the way in which one attains righteousness is through legalism, then the Messiah's death was pointless. (Galatians 2:20-21 JNT)

Paul celebrated his identification with the LORD's crucifixion daily in an interesting way. He lived by the phrase, "I die daily." Such a thought certainly makes it easier to walk in God's love and take any curve ball or disappointment that comes your way with grace! It also keeps you humble, and enables you to lift your burdens up to the LORD from a lowly position-one from which He can easily lift you up.

REFLECT AND RELATE

Have you fully identified with the LORD's crucifixion, receiving His total grace for the forgiveness of your sins?

Are there any areas in which you still condemn yourself, and have not fully received His love and grace?

REFERENCES

Romans 6:1-14; Galatians 5:24



The LORD was buried after being crucified; but *something crucial and powerful* was going on during the three days His body lay in the tomb. Ephesians 4:7-11 discusses how He descended (into hell), then ascended to lead “captivity captive.”

RELEVANCE

His spirit, therefore, descended into hell where he battled with the devil, and led the forces of darkness which had held mankind into captivity into their own captivity. In addition, as Revelation 1:18 records, He took the keys of hell and death— *Satan’s authority, away from him*; therefore stripping him from his authority! As Scripture says, “He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.” (Colossians 2:14-15 NLT)

God reversed things! Satan had won a position of spiritual authority over mankind when Adam and Eve believed the lie of the serpent (the devil personified) and disobeyed God’s command to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. His forces of darkness were given authority to keep people in bondage and spiritually dead in sin.

The LORD won back that authority! He provided for freedom and authority over sin and death to those who receive the pour of His love and victory over the penalties of sin. We therefore have opportunity to affirm His victory-- *bury the mistakes of the past and walk in the new life of the Spirit!* He has promised us this *new overcoming life by receiving His resurrected life*. We do so by *walking in His grace-- His light and truth and strength-- by faith.*

Believers, therefore, benefit from His authority over the power of sin and death. Those who have not put their faith in the LORD have not appropriated His authority over the devil, leaving them under the jurisdiction of the powers of darkness.

REFLECT AND RELATE

Do you understand how the LORD defeated the devil, and made a way of escape from the bondage of hell for you?

Have you fully received His exchange for your sins and attempts to justify yourself?

Are there things in your life—attitudes, ways, habits, values, material possessions—you may need to “bury” and put behind you so you can receive God’s grace and advance forward?

REFERENCES

Colossians 2:8-23; Romans 8:2



First-Fruits was prescribed to mark a time of giving back to God in gratefulness—and in faith—for His bountiful provision. It also marked a time to examine the first fruits of one's labors to test the quality of the harvest. If the first crops were good—and therefore blessed—the following fruits would likewise be blessed. Followers of Messiah Jesus have so much more to be grateful for!

RELEVANCE

Messiah Jesus was also “inspected” by the religious leaders to test His claim to be the Messiah. Many false Messiah’s have attempted to claim Messiahship. His point was made and His claim proved, however, after His resurrection from the dead!

First-Fruits therefore points forward to the LORD’s resurrection as the first soul arisen in the newness of eternal life.

But the fact is that the Messiah *has* been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have died. 21 For since death came through a man, also the resurrection of the dead has come through a man. 22 For just as in connection with Adam all die, so in connection with the Messiah all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: the Messiah is the firstfruits; then those who belong to the Messiah, at the time of his coming; 24 then the culmination, when he hands over the Kingdom to God the Father, after having put an end to every rulership, yes, to every authority and power. (1 Corinthians 15:20-24 JNT)

Through immersion into his death we were buried with him; so that just as, through the glory of the Father, the Messiah was raised from the dead, likewise we too might live a new life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will

also be united with him in a resurrection like his. (Romans 6:4-5 JNT)

In identifying with the LORD’s death and resurrection, we have opportunity to receive fresh pours of His love and allow the Holy Spirit to arise within with new measures of strength and overcoming grace.

The more we receive God's love and yield to this gift of grace—the true gift of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit—the more we experience the real sufficiency of God in our life. Paul discovered that this grace gift became the true source of his strength.

And we have such trust through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (2 Corinthians 3:4-6)

REFLECT AND RELATE

None of us will ever be perfect in our mortal frames. We are just asked to seek first His kingdom, and earnestly allow the Holy Spirit to transform us, and conform us—into His image until He is revealed in us.

In what areas would you like to see Christ’s nature more reflected in you?

REFERENCES

Romans 6; Philippians 3:7-16; 1 Peter 1:3-9



Shavuot—Pentecost was originally prescribed to celebrate the giving of God's word to Moses, and in addition, the fullness of the harvest once in the Promised Land. As the Holy Spirit was first poured out while the disciples were celebrating this appointed time, it truly became a new type of love feast! Pentecost therefore represents a time marking the fullness of God's covenant as well as the infinite wisdom, incredible love and awesome power of God!

RELEVANCE

On the day the disciples were celebrating this feast, they experienced the fresh pour of God's love through the Holy Spirit. They experienced the glory of the LORD in a new way-- through the *outpouring-infilling-presence of the Holy Spirit*.

The LORD brought something special to their remembrance. In His final great prayer, Messiah Jesus declared to the Father: "I glorified you on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. 5 Now, Father, glorify me alongside yourself. Give me the same glory I had with you before the world existed." (John 17:4-5 JNT) He knew His resurrection would glorify the Father. Even more, He knew the release of the power of the Holy Spirit would glorify the Father. He declared to the disciples:

"Yes, indeed! I tell you that whoever trusts in me will also do the works I do! Indeed, he will do greater ones, because I am going to the Father. 13 In fact, whatever you ask for in my name, I will do; so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me for something in my name, I will do it." (John 14:12-14 JNT)

Throughout life we experience all sorts of trials and conflict. In addition we get to participate in the awesome things that God does as opportunities arise to serve God and people in need of God's intervention. As we do, our character and faith is tested. We have the opportunity to exercise trusting faith so God's power may be displayed through us and He be glorified.

Through the process we get to be instruments through which the life of the Holy Spirit can flow. That's how we grow and experience the awesome love of God and grace of God's transforming work in us. It's even better when we experience it with others so God's testimony can go out and glorify His name.

REFLECT AND RELATE

How can you reflect the gift of God's word, Holy Spirit and nature in your life?

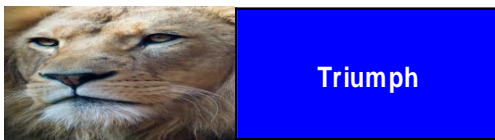
What new values has God impressed you to embrace this season?

What new vision has God imparted in you to give you greater insights?

What virtues of Christ have you received to walk in the new life in Him?

REFERENCES

John 15-17; Acts 2-4; Romans 8; 1 Peter 4



The Bible prescribed a time of celebration called Trumpets (celebrated as Rosh Hashana; Head of the Year). The ram's horn was blown to call the people to alarm, and raise the level of one's consciousness to self-examination, in preparation for the coming Day of Atonement. Trumpets were also sounded to call the people to battle.

On one notable occasion, the Angel of the LORD instructed Joshua to have the priests sound the trumpets seven times—which would call the army of the Lord to fight the spiritual battle which would result in the walls of the stronghold of Jericho falling.

We are still subject to the enemy of our soul; the powers of darkness opposing God's plans for us, seeking to distract and derail us, rob us from the joy of God's love and entrap us daily. We, therefore, need to awaken to spiritual realities and hear God's trumpet calling us to be alert, discerning and vigilant in resisting such strategies.

RELEVANCE

The LORD was crucified, taking our sin upon Himself. He was buried and resurrected from the dead—arising with the keys of hell and death—to serve as our High Priest and triumphant King of Glory—who always goes before us and leads us into His victory!

On the one hand, we celebrate His glorious triumph with genuine heartfelt praise and worship expressed from a truly grateful heart. We are also called to engage in spiritual warfare in order to bring down strongholds of opposition to God's ways and will; and walk successfully in the LORD's overcoming strength against the strategies of the powers of darkness operating rampantly.

“Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and

against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.” (Romans 6:10-13 NLT)

So we celebrate His triumph as we walk, receiving the pour of God's love; as overcoming children of God exhibiting the fruits and gifts of the Spirit, and in serving one another in love and in His name.

For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” (Galatians 5:13-18 NKJV)

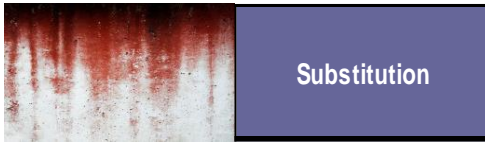
REFLECT AND RELATE

In what ways do you actively celebrate the LORD's triumph by serving others and helping them experience His overcoming love and power?

Are there additional ways you believe you can appropriate His victory in your life and celebrate His triumph?
How do you engage in spiritual warfare?

REFERENCES

Romans 8:31-39; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; 2 Corinthians 2:14-17; 1 John 5:1-5; Revelation 12:11; Revelation 15:2



The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) was established as a sacred day to afflict the soul and confess sins before God. It remembers the one day of the year when the high priest would go into the tabernacle, behind the veil into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkle the blood of the covenant sacrifice over the Mercy Seat. From within the cloud of God's glory over the ark, God would see the sacrificial blood as evidence of man's atonement of sin; reversing His judgment to MERCY.

It's become apparent, however, that the daily, weekly, and monthly animal sacrifices made to atone for sin were insufficient to establish one's right standing before Him. Instead, He has received the sacrificial blood of Messiah Jesus once and for all!

RELEVANCE

This appointed time of Atonement, therefore, was a shadow pointing forward to the LORD's sacrifice; the permanent substitute sacrifice for the sins of mankind. He demonstrated His incredible love and exchanged His life for yours! He stood in the place of judgment, and paid the price for the penalty of your sins in ADVANCE so you could walk in the will of God free from the torment of guilt, condemnation and the forces that cause depression, anxiety, and every other form of inner tension, robbing you of the peace God has ordained for you.

The writer of Hebrews in 10:5-7, therefore, quoted Psalm 40:6-8, which speaks prophetically about the LORD's sacrifice:

Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come --In the volume of the book it is written of Me --To do Your will, O God.'

