

**Monday 3/17****Related Verses****2 Pet. 1:3-4**

**3** Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue,

**4** Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

**1 Pet. 1:23**

**23** Having been regenerated not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the living and abiding word of God.

**Gen. 2:8-9, 22**

**8** And Jehovah God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there He put the man whom He had formed.

**9** And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

**22** And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.

**Matt. 16:18**

**18** And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

**Col. 2:19**

**19** And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

**Eph. 4:16**

**16** Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

**Related Reading**

The matter of life and its issue, which is the building,...is actually the theme of the whole New Testament. Life is simply the Triune God, who, after passing through a lengthy process, became the Spirit of life...The building is the church, the Body of Christ. This building comes out of life. The church is the issue of the divine life.

Once we receive this life,...it begins to grow within us, to saturate us, to transform us, and to build us together as God's dwelling place. In this age His dwelling place is the church; in the eternal age it is the New Jerusalem. The dwelling place is the issue of God's being life to us. As His life within us grows, we are transformed; the purpose of this transformation is the building up of God's dwelling place. Growth, transformation, and building are the crucial points in the New Testament. (CWWL, 1980, vol. 2, "The Completing Ministry of Paul," p. 203)

God wants us to express Him...Our created life cannot express God. In order to express God, we must have the life of God. This life is the divine life, the eternal life. Actually, this life is the Triune God embodied in Christ, who is realized as the life-giving Spirit. (*Life-study of Deuteronomy*, p. 150)

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God has...given us the marvelous and mysterious divine power. God as the divine power passed through creation, redemption, and resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b)...The visible things of the creation came into being through God's divine power. Redemption was also

accomplished by God's divine power. The one man Jesus could die on behalf of all men to accomplish an eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12) because of the divine power. Today as the life-giving Spirit, He offers Himself to us as the divine power in resurrection. When we receive the Lord Jesus, the very Triune God enters into us as life in resurrection, [which] is the divine power.

The divine power in 2 Peter 1:3 is the power of the divine life, and this divine life power has given us all things that relate to life and godliness. The things that relate to life are inexhaustible. They include the law of life (Rom. 8:2; Heb. 8:10), humility, wisdom, rejoicing, love, joy, hope, submission, goodness, meekness, kindness, long-suffering, and peace. Everything related to life has been given to us. The life power within the seed of a certain plant includes everything related to the plant. The life power within the seed includes the stem, branches, leaves, blossoms, flowers, and fruit of the plant. Within the power of the divine life as the seed in us are all the things necessary for the growth of the divine life. In the divine power are virtues such as love, patience, humility, kindness, and long-suffering. The divine power, the power of life, includes all things needed not only for life inwardly but also for godliness outwardly.

[Another] category of great things given to us by God is the precious and exceedingly great promises. The promises in 2 Peter 1:4 are mainly related to our spiritual life. These are promises for the inner life and the outward expression of life. One such promise is in Ephesians 3:20...This promise to do above all that we ask or think is not concerning the material things of the present life but concerning the spiritual things for the church life. The Lord is going to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think for the church life, according to the inner working power that operates in us. Other precious and exceedingly great promises are in Matthew 28:20; John 6:57; 7:38-39; 10:28-29;

14:19-20, 23; 15:5; and 16:13-15. (CWWL, 1969, vol. 2, “The Crucial Revelation of Life in the Scriptures,” pp. 512-513)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1969, vol. 2, “The Crucial Revelation of Life in the Scriptures,” ch. 16

## Tuesday 3/18

### Related Verses

#### 1 Pet. 2:4-5

**4** Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,

**5** You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

#### John 1:42

**42** He led him to Jesus. Looking at him, Jesus said, You are Simon, the son of John; you shall be called Cephas (which is interpreted, Peter).

#### Acts 4:11

**11** This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner.

#### Isa. 28:16

**16** Therefore thus says The Lord Jehovah: Indeed I lay a stone in Zion as a foundation, A tested stone, A precious cornerstone as a foundation firmly established; He who believes will not hasten away.

#### Zech. 4:7

**7** Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain, and he will bring forth the topstone with shouts of Grace, grace to it.