So our opportunity is receiving the great pour of His love and gift of grace, in acknowledging Messiah Jesus as LORD. We then walk in the *new light* and *new life* of the Spirit; seeking His will be done, in our life and the lives around us.

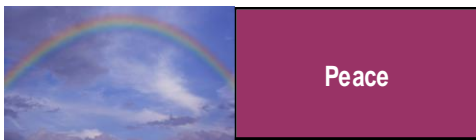
REFLECT AND RELATE

Have you settled the issue in your heart that the LORD's single sacrifice has permanently established your position of right-standing, or justification before God?

Are there any works you believe you have to accomplish to "earn points" with God... or earn His approval?

REFERENCES

Leviticus 23:26-32; Numbers 29:7-11; Hebrews 10:1-10; Colossians 2:13-17



The eternal plan of God included a marvelous way for us to celebrate God's love through a week long appointed time He defined as Sukkot, Tabernacles. It marks a special time for resting in God's peace. It was established to, "rejoice before the Lord for eight days." (Leviticus 29:40)

It was a Sabbath's Sabbath! On the one hand, it marked the time to rest from enduring the work of laboring in the field. On the other hand, it served to remind the people of God's favor and care extended through the long wilderness journey before crossing into the Promised Land-- and experiencing the *Promised Life*.

It serves an even greater purpose today of *facilitating a real love feast*, or special time to appreciate and receive the pour of God's love! It brings us to reflection and celebration of how the LORD has strengthened us by His Word and Spirit, and enabled us to truly *enter into His rest* and enjoy present and eternal peace of soul!

RELEVANCE

Tabernacles pointed forward to the permanent peace the LORD Messiah Jesus offered to those who would believe in Him, and accept His love and righteousness procured. It brings us to the way of experiencing His peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Even further, it points to an eternal peace with God.

He declared, "Come to me, all of you who are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30 JNT)

Paul further encouraged believers to be strengthened in faith, for it is by faith that we have access to the LORD's grace and gift of peace.

So, since we have come to be considered righteous by God because of our trust, let us continue to have *shalom* (peace) with God through our Lord, Yeshua the Messiah. 2 Also through

him and on the ground of our trust, we have gained access to this grace in which we stand; so let us boast about the hope of experiencing God's glory. (Romans 5:1-2 JNT)

We all seek God's peace. God purposes to bring us to a state of rest on the inside. It's called *shalom*; a sense of being fulfilled by God-- a sense of being *whole*. Paul illustrated how *seeking God* will result in finding the God of peace... who offers the peace of God!

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy -- meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:6-9 NKJV)

REFLECT AND RELATE

How do you celebrate the peace the LORD has settled for you and offered to you?

Have you truly received God's love and peace?

Are there things that bring anxiety into your life?

Do you find yourself striving to find peace?

REFERENCES

Leviticus 23:33-44; Hebrews 3-4; Luke 1:68-80; John 14:25-31; Romans 5:1-5



The Passover feast was prescribed to mark a critical transition from the bondage of Egypt to freedom found in a life based on faith and trust in God. As the children of Israel prepared to leave Egypt, the blood of the sacrificial lamb was washed over the doorposts of the home to spare its inhabitants from the angel of death which would strike the first born of Egypt.

God was preparing the people for a whole *new way of life*. He had some good surprises in store for them. He wanted to give them a *new perspective on life*. He would be revealing a new way to receive His amazing grace and experience life in His awesome presence. He was about to demonstrate to them a new dimension of life whereby they would find favor by actively trusting Him. He has the same message for us today!

Upon crossing the Red Sea, the children of Israel had truly entered into a new kind of relationship with God. God would begin the process of renewing and proving their heart. Through this process, God would reveal His love in a new way. He would bring the people to *experiencing His presence*; and demonstrate His awesome power, provision, and divine protection.

Through the 40 year journey, God would demonstrate His love and way to walk with Him in the new life, "that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD." (Deuteronomy 8:3 NKJV)

RELEVANCE

The LORD, likewise, began His ministry by spending 40 days in the wilderness. At the end of that period, He quoted this very Scripture when tempted. When questioned by the Jewish leader, Nicodemus, the LORD uttered a profound statement:

Yes, indeed, I tell you that unless a person is born from water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. 6 What is born from the flesh is flesh, and what is born from the Spirit is spirit. 7 Stop being amazed at my telling you that you must be born again from above! 8 The wind blows where it wants to, and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or

where it's going. That's how it is with everyone who has been born from the Spirit. (John 3:5-8 JNT)

Being "born again" is a gift of God's love and grace. It is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, changing the disposition of one's soul, inclining the heart to God. The "new nature" of this renewed heart has a new set of values and motivations; but must be cultivated and nurtured by intentional choices to grow in this new life.

Effective spiritual growth is accomplished through Bible study, prayer, meditation on God's Word, active fellowship, faithfulness, a willingness to yield to the Holy Spirit, and a heart inclined to worshiping God in spirit and truth.

The message of a time of a new birthing has great relevance to all with an ear to hear, eye to see and heart to believe new things God is doing! A wise person maintains a posture of being observant and attentive to new and emerging things God may be doing in this season. As Creator, God is always birthing new things: creative ideas, character traits, ways of doing things, new opportunities, etc.

God truly watches over our affairs and has foreordained plans and purposes in which we have opportunity to participate. He, therefore, desires that we be mindful of changes in seasons, seek Him, and engage with Him to discover and discern such new things and opportunities that may bless us.

REFLECT AND RELATE

How are you cultivating and nurturing your new nature as a born again believer?

How are you ordering your time to include God in the equation of your life?

In what ways can you lock in a posture to be observant and perceive and discern new things God may be doing?

REFERENCES

John 3:5-8; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Corinthians 5:17



The appointed time of Unleavened Bread was prescribed to serve as a reminder of the old life of bondage, and value of leaving it behind. The family was to engage in a process of thoroughly removing all the leaven from the home, and cleansing it.

What is the issue with leaven? It is a fermenting substance; a turbulent form of bacterium that is permeating and pervasive in nature. It spreads like a cancer or virus, contaminating, polluting and corrupting what it touches. As it spreads, it compromises and destroys what is true, good and otherwise pure. It therefore is used as a metaphor for sin and falsehood. There are many ways we can benefit from this truth today!

RELEVANCE

Unleavened Bread *points forward to the upgraded grace of God's love-- and the LORD's ongoing process of cleansing and strengthening by the Holy Spirit*; from the effects of sin and the corrupting and contaminating influences of the world. It brings us into a *firm settling of issues--* in our mind and heart-- establishing us in our new and strengthened position before God.

In another sense, it is a reflection of the outward practice of water immersion, or baptism, which expresses what God has already done in the heart by burying the "old nature of the flesh."

Messiah Jesus fulfilled all righteousness by allowing John the Immerser, or Baptist, to baptize Him in the Jordan. As He came up from the water, a dove descended upon Him.

This marked Him as the bearer of the Holy Spirit, and identified Him as the Servant Isaiah prophesied of. "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him..." (Isaiah 42:1 NKJV) John declared the LORD would thereafter baptize believers, "with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Matthew 3:11)

Paul, therefore, affirmed that once immersed, or baptized, the believer should walk in the LORD's grace, expressing this new nature.

Through immersion into his death we were buried with him; so that just as, through the glory of the Father, the Messiah was raised from the dead, likewise we too might live a new life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will also be united with him in a resurrection like his. (Romans 6:4-5 JNT)

The Lord would have us *live the new life fully immersed in His love* and identified in Him, experiencing the strength of His love, peace and joy! It is what He meant by "abiding in Him." As He shared with His disciples.

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. (John 15:7-10)

REFLECT AND RELATE

Have you participated in an outward immersion, or baptism?

How does your life reflect the inward change of your "new nature" in the LORD?

What other areas of the Lord's character and nature might He be working in you this season?

REFERENCES

Isaiah 42:1-4; Matthew 3:11; John 1:26-34; Romans 6; Matthew 5:3-10; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8; Galatians 5:22-26



God instructed the Hebrew people to bring an offering from the first fruits harvested of the crop. It signified recognition that all belongs to God, and served to honor the LORD's headship. In addition, inspecting the first fruits of the harvest provided for affirming that if the first fruits were good so would be the rest. First-Fruits, therefore, points forward to God's way concerning the order of advancement in the Kingdom of God.

RELEVANCE

Messiah Jesus revealed *the way, the truth and the new life* of God. The first way to the new life in God began with His resurrection from the dead. He became the first soul arisen in the newness of His eternal life, arising as our representative, establishing God's order of raising up believers spiritually, and ultimately eternally.

But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died. 21 So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. 22 Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. 23 But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back. (1 Corinthians 15:20-23 NLT)

God desires that we *continuously advance forward* in life, progressively growing trusting faith in God, bearing new fruit. This is accomplished as the Holy Spirit continues to strengthen our heart and renew our mind, helping us grow in the *new life of the Spirit*-- our renewed nature-- the nature and character of Messiah Jesus.

God works this renewing in us through a *process of exchange*: adding and deleting. Just as John the Baptist said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30), God grows His nature in us by continuously adding and strengthening aspects of His spiritual nature-- His virtue and character; while simultaneously deleting aspects of our old carnal nature. Paul described this as "our

outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16).

Such a process requires the cooperation and participation of our will. As we receive the pour of God's love and amazing grace and presence of the Holy Spirit, we are enlightened-- our eyes opened and heart convicted of aspects of wrong tendencies. The grace of God flows to strengthen us and delete such aspects of our disposition, *transforming our nature* and enabling us to advance forward in His strength!

One way we facilitate this process is by giving of the blessings of God--our first fruits--back to God. By resisting our carnal nature to hoard, we take authority over the power of selfishness, greed and mammon, and gratefully give back to God. It frees up our conscience and gives God permission, so to say, to bless us even further!

God, as Creator, is always doing *new things*. This perspective, therefore, blesses us by keeping our minds open to new things God may be doing. It, therefore, becomes easier to receive new insights by the Holy Spirit--even new instruction--as God opens doors of opportunity.