#### Rom. 9:21

**21** Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?

### Life and Building in Peter's Epistles

### Related Reading

A living stone is one that not only possesses life but also grows in life. This is Christ for God's building. [In 1 Peter 2:4-5] Peter changed his metaphor from a seed, which is of the vegetable life (1:23-24), to a stone, which is of the minerals. The seed is for life-planting; the stone is for building (2:5)...As life to us, Christ is the seed; for God's building, He is the stone. After receiving Him as the seed of life, we need to grow that we may experience Him as the stone living in us. Thus He will make us also living stones, transformed with His stone nature, that we may be built together with others as a spiritual house upon Him as both the foundation and the cornerstone (Isa. 28:16). (1 Pet. 2:4, footnote 1)

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We, the believers in Christ, are living stones, like Christ, through regeneration and transformation. We were created of clay (Rom. 9:21). But at regeneration we received the seed of the divine life, which by its growing in us, transforms us into living stones. At Peter's conversion the Lord gave him a new name, Peter—a stone (John 1:42). When Peter received the revelation concerning Christ, the Lord revealed further that He also was the rock—a stone (Matt. 16:16-18)...Both Christ and His believers are stones for God's building.

By our natural birth we are clay, not stones...Man was made from the dust of the ground [Gen. 2:7]. Romans 9 reveals that we are vessels of clay. How, then, can we become stones? We become stones through the process of transformation.

When Peter first met the Lord Jesus, the Lord changed his name from Simon to Peter...John 1:42 says, “Looking at him, Jesus said, You are Simon, the son of John; you shall be called Cephas (which is interpreted, Peter).” Peter means “a

stone.”...When the Lord called him Peter, a stone, that meant that he would certainly become a stone. Whatever the Lord says to us will be fulfilled. If He says, “You are gold,” then you will be golden. The Lord knew that when He changed Simon's name to Peter, a stone, he would become a stone.

In John 1:4 2 Peter was told that he was a stone. Then sometime later, in Caesarea Philippi, in answer to the Lord's question, “Who do you say that I am?” Peter, receiving the revelation from the Father, said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” To this the Lord Jesus replied, “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church” (Matt. 16:18). Here the Lord indicated that He is the rock upon which the church is built and that Peter is a stone.

No doubt, these two incidents, the one recorded in John 1 and the other in Matthew 16, were deeply impressed into Peter's being. He could never forget those events. It must have been from these experiences that Peter obtained the concept of living stones for the building of the spiritual house, which is the church. When Peter wrote this portion of 1 Peter, he wrote it according to the impression these events made upon him.

First Peter 2:5 says that we, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house. However, we all are clay. How can we be built up? In order to be built up as a spiritual house, we need to become stones. But how can we actually become living stones? We become living stones by coming to Christ as the living stone (v. 4).

We may use petrified wood as an illustration of transformation...Over a long period of time, water has been flowing over wood and through it. By means of this flow of water, the substance of the wood is changed into stone. On the one hand, the element of wood is carried away; on the other hand, the element of stone is brought in to replace the

element of wood. In this way the wood becomes stone. (*Life-study of 1 Peter*, pp. 151-152)

Further Reading: *Life-study of 1 Peter*, msg. 18

**Wednesday 3/19**

### Related Verses

#### Eph. 2:21

**21** In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

#### Prov. 4:23

**23** Keep your heart with all vigilance, For from it are the issues of life.

#### 1 Pet. 3:4, 15

**4** But the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God.

**15** But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, being always ready for a defense to everyone who asks of you an account concerning the hope which is in you,

#### Deut. 10:12

**12** And now, O Israel, what does Jehovah your God ask of you except that you fear Jehovah your God so that you would walk in all His ways and love Him and serve Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul;

#### Mark 12:30

**30** And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."

#### Psa. 139:23-24

**23** Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxious thoughts;

**24** And see if there is some harmful way in me, And lead me on the eternal way.

### Life and Building in Peter's Epistles

#### Related Reading

Since the building is living (1 Pet. 2:5), it is growing. It grows into a holy temple. The actual building of the church as the house of God is by the believers' growth in life. (Eph. 2:21, footnote 4)

Many people have difficulty in their spiritual life after they are saved because they do not know the pathway of life, and they do not take Christ as their life. (*CWWL*, 1953, vol. 1, "Knowing Life and the Church," p. 135)

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A smooth stone does not have any sharp edges or protrusions. Some people are born this way; they never offend their siblings and parents at home, and they never offend their co-workers and superiors at work. Regardless of how people treat them, they are always smooth and even. When such a person is saved, he becomes a smooth Christian in the church...Many brothers and sisters praise him, saying, "This person is truly spiritual. He never argues at home or causes trouble outside. We see him doing many things, but he never gives his opinion. He is truly spiritual and full of life."...We need to realize that this is actually hypocrisy. If his behavior were truly spiritual, then it would mean that he was spiritual even before he was saved. This is not possible. A person's spirituality is not determined by outward appearance but by how he takes care of Christ...Life is God Himself, life is Christ, and life is the Holy Spirit. Anything that is not of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit is not life. Hence, regardless of how much a person can meet—and even go beyond—the standard of morality, this is still not necessarily life.