Truly, as you continue to engage with God over time, He will nurture your faith and cultivate His nature in you from faith-to-faith and glory-to-glory! (Romans 1:17 and 2 Corinthians 3:18)

REFLECT AND RELATE

In what ways do you affirm the LORD's headship and permit His Lordship in your life, allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal new truths?

How is your new nature reflected in your life?

In what ways may God be preparing you to advance forward in your life?

REFERENCES

Ephesians 4:17-32; Colossians 3:1-17



The time of Shavuot—Pentecost was appointed to celebrate the fullness of the harvest. It also represents the fullness of God’s covenant—His Word and Spirit. In a very real way, Pentecost reminds us that we have an opportunity to participate in the dynamic work of God and experience His incredible love and awesome presence and power!

RELEVANCE

As the disciples were celebrating this feast 50 days after the LORD’s ascension, they experienced a huge dose of the pour of God’s love through the infilling of the Holy Spirit. John the Immerser, or Baptist, had mentioned that the LORD would baptize “with the Holy Spirit and fire.” That word came to fruition in a big way-- a way they hadn’t understood-- until they experienced it!

Upon receiving the LORD in your heart, you receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Paul admonishes believers to understand what the will of the Lord is and, therefore, “*keep on being filled with the Spirit.*”(Ephesians 5:17 JNT)

How is this accomplished? Paul explains in Colossians 3:16-17, it comes as we allow the richness of God’s word to live fully inside, as we teach and counsel each other in His wisdom, and as we sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude to God in our hearts.

You are, therefore, *continuously filled with the Spirit* by filling yourself with God’s Word, communing with God, and allowing the Holy Spirit to work in you by yielding to Him in faith and

obedience. It’s like driving your car. Upon filling your tank, you move forward, go places, and eventually need to replenish your tank! Such a repeated infilling should result in character growth that reflects the qualities of the fruit of the Spirit.

It should also: open up your heart to receiving new measures of His love and grace; open your mind to God’s continuous enlightenment and revelation of truth; and your spirit to the manifestation and realization of the various gifts of the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12)

REFLECT AND RELATE

In what ways do you seek God’s continuous infilling of the Holy Spirit?

How has your life been a reflection of this infilling?

What new values has God impressed you to embrace this season?

What new vision has God imparted in you to give you greater insights?

What virtues of Christ have you received to walk in the new life in Him?

REFERENCES

Romans 12; Ephesians 5:17; Colossians 3:16-17; Hebrews 2:1-4



Preparation

Trumpets (also Rosh Hashana; Head of the Year) was prescribed to call the people to alarm, and raise the level of one's consciousness to self-examination, in preparation for the coming Day of Atonement.

The finished work of Messiah Jesus, however, has permanently opened the door to a NEW DIMENSION OF GRACE and granted believers an invitation to participate in His victory over the power of sin and death in a new and exciting way! How we prepare to do so makes all the difference!

RELEVANCE

In Daniel 10:10-21, Scripture reveals an element of spiritual warfare. An angel was sent to Daniel as an answer to his prayer. He told Daniel about a war in the heavenly places that was being waged, and how it related to earthly events.

Paul taught the disciples more about waging spiritual warfare. He proclaimed, "For although we do live in the world, we do not wage war in a worldly way; 4 because the weapons we use to wage war are not worldly. On the contrary, they have God's power for demolishing strongholds. We demolish arguments 5 and every arrogance that raises itself up against the knowledge of God; we take every thought captive and make it obey the Messiah." (2 Corinthians 10:3-5 JNT)

What are spiritual strongholds? They are spiritual fortresses founded on falsehood. They give place to demonic opposition of God's truth and kingdom purposes. They keep us in tight places and traps, constraining us in subtle ways. They restrain our growth and freedom. We, therefore, have the opportunity to awaken in God's love and truth, and confess lies we have believed; renounce them, and pull our minds and thoughts into compliance with God's truth, obeying His Word in faith.

Peter spoke more about the issue of demonic opposition, and provided this exhortation. "Stay sober, stay alert! Your enemy, the Adversary, stalks about like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Stand against him, firm in your trust, knowing that your brothers throughout the world are going through the same kinds of suffering." (1 Peter 5:8-9 JNT)

James added more on the subject. "Come close to God, and he will come close to you. Clean your hands, sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded people!" (James 4:8 JNT)

The LORD defeated Satan and the authority of the powers of darkness on Calvary's Cross. Satan, and his host of demons, however, are sore losers! They regain limited power as people agree with and subscribe to lies against the knowledge of God's truth by maintaining prideful attitudes, pursuing lustful desires, and exalting vain images—the worship of idols.

Revelation 12:11-12 addresses the issue and final outcome. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time." Our opportunity is to:

- Receive the pour of God's love
- Prepare our heart to come clean before God
- Repent with new revelation and understanding of sins and shortcomings
- Step into the place of receiving His overcoming grace
- Enjoin with the Lord in His overcoming life

REFLECT AND RELATE

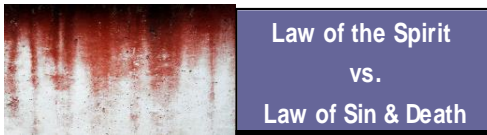
How have you positioned yourself to wage spiritual warfare?

How do you appropriate your "armor" daily in humility and faith, and engage in the LORD's way of fighting spiritual battles?
See Ephesians 6:10-18 and 2 Corinthians 10:2-6.

Do you have prayer and accountability partners to support you in fighting spiritual battles?

REFERENCES

Daniel 10:10-21; Luke 10; Matthew 16:17-19; 1 Peter 5:8-9; James 4:7-8; Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Corinthians 10:2-6.



The LORD became the atonement for our sins; and is the atonement. We appropriate His atonement by appreciating His sacrificial blood for the remission of our sins and receiving the pour of His love.

We are under the law of grace, and receive the operative power of the Holy Spirit; thus living in the freedom of the law of the Spirit.

RELEVANCE

Our natural fleshly tendencies, however, are inclined towards satisfying carnal desires, and therefore subject to the sway of sin and worldly ways. Giving into sin—lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and pride of life—brings guilt upon us, and puts us under the operative power and consequences of the law of sin; which leads to spiritual death.

Repentance—the purposeful and deliberate turning back towards God's ways—and receiving His mercy and forgiveness, restores the operative powers of the law of grace—the liberty of God's Spirit—to be effective and bear fruit in your life.

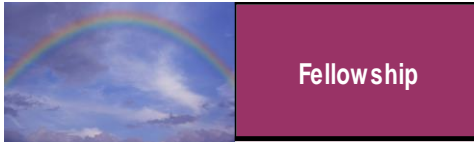
REFLECT AND RELATE

Review Paul's monologue in Romans 7. How do you relate to what he is describing?

Then read Romans 8. Meditate about what Paul is relating. Compare the benefits and values of life as a child of God vs. life under the sway of sin and pulls of worldly ways.

REFERENCES

Romans 7-8; Galatians 3:21-29; 5:16-26



God appointed a special time to have a special kind of fellowship with Him and our fellow man. He called it Sukkot, Tabernacles. It was prescribed to be a most joyous time to celebrate life for eight days, recalling the awesome things God did that year.

It marked a special time to be grateful for God's faithfulness in keeping His promises and sustaining life through times of trial and conflict. It points forward to an awesome way of gathering with fellow believers in a feast of God's love, sharing testimonies of God's goodness and doing life together!

RELEVANCE

After the LORD had ascended to heaven, the disciples remained in a state of worship and fellowship, meeting often in an upper room. "These all devoted themselves single-mindedly to prayer." (Acts 1:14 JNT)

Scripture also reports in Acts 2:44-45 the magnitude of their cooperation with one another. *They became "their brother's keeper."* (Genesis 4:9) They continued living faithfully towards God and one another with singleness of purpose, in a state reflecting the genuine love of God.

The context of Scripture truly has in view a spirit of real covenant love; intimacy, mutual affection, care, and concern for one another. They shared what they had. They supported one another. They lived with a genuine sense of community. The glimpse we have from their engagement, in essence, is a real knitting of hearts: between God and man; and one another.

REFLECT AND RELATE

What kind of fellowship do you maintain with other believers?

Are you part of a small group that prays for one another, supports one another-- emotionally and physically, and fellowships in God's Word and His Spirit, testifying of *His works*?

What opportunities do you have to witness the working of God's power?

What kind of relationships do you maintain that build your faith and nurture your relationship with God?

REFERENCES

Acts 1-2; 5:42; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Philemon 2



Passover was prescribed to be more than a mere celebration of freedom from bondage. It marks a total discharge—a genuine release and relief from the heavy burdens of sin and effects of the bondage and corruption of the world, its systems and environments in which we live.

Passover also points to an opportunity to *see how God begins the creative process and does new things*. It's a season to *prepare for releases into new things according to the purposes and plans of God*. He separates light from darkness, truth from error and lies, and people from the weight, pressures and burden of bondage.

So it marks the beginning of *new things* God initiates. He puts the past behind us, and prepares us for a new season of grace. We have the opportunity to receive the pour of His love, grace and release; and *go forward*—pressing towards new things and God's upward call.

Behold, I will do a new thing,
Now it shall spring forth;
Shall you not know it?
-- Isaiah 43:19

RELEVANCE

Messiah Jesus truly bore our sins, thoroughly releasing us from the burden of the effects of sinful tendencies. The Holy Spirit, He said, would come to be our comforter; providing real relief from stress, anxiety, fear, depression, and every evil thing. The gospel, therefore, provides a real assurance and hope of spiritual freedom.

In order to experience a new sense of liberty we have to truly receive His love and grace, and let go of things of the past; things that weigh us down. We may also have to break free of barriers or constraints; things that restrain our moving about or being able to receive new things and new opportunities from God so we can advance forward in life. One form of constraint is unforgiveness. It blinds us in bitterness as we judge others. It holds us back from receiving measures of God's grace.

The LORD would have us continue growing and advancing forward. He wants us to live with a hope for the future. The Holy Spirit yearns to cleanse, strengthen and fill us with greater measures of peace and joy the world cannot comprehend! It's so we can advance forward into new areas of release and bear new measures of fruit-- for His glory.

So, since we have come to be considered righteous by God because of our trust, let us continue to have *shalom* with God through our Lord, Yeshua the Messiah. 2 Also through him and on the ground of our trust, we have gained access to this grace in which we stand; so let us boast about the hope of experiencing God's glory. (Romans 5:1-2 JNT)

REFLECT AND RELATE

Have you appropriated the LORD's total discharge from the heavy burdens of sin-- or even past failures? Have you cast off guilt and shame?

Are you experiencing real relief from anxiety, stress, fear, and depression? If not, place your burdens at the foot of the cross. Submit them to the LORD. Allow His blood to wash them away, and let the peace of God which surpasses all understanding guard your heart and mind through the LORD. (Philippians 4:6)

Do you see opportunities for new things God may be doing in your life?

Do you see new resources, new ground for you to possess?

Do you hear heaven's call to bring liberty and greater joy into your life?

What barriers or constraints may be holding you back from receiving God's promises?

REFERENCES

Romans 8; Hebrews 6:9-12; 2 Peter 1



Things like bitterness, unforgiveness or wrong attitudes defile us on the inside. So God gives us a visual aid representing *His way to be cleansed on the inside and strengthened for greater purposes.*

During the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the home was cleared from all traces of leaven. What's the issue with leaven? It's a turbulent form of bacterium that is permeating and pervasive in nature. It spreads like a cancer or virus, contaminating, polluting and corrupting what it touches. As it spreads, it compromises and destroys what is true, good and otherwise pure. It therefore, is used as a metaphor for sin and falsehood. We can learn many things from this visual aid.

RELEVANCE

As we walk in this life, we are continuously bombarded with messages of this world that may seem good. The majority of them, however, are rooted in the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil.* They look good on the outside—but are *not rooted in God's truth or life of His Spirit*—and therefore, cannot bear the life, wisdom or fruit of His Spirit, and produce God's real peace and joy.

God wants us to eat of the *tree of life!* He wants us to discern between what is of Him and what is of the world. He wants to bring us from *confusion to clarity.* That is accomplished by seeking God's wisdom and peace through His Word and Spirit; and comes from receiving the true *light of the world*—the LORD, Messiah Jesus.

The LORD's sacrifice, therefore, not only released you from the burdens of the effects of sin, but accomplished what the Law of Moses could never permanently do: legally clear you of all possible charges of sin, removing all possible effects of guilt, condemnation and confusion found under the law of sin and death!

His last words proclaimed on the cross were, "It is finished!" (John 19:30) Paul, therefore, endeavored to clear the disciples' conscience from all traces of guilt proclaiming:

And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. 3 The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared

an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. 4 He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit. (Romans 8:1-5 NLT)

Free from guilt and condemnation, the believer can receive the LORD's love-- His mercy and truth. By receiving His mercy and truth, you walk with a refreshed mindset and perspective on life—God's perspective! Such a mindset sets things clear to you so you see with God's kind of *open vision.* Truly, His open vision enables you to *walk in new dimensions of the light of His wisdom and truth.*

So receive the pour of God's love through the Holy Spirit-- *to see new things with greater clarity* and be *strengthened in new dimensions of His new life.* God is always doing and planning new things-- for our good and His glory. Receive and embrace Paul's prayer for enlightenment and strengthening.

Therefore I... do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places... (Ephesians 1:15-20)

REFLECT AND RELATE

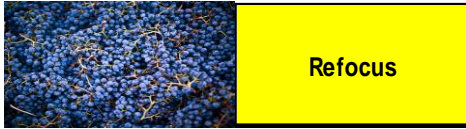
Have you allowed the LORD to clear all the charges of guilt and condemnation from your conscience?

Have you received the full mercy of God?

Ask the Lord to show you new doors through which He has made a way for you to go.

REFERENCES

Romans 8:1-3; Colossians 2:13-15; Matthew 6:14-15; Mark 11:25; Luke 17:3-4; 23:34; 1 John 1:9



The Feast of First-Fruits served as a shadow, pointing to the resurrection of the LORD as the first soul arisen in the newness of eternal life. In identifying with His death and resurrection, the child of God is elevated to a new spiritual state; “from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (Romans 8:21 NKJV)

RELEVANCE

This new position acknowledges an intimate and genuine relationship with our Creator and Father God. It is by this real “Spirit of adoption” whereby the child of God receives the love of the Father, responding by crying out from the heart, “Abba, Father.” As His children, we become *joint heirs* in union with the LORD. (Romans 8:17)

In addition, the gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed into our hearts as the “guarantee of our inheritance” (Ephesians 1:14) This infilling is in essence, the deposit—or initial installment of our eternal inheritance!

This new posture or standing opens up a truly *new realm* of vested spiritual rights to the child of God, as stated in John 1:12-13. “But as many as *received* Him, to them He gave the *right* to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

To gain insight into what this truly means, two words need to be fully understood: *receive* and *right*. The word used for receive here, *lambano*, is an active verb, in contrast to the more passive kind of verb used in the sentence just prior to this one. It means: actively attained. The word used for *right* is *exousia*. Like many Greek and Hebrew words, it is an expansive word. It means: right, privilege, capacity, competency, strength, freedom, authority, power, and jurisdiction. It means a lot!

So, those who more than believe, but *actively embrace* and trust the LORD and welcome the Holy Spirit from the heart, attain the full right, privilege, capacity, competency, strength, freedom, authority, power, and jurisdiction of covenant children of God!

How many of those who believe actively receive all God has to bestow? Truly, God's children in the LORD have opportunity to apprehend a fresh, wide-range perspective of life! It's what the new life in Christ is all about!

This standing offers the child of God a special kind of spiritual vision. 1 Samuel 3:1 calls this type of vision, *open vision* (*chazone parats*). With such type of *open vision* and the faith to see it materialize, you can truly come into the fullness of God's unique purposes for your life.

So receive the pour of God's love through the Holy Spirit to give you a fresh new focus and strengthened view of God's multidimensional love! Receive and embrace Paul's special prayer:

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height — 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:14-19)

REFLECT AND RELATE

How has God revealed His Son in you?

To what extent have you received your “vesting” as a joint heir with the LORD?

How have you been exercising your rights as heirs of grace, children of the King of Glory?

REFERENCES

John 1; Romans 8; Galatians 1:16; Galatians 4; Hebrews 12



Shavuot—Pentecost was originally established to celebrate the fullness of the harvest. It also marks the day Moses received the Law—God’s covenant. It would be God’s word that would guide God’s people through a life of faith—dependent on God; and distinguished from the pagan nations of the world.

The Law demanded performance of all kinds of works to be justified before God. Messiah Jesus came in the power of God’s love to reveal an *upgraded dimension of grace* and *release the enabling power of the Holy Spirit so we could experience a new kind of freedom-- the new life of the Spirit-- liberty in the Holy Spirit!*

RELEVANCE

As the disciples were celebrating Shavuot, they experienced a huge pour of God’s love as the Holy Spirit fell upon them as recorded in Acts 2. God’s covenant Word connected with His Spirit and brought completion—or fullness—to the revelation of God’s covenant.

It brought fulfillment to Isaiah’s prophecy expressing the *fullness of God’s covenant*: “this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth...” (Isaiah 59:21 NKJV)

So, *full independence in God* would be expressed by *depending on God’s Word breathed by His Spirit*—the Holy Spirit. This is what the LORD revealed towards the end of His ministry in the upper room.

I still have many things to tell you, but you can’t bear them now. 13 However, when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own initiative but will say only what he hears. He will also announce to you the events of the future. 14 He will glorify me, because *he will receive from what is mine and announce it to you.* (John 16:12-14 JNT)

This is also what Paul had in mind in expressing what liberty in the LORD is about: standing free, not being “entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” (Galatians 5:1)

As the LORD has discharged us from the debt to the law of sin and fully acquitted us from the guilt of the effects of sin, we

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have the capacity to be empowered to walk in the Spirit of liberty! That capacity is realized by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit; the enabling power to resist worldly influences and carnal impulses so the LORD’s nature can dominate our thought processes and actions.

This happens as we allow the Holy Spirit to strengthen us and enable us to resist the ways of the world and sways of sin: the lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and pride of life. The more we yield to the LORD’s nature by the Holy Spirit, the more we appropriate His victory in our life.

This is what the LORD meant in declaring, “He who loves his life loses it, but he who hates his life in this world will keep it safe right on into eternal life!” (John 12:25 JNT) He was referring to a real kind of life transformation: where our life absorbed in satisfying the desires of the flesh become renewed; and we become more focused on satisfying the desires God imparts in our heart and purposes He has towards us—which have the capacity to bring more fulfilling measures of liberty and the real joy and peace of God.

This transformation comes as the Holy Spirit enlightens your mind and heart to truth, bringing God’s real refreshment and liberation! The more you yield to the Holy Spirit, the more you are able to resist temptations and be free from the pulls that lead to anxiety and fear—so God can bring you to His rest, His settling state of peace.

REFLECT AND RELATE

What good desires and purposes do you think God has towards you?

What thoughts can you release to the LORD so the Holy Spirit can empower you to greater measures of freedom, peace and joy?

What new values has God impressed you to embrace this season?

What new vision has God imparted in you to give you greater insights?

REFERENCES

John 12-17; Romans 8; 1 Corinthians 2; Galatians 5-6



Reclamation

Trumpets serves as a shadow pointing forward to the LORD's triumph over the power of the law of sin and death. Messiah Jesus humbled Himself, and was obedient unto death. He sent the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin, reveal God's righteousness, and administer God's judgment—releasing His amazing grace and awesome mercy!

RELEVANCE

In surrendering to death on the cross, the LORD overcame the human sinful tendency to uphold self-righteousness. He then recovered the spiritual authority that Adam had lost to Satan in giving in to the lie of the serpent and disobeying God. He, therefore, declared in Revelation 1:18-19, "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death."

Peter's life illustrates a great example of a life reclaimed and transformed. He was humbled, and allowed the LORD to impart in him a great grace gift. Extremely self-confident and often quick to talk, He thought he could never deny his friend and Savior. How quickly he did, though, just as the LORD had predicted. However, he allowed the Holy Spirit to convict his heart. He was then given the grace of redemption, and the opportunity to three times declare his true love for the LORD.