Christ operates and moves in us in order to make us clear about His will and requirements for us and about His leading and dealing with us. However, if we do not obey but go against the feeling within, not accepting His leading or paying

the price, this unwillingness and opposition are rebellion.

We may be very active and zealous in doing [such things as visiting gospel friends and fellowshiping with the brothers and sisters] but still may imprison the living Christ within us by ignoring Him. Thus, we are actually disobeying the living Christ in us. He wants us to do things in a certain way, but we refuse to follow His way. Our unwillingness to do things according to His will is clearly rebellion.

Our natural being, disposition, and self are all problems that prevent God's life from coming out of us. However, the problem of our natural capability and ability is even more serious, and it is a strong obstacle that prevents God's life from flowing out of us. Many brothers and sisters truly love the Lord, are zealous for the Lord, and are very godly. Nevertheless, their greatest problem is the strength and greatness of their capabilities and abilities. Consequently, Christ has no ground or way in them.

They even think that [their capabilities and talent] are good and useful things to the church. They think that they need such [things] in order to serve God. They do not despise their natural capabilities; instead, they treasure them. If these capabilities remain unbroken in them, they will become a problem to Christ's life.

May the Lord have mercy on us so that we would be enlightened to see how many obstacles there are in us and how much these obstacles restrict God's life. Actually, the obstacles in us are not limited only to these things. Nevertheless, there is one solution to all these obstacles in us—we must pass through the cross and let the cross break us. If we want Christ's life to be unhindered in us, we must experience the breaking of the cross and allow these obstacles to be dealt with and removed. This will allow Christ's life to be lived out from us.

(CWWL, 1953, vol. 1, “Knowing Life and the Church,” pp. 136-140)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1964, vol. 4, “Practical Lessons on the Experience of Life,” ch. 16; CWWL, 1989, vol. 3, “The Experience and Growth in Life,” chs. 21—24, 27

**Thursday 3/20**

### Related Verses

#### 1 Pet. 2:1-2

1 Therefore putting away all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envyings and all evil speakings,  
2 As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation,

#### **Rom. 8:6**

6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

#### **Psa. 119:15, 23, 148**

15 I will muse upon Your precepts And regard Your ways.

23 Princes as well have sat and spoken against me, But Your servant mused upon Your statutes.

148 My eyes anticipated the night watches, That I might muse upon Your word.

#### **Heb. 5:13-14**

13 For everyone who partakes of milk is inexperienced in the word of righteousness, for he is an infant;

14 But solid food is for the full-grown, who because of practice have their faculties exercised for discriminating between both good and evil.

#### **Phil. 3:15**

15 Let us therefore, as many as are full-grown, have this mind; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, this also God will reveal to you.

### Life and Building in Peter's Epistles

### Related Reading

According to the sequence of [the five sinful matters in 1 Peter 2:1], malice is the root, the source, and evil speaking is the expression. We may have malice as a root within us. Then there will eventually be evil speaking as the expression of this malice. The development from malice to evil speaking includes guile, hypocrisies, and envyings, three downward steps from malice toward evil speaking...The root is malice, the development includes guile, hypocrisy, and envy, and the final expression is evil speaking.

The milk of the word [in verse 2] is...milk for the soul, the inner being. It is conveyed in the word of God to nourish our inner man through the understanding of our rational mind, and it is assimilated by our mental faculties.