After the LORD asked him three times, "do you love me," Peter replied, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." (John 21:17 NKJV)

Peter learned that the LORD really knew his heart. He received the pour of His great love. He surrendered to the conviction

of the Holy Spirit. He allowed the Holy Spirit to fill the gap in His heart. That empowered a real change in temperament and attitude: real transformation. He could, therefore, be entrusted with a large measure of authority and anointing of the Holy Spirit!

REFLECT AND RELATE

Have you noticed situations arising in your life where you have faced having to defend, justify, or prove yourself? In those situations, how have you received the love of God and asked God for the strength to make it? How may you have kicked in your heels, and fought to win on your own strength?

Are there times where you blame the devil or other people for your shortcomings, taking no responsibility for your own actions?

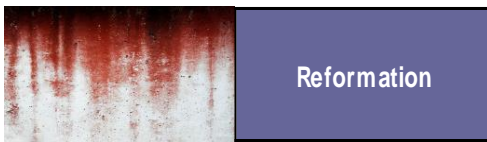
Has the Holy Spirit been leading you to consider some things and beckoning you to settle the issue—and come to the understanding of God's truth—which will make you free?

Has the Holy Spirit been trying to convict you of any weaknesses or areas of pride or self-indulgence?

Has the Holy Spirit been leading you to repent for anything, and turn to God for His mercy—and way of grace?

REFERENCES

1 Samuel 13:1-15; Psalm 51; Daniel 4; Matthew 16:24-27; Mark 8:35-38; Philippians 4:12



The LORD is our atonement for sin. His obedient death on the cross reconciled man back to God, restoring the fullness of the covenant relationship lost in the Garden of Eden due to sin, disobedience and assertion of independence from God. His ultimate love and sacrifice satisfied God's wrath.

RELEVANCE

As we have been united together in the likeness of His death, we have, likewise, been united with Him in the likeness of His resurrection. We, therefore, have a *new capacity* to resist the tendencies to sin-- and *walk in God's overcoming new life--* through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

As a result, sin no longer has to have dominion over the believer, for we are under the law of grace. Therefore, it is up to us to walk in the newness of this new life in the LORD. If we stumble, we repent, turn to God's way and receive God's forgiveness without condemnation.

Such freedom, however, does not give us license to keep walking in self-indulgence. In fact in the LORD we have been raised to a higher standard of moral excellence and accountability.

Therefore, we "submit to God" and "resist the devil" by drawing near to God, purifying our heart, and apprehending the LORD's thoughts by the Holy Spirit. (James 4:7 and Philippians 2:5) By this we allow the Holy Spirit to transform and "re-form" us by His grace as God the potter forms the clay. This was the concept behind Paul's exhortation in Romans 12:2-- "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

In addition, by reckoning to be dead to sin and alive to God, we can redirect our thoughts and actions, and serve our fellow man in the "newness of the Spirit." (Romans 6:5-6 and 7:6)

In teaching believers how to express gratefulness to God for His love and precious promises, Peter encouraged believers to cultivate the LORD's divine nature—character traits above and beyond basic faith: virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.

Peter spoke more on the value of allowing the Holy Spirit to keep us diligent and disciplined in order to grow in the knowledge of God and live fruitful lives. He admonishes us to, "prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and you will never fall away." (2 Peter 1:10)

So receive the pour of God's love through the strengthening power of the Holy Spirit. Be prepared to walk through new doors through which the LORD has made a way for you to go.

REFLECT AND RELATE

Having received the LORD's atonement, in what ways do you think you can diligently pursue advancing your walk with Him to be a partaker of His divine nature?

What fruits of the Spirit's character traits do you regularly bear?

Which of these character traits will you ask God to manifest in your life to a greater extent?

In what ways can you see yourself growing further?

Ask the Lord to show you new doors through which He has made a way for you to go.

REFERENCES

Romans 5-7; 2 Peter; Philippians 2:5-15; 2 Corinthians 4; 1 John



Fruitfulness
Recovery
Transformation

Sukkot, Tabernacles, was prescribed to represent a special time of celebrating God's amazing grace and awesome works. It was appointed to be an eight-day celebration facilitating active times of relating with God and one another. For those with eyes of faith, it points to *God's ultimate redemption*. Celebrating God's love, we *reflect on the good He has done* and find *hope for the future*. We focus on anticipating how *God restores things lost and makes things new!*

RELEVANCE

On the one hand, the early disciples experienced a type of fulfillment of what the Hebrew Scriptures or Old Testament had represented in Sukkot. Through the outpouring of God's love by the Holy Spirit they *experienced the dynamic presence of God*. It changed their fellowship with one another, as recorded in Acts. They had simple hearts, childlike faith, and walked in childlike obedience to God-- *experiencing the amazing grace of God!*

They pursued an active, passionate relationship with God, and strong dynamic, covenant relationships with one another. The high level of engagement they maintained with God and one another further points forward to the great wedding feast of the LORD and His Bride—the marriage supper of the Lamb. (Revelation 19:9)

As a result of the active engagement with the Holy Spirit, the prophecy in Isaiah 61 began to be fulfilled: good tidings were preached, many broken-hearted and lame were healed, those in captivity to sin were set free—God was glorified!

God's community of faith, therefore, grew by leaps and bounds. People were certainly witnessing His wonders. Revival broke loose. God still seeks such vibrant, active communities of believers glorifying His name and accomplishing His purposes in the earth.

These disciples knew they had realized and experienced something very special. They now had an expanded view and revelation of the *fullness of God's intended purpose and vision* spoken to Moses regarding His delivering the children of Israel out from the bondage of Egypt and into the Promised Land-- or *Promised Life-- liberty of a new life-- His overcoming life* .

I am the LORD; I will *bring you out from under the burdens* of the Egyptians, I will *rescue* you from their bondage, and I will *redeem* you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will *take you as My people, and I will be your God*. (Exodus 6:6-7)

They now understood the true value of being rescued. Their lives had been recovered by God from the corruption of the world—spiritual death—to recover what had been lost—*real dynamic refreshed new life of the Spirit-- in earth as it is in Heaven!*

As an eight-day celebration, we have the opportunity to spend quality time thinking about all the blessings God has bestowed upon us this year, and all the ways we have been strengthened in faith through our relationship with God. We also celebrate things that may have been recovered or restored, the lives of others we have had an impact upon, and the new character traits God has developed in us that bear the fruit of a transformed life—personal growth; the evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in our life.

We look forward to the next season of growth in the Lord, anticipating new things God may be doing. We also have the opportunity to celebrate the time of ultimate transformation in the Lord's presence.

REFLECT AND RELATE

How can you maintain an active engagement with God?

In what kind of dynamic fellowship can you participate?

How do you think your community of faith can grow?

In what ways do you think you can experience such a dynamic life and witness the power of God in your midst?

How do you measure personal growth and transformation of character?

REFERENCES

The book of Acts



God desires quality spiritual connections with His children. He, therefore, is focused on establishing, keeping and restoring active relationships with us. His goal, therefore, is to bring your relationship with Him to a *flourishing and fruitful state of oneness with Him*—a true solid union in His love. This was the core focus of the LORD's prayer recorded in John 17.

In the story about the children of Israel being delivered from the bondage of Egypt and led to freedom, the blood of a sacrificial lamb was sprinkled over the doorposts to mark the home that was spared from the plague of death. The blood, therefore, connected every family to God's covenant of life. Any individual who did not participate in the Passover feast would be cut off from the congregation of Israel. God's word says the Passover should be celebrated, "throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance." (Exodus 12:17)

In prescribing that ALL these feasts and appointed times should be kept for all generations, God was foreshadowing very real and relevant ways to keep them to maintain active relationship with Him! What was concealed as measures of grace was revealed as amazing grace in Messiah Jesus, who fulfilled them by giving more accurate understanding of God's purposes.

RELEVANCE

Passover was inaugurated as the first of a cycle of appointed times of the LORD, marking deliverance from bondage. John the Baptist introduced the LORD as, "God's lamb! The one who is taking away the sin of the world! (John 1:29 JNT)

The LORD came to Jerusalem on the very day the Passover lamb was traditionally set aside for inspection. Likewise, He endured five days of questioning and "inspection" from the Jewish leaders. He was crucified on the same day, at the same time the lamb was to be killed.

He, therefore, became the sacrificial lamb, obtaining eternal redemption, "setting people free forever." (Hebrews 9:12 JNT) His blood was shed to, "cleanse your conscience from dead works to

serve the living God." (v. 14) It was shed, "that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." (v.15)

The precious blood of the LORD, therefore, was shed to set your conscience free from the anguish and guilt felt from performing worthless and vain works that cannot earn salvation, liberate your weary and bound soul, connect you to God's Spirit, and guarantee you eternal peace with God! His salvation is a gift of His grace.

Our union with Him is also to be dynamic and full of life. Such a union enables us to live in a free state of communion and communication with God.

God, therefore, desires to keep you continuously connected and engaged in bi-directional communication! If you can connect to somebody via a cell phone, you can connect with God! As the LORD said, "My sheep listen to my voice, I recognize them, they follow me, 28 and I give them eternal life." (John 10:27 JNT)

Truly, He is as close as your heart; for He resides within you! It just takes receiving the pour of His love and listening for His whispering voice. His living word comes alive by the Holy Spirit, providing new enlightenment daily! Read His word....then listen intently to His Holy Spirit speaking to your heart.

REFLECT AND RELATE

How can your connection to God be strengthened?

Is your communion and communication with Him bi-directional?

Do you know His Holy Spirit intimately?

Would you like to recognize His voice speaking to you? Ask and seek, my friend....

REFERENCES

Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 30:11-14; Psalm 86:11; James 2:23; John 14:15-24



God created mankind with relationships in mind: relationships with Him and with one another. His hope is that we get to know Him and value the relationship; as it is one intended to be experienced in the earth and for eternity in heaven. This relationship, or union, is expressed through a way of *abiding in Him*-- powerful engagement called communion-- or intimate fellowship.

RELEVANCE

God's idea for a relationship with Him is a dynamic union flowing in the substance of His love and life—His Spirit. He desires quality relationships that will testify of His presence and active involvement in human affairs. In fact, through Daniel, He made this very clear before the king of Babylon, the leader of the world's greatest power of the day, "the Most High rules in the kingdom of men" (Daniel 4:32 NKJV).

More than expressing His dominion over the earth, God desires the devotion of the hearts of His children. It's how He reigns through us. As He does, we get to *participate in His awesome works!* That's why He seeks strong unions; and why He prayed before His closest disciples at the end of His earthly ministry the prayer recorded in John 17. Hear His heart in this snippet.

I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me." (John 17:20-23)

Paul understood that God intended for us to have a relationship with Him that would bless us with a sense of fulfillment, peace and joy. Such qualities bear the very fruit of His Spirit, the Holy Spirit.

Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you... The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Corinthians 13:11-14)

David, the man after God's own heart, received fresh pours of God's love daily. He experienced such a relationship with God. He understood that maintaining a practice of self-examination to stay right with God was a key element of the relationship. "Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; Try my mind and my heart." (Psalm 26:2)

For this same reason, Paul admonishes us to examine ourselves before participating in the LORD's communion. "So let a person examine himself first, and then he may eat of the bread and drink from the cup; for a person who eats and drinks without recognizing the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself." (1 Corinthians 11:28-29 JNT)

As we engage with God through the Holy Spirit, we receive the pour of His love and invoke His grace and activate His power, His sanctifying work in us. Truly, our relationship with God is intended to bring us bountiful blessings in life. May you drink of the cup of communion and be blessed as you engage in rich relationship with the LORD!

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread (1 Corinthians 10:14-17).

REFLECT AND RELATE

How do you examine your standing—or health of your relationship with God?

Are there crevices in your heart that the Holy Spirit may be shedding light upon to bring your heart into a greater degree of sanctification, and unity with God?

What falsehoods might you be believing, holding onto, or trusting in that could be impacting your relationship with God?

REFERENCES

2 Thessalonians 2:13; 4:1-3; James 4; Ephesians 1:15-21



First-Fruits was prescribed as time to express gratefulness to God for the fruits of our labor and His provision. It's how we acknowledge the LORD's headship over our life and stewardship before God. This appointed time also established a way to examine the first fruits of the crop to test the quality of the harvest. If the first fruits were good, and therefore blessed, the rest would likewise be blessed.

On another level, First-Fruits also serves as a shadow, pointing to the LORD's resurrection as the first soul arisen in the newness of life.

But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died. So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back. (1 Corinthians 15:20-24 NLT)

RELEVANCE

In identifying with His resurrection, the child of God is, therefore, elevated to a new spiritual state; "from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Romans 8:21 NKJV)

Consecration, therefore, relates to how we *value our relationship with God*; specifically this new state of belonging to the

LORD. It's how we receive the love and grace of God and express loyalty-or faithfulness-to God.

The LORD set an example of the type of character we should value and embrace. He would have us receive the pour of His love through the Holy Spirit, and continuously look inside and examine our character. As we desire to grow in character the Holy Spirit strengthens us to do so.

He is the Comforter who, if allowed, will transform your mind and heart, bringing it to conformity with the LORD's character and nature. The more God's love softens our heart and the Holy Spirit transforms our nature, the more our values and world-view changes. We identify more intimately with God's causes, see more of God's perspectives and truly become more concerned with what the LORD referred to as the weightier matters-justice, mercy and faith.

REFLECT AND RELATE

In what ways do you submit to the LORD's headship, allowing Him to have authority in your life?

How do you dedicate the first fruits of your labors to God?

What are some ways by which you can demonstrate greater loyalty and faithfulness towards God?

REFERENCES

Psalms 26; Matthew 6:33; 1 Corinthians 11:28; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 6:4; Hebrews 4; 12:14-15; Matthew 7:21; 1 John 3:1-3; Galatians 5:22



Shavuot (Pentecost) was prescribed to celebrate the glory of God. Initially it served as a reminder of the time God's law was given to Moses. As the disciples were celebrating this time, the Holy Spirit gave them a huge wake-up call with a *huge pour of God's love*, just as the LORD had promised! It marked a *time of transition*, and revealed God's plan to inhabit His people and display the manifold grace and presence of His Holy Spirit.

RELEVANCE

The LORD called the Holy Spirit the Comforter, promising He "will guide you into all truth." The disciples learned quickly that it was by the power and comfort of the Holy Spirit that the community of believers grew and maintained its vitality.

It is by the working of the Holy Spirit that God works His transformation process, renewing our mind and changing our character to conform to the LORD's as we yield to Him. Peter, having experienced real transformation, referred to this as being "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4).

In appreciating the value of the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit, Paul encouraged believers to understand the nature of the Holy Spirit, and how He works and communicates with us.

It is to us, however, that God has revealed these things. How? Through the Spirit. For the Spirit probes all things, even the profoundest depths of God. 11 For who knows the inner workings of a person except the person's own spirit inside him? So too no one knows the inner workings of God except God's Spirit. 12 Now we have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit of God, so that we might understand the things God has so freely given us. (1 Corinthians 2:10-12 JNT)

One of the primary attributes of the Holy Spirit's ministry is to console and comfort those in despair; the depressed and broken of heart, those without hope. Touched by compassionate servants of faith, the Holy Spirit can release the healing virtue of God to bring stability and comfort to wounded hearts and set in motion God's healing process.

Real transformation happens in time through God's process as we submit and surrender to Him, and allow ourselves to be conformed to His nature. It entails allowing Him to increase and the self nature to decrease. For most of us, that's more easily said than done! As we do, though, the Holy Spirit establishes and confirms our alignment with the LORD by manifesting the sweet peace of God. That peace gives us the confidence of God's presence and assurance of His favor.

Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:17-18 NKJV)

The result of God's process yields good fruits. The more we submit to the Spirit, the more we reflect His character and the fruit of the Spirit. "Since it is through the Spirit that we have Life, let it also be through the Spirit that we order our lives day by day." (Galatians 5:25 JNT)

REFLECT AND RELATE

In what ways can you value the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life?

How do you think you can recognize the working of the Holy Spirit?

How does He speak to you?

How might you confirm what the Holy Spirit is doing?

In what ways has God been transforming you, growing greater measures of His nature in you?

REFERENCES

John 14-16; 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; 12-14; 2 Corinthians 3:4-18; Galatians 5; Romans 14; 1 Peter 1:2-11



Trumpets is a glorious time of celebrating the LORD's *overcoming life*. A primary purpose of Trumpets was to call the people to do battle against the enemy of the soul—sin. Believers, though, have more reason to be vigilant and engage in spiritual warfare against Satan, the adversary, who "walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." The good news is we have the opportunity to live in unity with God and victoriously in the love and triumph of Messiah Jesus!

RELEVANCE

Messiah Jesus is the eternal "horn of salvation." Triumphant over the devil through His death and resurrection, He overcame the power over sin and death; stripping the devil's authority, limiting his power.

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. (Colossians 2:13-16 NKJV)

Paul, like David, experienced suffering and shame, yet also knew the sweet taste of victory. Through suffering the LORD molds character.

I know what it is to be in want, and I know what it is to have more than enough — in everything and in every way I have learned the secret of being full and being hungry, of having abundance and being in need. 13 I can do all things through him who gives me power. (Philippians. 4:12-13 JNT)

Receive the pour of God's love! Embrace Paul's exhortation regarding our triumph in the LORD.

No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. 38 And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor

demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. 39 No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37-39 NLT)

As we realize His victories in our life, we mature in the LORD. The Holy Spirit brings our character and nature into alignment--congruence or conformance-- with Him.

This is important because it measures our integrity, or state of wholeness in the LORD. The more we come into alignment or conformance with God, the more our character corresponds, or lines up with His, reflecting His nature. This in essence is what being "Christ-like" is about. It relates to how God sees us; how our inner spirit aligns with His Holy Spirit. It also relates to how open and willing our conscience is to aligning with God's ways and will.

As we grow in trusting faith and character, we become less double-minded and more in sync with the LORD. This is why Elijah brought up the issue of being of two opinions; and James explained how being double-minded restrains God from answering prayers. Through GRACE, the LORD showers us with LOVINGKINDNESS-- the pour of His love-- and covers us in MERCY.

REFLECT AND RELATE

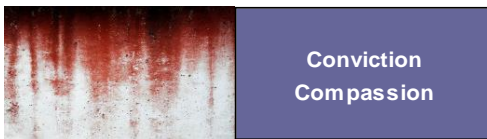
In what real ways do you think you can appropriate the LORD's victory?

Do you often feel like life is overcoming you? In what additional ways could you perhaps receive His victory?

Have you asked God what it will take for you to gain victory in the areas you need victory? Ask God to reveal issues you need to settle.

REFERENCES

Romans 8:18-39; 2 Corinthians 2:14-17; 9:6-8; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; 1 John 5:1-5; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 2:18-21; 3:13-17; Colossians 2:13-16; Exodus 17:8-16; Psalm 16; 98; 108; 129; 1 Kings 18:21; James 1:2-8



The Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, remembers the one day of the year when the high priest would go into the tabernacle, behind the veil, into the Holy of Holies to atone for the sin of the people. On the Mercy Seat covering the Ark of the Covenant, the priest would sprinkle the blood of the covenant sacrifice. From within the cloud of God's glory over the ark, God would see the sacrificial blood as evidence of man's atonement of sin, *reversing God's judgment to mercy*.

Today Father sees the sacrificial blood of His Son, Messiah Jesus, crying out, FORGIVEN AND REDEEMED! As we receive the freshness of the pour of the love of God, our heart comes into new measures of conviction, appreciating the LORD's redemption. So we can likewise walk in new dimensions of the liberty of the Spirit--experiencing the *new life* of the Spirit!

RELEVANCE

The LORD's sacrificial blood was poured out once and for all reversing God's judgment of sin. As much as we need to allow the Holy Spirit to convict our heart of sin, we also need to allow our heart to receive with conviction the immensity of Father's love and the grace of His mercy.