The nourishment contained in the guileless milk of the word is an antibiotic for guile...In 2:1 and 2, Peter indicates that, as newborn babes, we need to practice putting away all guile, and we also need to desire the guileless milk of the word. The purpose of putting away the evil root of malice is that we may long for, desire, the milk of the word...If you want to hunger and thirst after God's word, that is, if you want to desire the drinking of the milk in the word, you need to hate your malice and abstain from speaking evil things about others. (*Life-study of 1 Peter*, pp. 125-127)

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According to Peter's word in 1 Peter 2:2, by the guileless milk of the word we may grow unto salvation...Growth in life results in salvation. Salvation here, as the result of growth in life, is not initial salvation. God's full and complete salvation has a long span—from regeneration, including justification, to glorification (Rom. 8:30). At regeneration we receive initial salvation. Then we need to grow by feeding on Christ as the nourishing milk in the word of God unto full salvation, unto

maturity for glorification. This will be the salvation of our soul, which will be revealed to us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus (1 Pet. 1:5, 9-10, 13). However, according to the context, *unto salvation* in 2:2 refers directly to *being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices* in verse 5, and to *tell out the virtues of Him* in verse 9.

In verse 3 Peter continues, “If you have tasted that the Lord is good.” The Lord can be tasted, and His taste is pleasant and good. If we have tasted Him, we will long for the nourishing milk in His word. The Greek word rendered “good” in this verse also means “pleasant, kind.”

In 1 Peter 2:4 Peter makes a leap from the milk of the word to the living stone. There does not seem to be a bridge or any other kind of connection between the milk and the stone. First, Peter indicates that the Lord is the milk of the word for nourishment. Then he goes on to speak of Him as the living stone.

This implies that the milk becomes the stone. How can this be? With us, this is impossible, but it is not impossible with the Lord, because He is all-inclusive. As the all-inclusive One, Christ is milk, and He is also the stone. We are not able to exhaust all the aspects of Christ. He is the milk, He is the bread, and now we see that He is the stone.

We need more experience of Christ as the milk and the stone. In the morning we should drink Christ as milk from the Word. Then during the day the process of transformation should take place within us. In the evening we should come to the church meetings and fellowship with the saints. This is building. Here we see that in the morning Christ is milk, and in the evening He becomes the stone. During the day the milk does a transforming work within us to produce a stone. (*Life-study of 1 Peter*, pp. 131-132, 134, 138-139)

Further Reading: *Life-study of 1 Peter*, msgs. 15—16; *Life-study of Exodus*, msg. 57

**Friday 3/21**

### Related Verses

#### **1 Pet. 2:5, 9**

**5** You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

**9** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

#### **Exo. 19:5-6**

**5** Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My personal treasure from among all peoples, for all the earth is Mine.

**6** And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel.

#### **Rom. 15:16**

**16** That I might be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.

#### **Rom. 12:1**

**1** I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.

#### **Heb. 13:15-16**

**15** Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, the fruit of lips confessing His name.

**16** But do not forget doing good and sharing with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

#### **Phil. 4:18**

**18** But I have received in full all things and abound; I have been filled, receiving from Epaphroditus the things from you, a sweet-smelling savor, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

### Related Reading

In 1 Peter 2:5...*spiritual* denotes the capacity of the divine life to live and grow; *holy*, the capacity of the divine nature to separate and sanctify. The house of God subsists mainly by the divine life; hence, it is spiritual. The priesthood subsists mainly by the divine nature; hence, it is holy.

The coordinated body of priests is the built-up spiritual house. Although Peter did not address his two Epistles to the church or use the term *church* in verse 5 in stressing the corporate life of the believers, he did use the terms *spiritual house* and *holy priesthood* to indicate the church life. It is not the spiritual life lived in an individualistic way but the spiritual life lived in a corporate way that can fulfill God's purpose and satisfy His desire. He wants a spiritual house for His dwelling, a priestly body, a priesthood, for His service...This service issues from the three vital steps in the spiritual life: being born anew (1 Pet. 1:2), growing in life by being nourished with Christ, and being built up with the believers. (*Life-study of 1 Peter*, pp. 154-155)

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*Spiritual house* and *holy priesthood* are synonymous terms. The spiritual house is for God's dwelling, and the holy priesthood is for God's service. According to 1 Peter 2:5, the building up of a spiritual house into a holy priesthood is for a particular function...Here we see that Jesus Christ is the channel through which the spiritual sacrifices are offered to God...Furthermore, what is offered to God must be something of Christ.

The spiritual sacrifices that the believers offer in the New Testament age according to God's

economy are (1) Christ as the reality of all the sacrifices of the Old Testament types, such as the burnt offering, meal offering, peace offering, sin offering, and trespass offering (Lev. 1—5); (2) the sinners saved by our gospel preaching, offered as members of Christ (Rom. 15:16); and (3) our body, our praises, and the things that we do for God (Heb. 13:15-16; Phil. 4:18).