As we receive God's love and forgiveness purchased with the LORD's blood, we can forgive others. "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." (Matthew 6:14)

As we value the LORD's sacrifice and His forgiveness, we are able to cast off condemnation, allowing the Holy Spirit to fill and refresh our heart. Such liberty enables us to *walk free from guilt*; and empowers us to *express the love and compassion of Messiah to set others free from our judgment*.

So as we take the "log" out of our eye (Matthew 7:4) God cleans our eye, and clears and strengthens our vision—so that we can see with His *open vision-- through eyes of love-- or chesed-- lovingkindness*.

Living free from the guilt of sin and judgment truly transfers us into a new realm. For, when you receive the liberty of the Spirit,

you are transferred from the realm of the guilt and condemnation of sin to the realm of freedom in the Spirit.

We often find it difficult to shake off guilt. Therefore, we find encouragement and hope in Messiah Jesus. Allow your heart to embrace Paul's exhortation.

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. 2 And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. (Romans 8:1-2 NLT)

Free from guilt and condemnation, it is certainly easier to walk in God's love and have compassion towards others. The LORD had compassion on the multitudes because He saw them as sheep not having a shepherd. He saw people needing a touch of Father's love. He loved those who were difficult to love; those who didn't know what it was like to be genuinely loved; those who had a hard time receiving love.

Wherever you are, needing to be loved or show greater love towards others, ask the LORD for a pour of His love through the Holy Spirit; to reveal His love to you in a greater way than you have ever known, and place you where you can experience the giving and receiving of His love.

REFLECT AND RELATE

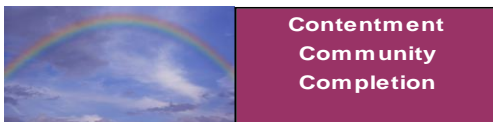
Have you fully received the love of the Father? Would you like to?

How well do you know and receive the mercy of the LORD daily?

Do you think there might be things preventing you from freely extending God's love to others—even difficult people? How do you think the Holy Spirit might help you extend mercy and grace to others?

REFERENCES

1 John 4:16; Psalm 19:7-14; 27; 136; Hebrews 6:13-20; Romans 5:1-5



Sukkot, Tabernacles, was prescribed to mark the end of the annual cycle of seasons and offer one the opportunity to look ahead to the next season. God appointed it as a time to rest from one's hard work and express gratefulness to God for His provision, reflect on His goodness and relate with others.

Believers in Messiah Jesus have an even greater opportunity to express gratefulness, celebrate the incredible love and awesome works of God with our family and the community of faith, enter into His rest and anticipate His future glory!

RELEVANCE

The LORD redeemed us from vain works and lifted our burdens. He invited all who believe to be joined with Him, and receive His peace.

Come to me, all of you who are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30 JNT)

The LORD's peace is truly precious. It is the true antidote to fear and anxiety. To some, real inner peace and God's *shalom* may be hard to comprehend. But, it is real. It is available to experience.

So focus your thoughts on what is "true, noble and righteous" communicating with gratefulness to God, and "the peace of God which surpasses understanding" will keep you secure in God's love (Philippians 4:6-8). Through his labor and trials, Paul learned how to have contentment in the LORD. He confessed that:

"I have learned to be content regardless of circumstances. I know what it is to be in want, and I know what it is to have more than enough — in everything and in every way I have learned the secret of being full and being hungry, of having abundance and being in need. I can do all things through him who gives me power." (Philippians 4:11-12 JNT)

In a world that finds it hard to find satisfaction with the simple things of life, contentment in the LORD is to be greatly valued. The early community of faith valued the peace and presence

of the Holy Spirit. They followed after the LORD. They received revelation of God's Word and maintained a rich kind of fellowship.

Such dynamic follow-ship and fellowship enabled them to truly experience the fullness of God. These believers were convicted in their hearts that they needed one another, and needed to support one another through the trials and toil of life. They valued the different gifts, skills, and resources that God had given to them, and in turn, actively engaged in the practice of sharing and caring for one another.

Their sense of community was real because the *presence of the Holy Spirit and love of God was real to them*. That presence gave them a sense of confidence and peace. Although external trials abounded, they were exhorted to rest internally in His rest. "For in him, bodily, lives the fullness of all that God is. And it is in union with him that you have been made full — he is the head of every rule and authority." (Colossians 2:8-10 JNT)

God brings us to the place where we are confident that prayer and patience work together to see God's will and purposes accomplished. We experience His love and active presence. The more we do, the more we know He is in control and rest settled in His purposes.

As we anticipate a time of entering a complete state of rest and wholeness in God, we realize we will never be totally complete this side of heaven; but knowing you are eternally found in Messiah Jesus brings a greater sense of peace that truly does surpass understanding.

REFLECT AND RELATE

What blockages and constraints could be preventing you from experiencing God's presence and peace?

How might you be able to experience fellowship centered in the life of God and engage with God through the Holy Spirit in a real way?

REFERENCES

Matthew 11:28-30; Philippians 4:6-7; Hebrews 13:4-6; 2 Corinthians 4:7-18; Acts 2:42-47; Colossians 2:8-10; James 1:3-8

I AM
THE BREAD
OF LIFE

TRUTH AND PURPOSE

The Feast of Passover was approaching. The LORD had just performed the miracle of multiplying five barley loaves and two small fish into enough to feed a crowd of 5,000. The next day the people searched for Him; and after finding Him, engaged in conversation. He said some things that astounded them, including these statements:

I am the bread which is life! Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever trusts in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶I told you that you have seen but still don't trust. ³⁷Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will certainly not turn away. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven to do not my own will but the will of the One who sent me. (John 6:35-36 JNT)

Yes, indeed! I tell you that unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life in yourselves. ⁵⁴Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life — that is, I will raise him up on the Last Day. ⁵⁵For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶*Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me, and I live in him.* ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me, and I live through the Father, so also whoever eats me will live through me. (John 6:53-57 JNT)

RELEVANCE

As Messiah Jesus continued to share about the kingdom of God, many came to understanding and believed in Him. Yet there were also many who could not comprehend. It became apparent that some could *see* with spiritual eyes, and therefore, trust—believe; while those who could not see through eyes of faith were bewildered and frustrated. What was He really communicating? Isaiah had spoken something important about God's covenant that helps us understand!

As for Me," says the LORD, "this is My covenant with them: *My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth*, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the LORD, "from this time and forevermore." (Isaiah 59:21 NKJV)

God's Word breathed by His Spirit bears LIFE. It is the LIFE of His covenant—and LIFE and LOVE of the LORD. As we receive His words with open hearts by faith, God's Spirit breaths LIFE within us, watering the seeds of truth that His words bear. In such a way, His Words and Spirit IN US nurture and strengthen us, manifesting God's presence in us. In such a way we live IN HIM—in UNION with Him. In John 17, the LORD prayed this would become reality!

I pray not only for these, but also for those who will trust in me because of their word, ²¹that they may all be one. Just as you, Father, are united with me and I with you, I pray that they may be united with us, so that the world may believe that you sent me. ²²The glory which you have given to me, I have given to them; so that they may be one, just as we are one —²³I united with them and you with me, so that they may be completely one, and the world thus realize that you sent me, and that you have loved them just as you have loved me. (John 17:20-23 JNT)

REFLECT AND RELATE

How are you being filled daily with the Lord's bread of life—His Words of truth bearing His life?

In what ways do you apply His word daily?

How does God's word help bring you into union with God?

I AM
THE LIGHT
OF THE WORLD

TRUTH AND PURPOSE

The LORD was teaching in the temple. A group of religious leaders brought to Him a woman caught in adultery, a sin worthy of death. They tested Him by asking what He thought. He replied to her accusers, "The one of you who is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." (John 8:7 JNT) Her accusers, convicted by their own conscience, left. He said He did not condemn her, and that she should sin no more. He then shared something that brought peace and strength to her as well as others hearing.

I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light which gives life.

RELEVANCE

The *light* of the LORD reveals His *truth and love*. Receiving His Words breathed by His Spirit bears the life of God's truth. For, His words cut through the darkness of lies that condemn. His words and Spirit bear His love and truth that sets people free. The LORD revealed this later in His conversation.

If you obey what I say, then you are really my disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Light, separating truth from lies, in essence is what Unleavened Bread is about. Why does Scripture prescribe removing leaven from the home?

Leaven is a fermenting substance; a turbulent form of bacterium that is permeating and pervasive in nature. It spreads like a cancer or virus, contaminating, polluting and corrupting what it touches. It is what sin and bad influences do to our life. It prevents us from receiving the fullness of God's love.

As we actively receive and embrace the love of Messiah Jesus and the light of God's truth by His Word, His Spirit cleanses and sanctifies us. This is what the apostle Paul related as, "sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth." (2 Thessalonians 2:13 NKJV)

REFLECT AND RELATE

Colossians 2:8 says, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ." The "philosophy" and "empty deceit" of the world is so pervasive, we confront it daily. How do you discern and separate truth from such impressions daily?

How do you resist the pressures of absorbing and adopting the world's philosophies and empty deceit?

How do you receive the Lord's light to deal with the world's darkness?

**I AM
THE DOOR
OF THE SHEEP**

TRUTH AND PURPOSE

The prophet, Joel, was speaking of Messiah when he proclaimed, “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.” (Joel 3:5 MT; v. 2:32 others)

Yeshua the Messiah, Jesus Christ came as LORD proclaiming that He was the way to eternal salvation, the gateway—or door—of heaven.

Yes, indeed! I tell you that I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All those who have come before me have been thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn’t listen to them. ⁹I am the gate; if someone enters through me, he will be safe and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only in order to steal, kill and destroy; I have come so that they may have life, life in its fullest measure. (John 10:7-10 JNT)

RELEVANCE

This word was truly fulfilled at the moment His fleshly life expired, as the veil to the Holy Place in the Temple was ripped in two from top to bottom. (Matthew 27:51) The very entrance to the place representing the throne room of God, where access had been restricted, became *open*.