In 1 Peter 2:9...*race*, *priesthood*, *nation*, and *people* are all collective nouns, referring to the believers corporately. As a race, we, the believers, are chosen; as a priesthood, a body of priests, we are royal, kingly; as a nation, we are holy; as a people, we are God's possession, a possession particularly acquired and owned by God as His treasure. *Chosen race* denotes our lineage from God; *royal priesthood*, our service to God; *holy nation*, our being a community for God; and *people acquired for a possession*, our preciousness to God. These are all in a corporate sense. Hence, we need to be built together.

As a chosen race, we have our source in God. We are also a royal priesthood. *Royal* denotes the status of our priesthood, which is kingly, like that of Christ the King, our High Priest, typified by Melchizedek (Heb. 7:1-2, 26; Gen. 14:18). We are also a holy nation and a people acquired for a possession. *Holy* denotes the nature of the nation. The Greek words rendered "a people acquired for a possession" are an equivalent to a Hebrew expression [that]...implies a particular treasure...In Titus 2:14 Paul speaks of "a particular people as His unique possession."...This is an expression borrowed from the Old Testament (Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 26:18), and it denotes a people privately possessed by God as His unique, peculiar treasure (Exo. 19:5), His own possession. First, we are a chosen race, then a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people acquired for a possession. As God's particular treasure, we are His people who are precious to Him. (*Life-study of 1 Peter*, pp. 155-156)

Further Reading: *Life-study of 1 Peter*, msg. 17—18

**Saturday 3/22**

**Related Verses**

**2 Cor. 4:12**

12 So then death operates in us, but life in you.

**2 Cor. 10:13**

13 But we will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach even as far as you.

**John 12:24**

24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

**John 21:15-22**

15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.

16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.

17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

18 Truly, truly, I say to you, When you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go.

19 Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had said this, He said to him, Follow Me.

20 Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also reclined on His breast at the supper, and said, Lord, who is the one betraying You?

21 Peter therefore, seeing him, said to Jesus, Lord, and what about this man?

22 Jesus said to him, If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.

**Related Reading**

When we are under the killing of the Lord's death, His resurrection life is imparted through us into others. The impartation of life into others is always the issue of our suffering the killing of the cross. (2 Cor. 4:12, footnote 1)

We should not think that Paul was so spiritual that he was altogether different from us. Even he had to learn to take the Lord's restriction. For example, Paul wanted to go to Rome, but he did not expect to go there in bonds. Furthermore, he told the believers at Rome that he expected to go to Spain by way of them (Rom. 15:24). Paul never went to Spain, and he arrived in Rome in bonds. Those bonds were the Lord's measure, His limitation. God did not measure out Rome to Paul in a free way. Instead, God led him there as a prisoner. Yes, Paul was in Rome, but he was there in prison. That imprisonment was a restriction...God is sovereign, and whatever happened to Paul was under God's sovereignty. This means that Paul's bonds and imprisonment were God's sovereign restriction. Paul was willing to be subject to God's measuring. He neither transgressed this restriction nor rebelled against it. (*Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, pp. 442-443)

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The Lord is especially interested in restricting the young people. If the young ones do not have a heart to serve the Lord, He will stir them up to serve Him. But once they have been stirred up, He will limit them. Human nature does not like this kind of

limitation. For example, both in our sleeping and in our activity, we may not like limitations. When, spiritually speaking, we are asleep, God will stir us up. But when we become too active, He will restrict us. I know some young people who have been offended because God has done this to them. A young brother may want to be a leader among the young people. If he becomes a leader, he may then want to be a deacon or an elder in the church. In these matters he may expect to make swift progress. God's way, however, is first to speed us up and then to slow us down, first to raise us up and then to lower us down. When we are down, He will lift us up. But when we get too far up, He will lower us down...If we can take God's ups and downs, we will eventually become useful in His work.

Many young people cannot tolerate God's ups and downs. After a few of these ups and downs, they want to quit. Their attitude may be, "If God wants me up, then let me go up to the heavens and stay there until the Lord Jesus comes back. But if God wants me down, let me stay down. But I don't like going up and down, down and up." This unhappiness with God's ups and downs is an expression of the disposition of many young people.

God does not want us to be always up or to be always down. Even in nature the alternating of day and night testifies of this...God did not create us so that we would have a day or night that would last for many years. This may be according to our way, but it is not according to God's way.