Paul expanded on what this truly meant for those placing their faith in the LORD by explaining, “through him and on the ground of our trust, *we have gained access to this grace* in which we stand.” (Romans 5:2 JNT)

This grace is the fullness of the LORD’s salvation—eternal life with eternal access to God’s presence in heaven—and open access to God, “in earth as it is in heaven” while still on earth, through the presence of the Holy Spirit! Paul further explained how believers in the LORD follow after Him as true children of God bound for eternal life, in proclaiming that, “the Messiah has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have died.” (1 Corinthians 15:20 JNT)

The LORD came as a man to be the first fruit to ascend unto eternal life after substituting His sacrificial blood for the remission of sins. No longer would animal sacrifices be acceptable to God. His LOVE made a new way! He opened the door to eternal life! He lives eternally in heaven, as do those who have put their faith in Him, and follow Him.

REFLECT AND RELATE

How do you access the grace of God daily?

With so many influences seeking your mind and heart, and so many events stirring your emotions, how do you discern which doors of opportunity to go through and the activities in which you should participate?

I AM
THE GOOD
SHEPHERD

TRUTH AND PURPOSE

Messiah Jesus came to fulfill prophecy and bear revelation of God's covenant truths. He fulfilled scripture, revealing its greater purposes and providing more accurate understanding.

While the disciples were celebrating this very feast, 50 days after His resurrection on the day of the feast of First-Fruits, the Holy Spirit was poured out amongst them. It became known as Pentecost. Whereas this feast had been celebrated by remembering the giving of the Law to Moses, now it would truly represent the *fullness* of God's covenant—His incredible love and amazing grace expressed through His Word and Spirit.

RELEVANCE

In was on this day that Peter stood up remembering the prophecy of Joel, "I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh..." (Joel 2:28)

It was also about 550-600 years after the prophet, Ezekiel, spoke of the condition of His people and of His future solution...

The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost...So they were scattered because there was no shepherd... (Ezekiel 34:4-6 NKJV)

He continued...

For thus says the Lord GOD: "Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered...I will feed them in good pasture...I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick... (Ezekiel 34:11-16 NKJV)

In the midst of escalating political tension and corruption that was spurring an impending revolution against dominant Roman powers the LORD arrived on the scene to make a difference. The religious leaders

expected a political type to take his place as the Messiah-King. The LORD did take His place as the Good Shepherd of God's flock. He came fulfilling Ezekiel's prophecy.

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep....¹⁴I am the good shepherd; I know my own, and my own know me — ¹⁵just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father — and I lay down my life on behalf of the sheep. ¹⁶Also I have other sheep which are not from this pen; I need to bring them, and *they will hear my voice*; and there will be one flock, one shepherd. (John 10:11-18 JNT)

The LORD expressed a greater dimension of God's love, revealing it in a whole new way. He came full of compassion. He came "moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd." (Matthew 9:36)

He came with a heart to seek and save the lost. He healed all types of sicknesses and diseases, bound the broken-hearted, opened the eyes of those of faith, and freed people captive to all sorts of bondages. He truly manifested the LORD Our Shepherd, who leads us to His peaceful places, and fills us with the substance of His life! He speaks to His sheep through the voice of the Holy Spirit, speaking His words of truth and life.

REFLECT AND RELATE

With so many voices fighting for your attention, how do you discern the voice of the Shepherd leading and guiding you daily?

How do you spend time with the Shepherd daily, receiving His insights, counsel and wisdom?

I AM
THE RESURRECTION
AND THE LIFE

TRUTH AND PURPOSE

Messiah Jesus was crucified, and on the third day was resurrected victorious over the powers of life and death. Revelation 1:18 records how He had the keys to hell and death; and in conquering death, opened the way to eternal life. He affirmed His authority over Satan and dominion over the physical and spiritual world. The apostles, however, made a point that we fight a spiritual battle, as “the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

The time of Trumpets serves as a reminder of who we herald and honor as King of kings and Lord of lords! It also reminds us of the importance of resisting His adversary the devil, being vigilant in spiritual warfare and diligent in growing in virtue, knowledge and the love of God.

RELEVANCE

The LORD came as the Messiah-King to be the final sacrifice and reconciliation for sin. Those placing faith in Him are justified before God in His righteousness.

He has accomplished more through His sacrificial blood than a single day of confession could ever possibly do! He defeated the enemy of our soul and won the battle over the power of sin and death. By the power and authority of His resurrection, all those who put their faith in Him are justified before God and delivered from His judgment into eternal life.

To illustrate this point, the LORD raised a man, Lazarus, who had been in a tomb for four days. He did this, “for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may receive glory through it.” (John 11:4 JNT) He, therefore, declared:

I AM the Resurrection and the Life! Whoever puts his trust in me will live, even if he dies; and everyone living and trusting in me will never die.” (John 11:25-26 JNT)

Placing our trust in the LORD, we become united with Him by faith, and our soul is justified before God to live for eternity. We also celebrate our new life in the LORD, and look to ways we can grow in faith and in the virtues of Christ; and likewise express greater measures of the new life we live in grace by the power of the Holy Spirit. In this we truly *walk being Christ-like*, representing the love of Christ to the world, glorifying God.

Truly, He has prepared a way and a place for those who place their faith in Him.

REFLECT AND RELATE

How do you honor the King, your Lord and Savior daily?

Paul gained a real revelation of *living in the Lord*. He embraced and lived in accordance with two profound principles. How might you apply these principles in your own life daily?

- 1) to “know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” (Philippians 3:11)
- 2) “I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.” (1 Corinthians 15:31)

In what ways can you see the reality of tapping into God’s capacity, and growing greater measures of faith and in the virtues of Christ? For more insights see 1 Peter 1:2-11.

I AM
THE WAY,
THE TRUTH,
AND THE LIFE

TRUTH AND PURPOSE

Towards the end of His earthly ministry, the LORD was sharing a Passover meal with His closest disciples. He shared many key truths about the kingdom of God. When it came time to ritually clean his hands, he illustrated through practical demonstration the way by which the disciples would share God's love and serve one another. He served them in humility by washing their feet. If that didn't startle them, He said something that startled them even more.

"I AM the Way — and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6 JNT)

RELEVANCE

The LORD revealed that He not only is the true way or path to eternal life, but IS eternal life—and *the* true atonement for sin, opening the way of eternal life. What did He really mean? The apostle, Paul, shed light on the meaning of this in revealing that if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will also be united with him in a resurrection like his. (Romans 6:4)

As we suppress our carnal sinful tendencies (lust of the eye, lust of the flesh and pride of life) allowing them "to die" and put our faith in the LORD, trusting in the Holy Spirit to enable us to rule over those tendencies, we become united with the LORD in His resurrection, and live IN HIM—the power of His resurrection—HIS WAY, HIS TRUTH and HIS LIFE.

Truly, no single day of atonement, verbal confession, collection of good works or blood sacrifice can satisfy God's righteous requirements for the remission of sins. There is no way to reconcile our sins with a righteous, perfect God and make amends for transgressing His law; *except coming before Almighty God with brokenness of heart and humility, receiving the love and amazing grace of the sacrificial blood atonement of the LORD, Jesus the Messiah.*

In RECEIVING His truths, we can WALK and PROSPER *in His truths*. John offered believers this great nugget of wisdom in the form of a prayer.

Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. (3 John 2-4)

REFLECT AND RELATE

How can you daily resist the pulls of the world which would have you walk in ways contrary to God's way, truth and life?

How can you keep God's way, truth and life before you when making decisions?

When at a crossroads, what principles can you apply to best follow the LORD's way?

I AM
THE TRUE VINE

TRUTH AND PURPOSE

After sharing that He is “the way, the truth, and the life,” Messiah Jesus continued teaching, adding HOW to live IN THE WAY—permanently *being* a temple—or tabernacle or sanctuary—for the Holy Spirit.

If you love me, obey my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷ He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. ¹⁸ No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. ¹⁹ Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. ²⁰ When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹ Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.” (John 14:15-28 NLT)

RELEVANCE

He then headed with them towards the Garden of Gethsemane. There He challenged them to tarry with Him and pray. There, He prayed His greatest prayer, as recorded in John 17. Before doing so, however, He shared a great truth about how to live THE WAY OF THE KINGDOM—individually and together as a community of faith.

“I am the real vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² Every branch which is part of me but fails to bear fruit, he cuts off; and every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes, so that it may bear more fruit. ³ Right now, because of the word which I have spoken to you, you are pruned. ⁴ *Stay united with me, as I will with you — for just as the branch can't put forth fruit by itself apart from the vine, so you can't bear fruit apart from me.*

⁵ “I am the vine and you are the branches. Those who stay united with me, and I with them, are the ones who bear much fruit; because apart from me you can't do a thing. ⁶ Unless a person remains united with me, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up. Such branches are gathered and thrown into the fire, where they are burned up.

⁷ *“If you remain united with me, and my words with you, then ask whatever you want, and it will happen for you. ⁸ This is how my Father is glorified — in your bearing much fruit; this is how you will prove to be my talmidim (disciples). (John 15:1-8 JNT)*

The Feast of Sukkot, or Tabernacles, is in essence a love feast, a celebration of our relationship—“follow-ship” and fellowship—with God. It is a time we remember His faithfulness, and are grateful that He chose us to enter into intimate communion and fellowship with Him. That relationship finds itself and is expressed in its fullness through relationships amongst a community of believers worshiping and living in the LORD's WAY—in SPIRIT and TRUTH—the WAY of HIS LOVE and FAITHFULNESS. In such a way, we bear His identity and character, and live a part of HIS VINE.

In living in His vine, and experiencing the flow of His sap—His Holy Spirit—we experience His presence!

Enjoy His vineyard! Know His presence! Relate and engage with Him in intimate union and fellowship! Enter into His life—His love, His peace, and His joy—that yours be full!

REFLECT AND RELATE

How do you know when you are *abiding in the LORD*?

What does it mean to be united with the LORD?

How do you have intimate communion and fellowship with the LORD?

How can you sense God's presence?

It what ways can you truly tap into the “true vine” and grow into the fullness of the measure of your capacity in God?

**"The LORD bless you and keep you;
The LORD make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious to you;
The LORD lift up His countenance upon you,
And give you peace."**

(Numbers 6:24-27 NKJV)