I encourage the young people especially to study this portion of the Word [2 Cor. 10:7-18] and learn from it how to conduct themselves in the church service and how to move in the Lord's recovery. Young people, you must know your rule, your limit. This means that you must know how much God has measured to you, how much He has apportioned to you. This restriction, this limitation, is a very practical dealing with our flesh. Our

*Life and Building in Peter's Epistles***Lord's Day 3/23****Related Verses****Gen. 2:10-12**

**10** And a river went forth from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided and became four branches.

**11** The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that goes around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.

**12** And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there.

**1 Cor. 3:6-9**

**6** I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.

**7** So then neither is he who plants anything nor he who waters, but God who causes the growth.

**8** Now he who plants and he who waters are one, but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

**9** For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's cultivated land, God's building.

**Rev. 21:9**

**9** And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

**Rev. 22:1-2**

**1** And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

**2** And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

**Further Reading:**

Further Reading: *The Crucial Revelation of Life in the Scriptures*, ch. 16

**Churchwide Truth Pursuit of Genesis****Level 1—Sequential Life-study Reading**

Scripture Reading and Copying: Gen. 7

Assigned Reading: *Life-study of Genesis*, msg(s). 13-14

**Level 2—Topical Study**

Crucial Point: Image

Scripture: Gen. 1:26

Assigned Reading: *Life-study of Genesis*, msg(s). 8

Supplemental Reading: *The Central Thought of God*, ch. 2; *The Central Line of the Divine Revelation*, ch. 6; *Revelation in Genesis: Seeing God's Desire and Purpose in Creation*, ch. 4

Questions: See the church website at [churchinnyc.org/bible-study](http://churchinnyc.org/bible-study)

natural man wants to be without limitation. However, God knows our problem. Therefore, He sets up boundaries and restrictions so that we may stay within the measure that He has apportioned to us. (*Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, pp. 441, 444-445)

Further Reading: *Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, msg. 51; *CWWL*, 1953, vol. 1, "Knowing Life and the Church," chs. 3, 16

*Life and Building in Peter's Epistles***Hymn: #1242**

1 The Lord, the seed of life,  
Has sown Himself into our heart  
To grow up into fullness  
And become His counterpart.  
The seed requires no rules or forms,  
For water is its need—  
By this the all-inclusive seed  
Will grow in us indeed!

The seed is simply Jesus!  
Oh, Jesus lives in me!  
And by His growth this seed  
in us will reach maturity.

2 The growth of Christ, the seed, in us  
Will soon produce the wheat,  
The life within break forth—yet work  
Divine is not complete;  
For wheat alone can never be  
The seed's expression true;  
So all the grains must blend together  
Into something new.

The seed is simply Jesus;  
Now wheat is Jesus too!  
The grains of wheat must blend  
Together into something new.

3 The individual grains of wheat  
No longer must be free,  
But crushed together, ground to powder,  
Every grain must be,  
Until the wheat becomes the meal  
From which the loaf is formed  
Till all the saints will blend and to  
His Body be conformed.

We all must take the grinding  
until the Christ within  
Can mold into His Body all the  
individual grains.

4 The seed is planted, wheat is grown  
And meal is the sum  
Of all the growth upon God's farm,  
Where Christians grow as one;  
But all the growth in life is for  
The building of the church,  
That God and man may have a home  
And both may end their search.

The farm is for the building,  
for God and man a home,  
Where both may dwell among  
His people gathered into one.

5 God's building is produced by silver,  
Precious stones, and gold—  
From meal through transformation,  
Pressure, heat, and pain untold.  
The meal must not be satisfied  
To stay as meal alone,  
But must submit to transformation  
Into precious stone.

The meal must pass through suffering  
that precious stones be formed;  
Then built into God's building, to His  
purpose full conformed.

6 From fullest growth and transformation  
Comes a pearl of worth;  
This simple, precious, all-inclusive  
Gem will then come forth.  
Conceived in death and formed in life  
By that all-glorious One,  
The church, His Bride, the fruit of all  
The work that He has done.

The pearl is what He's after,  
the Bride to please His heart,  
So single, pure and precious,  
and His very counterpart.

7 The growth in life begins when planted  
On God's farm we're found:  
The growing seed becomes the wheat  
From which the meal is ground.  
But building work proceeds when meal  
Submits to be transformed;  
Then gold and silver, precious stones  
For building will be formed.

The farm is for the building,  
built up by precious stones,  
From which the priceless pearl comes  
forth to be His Bride, His own.

8 Lord, keep us poor in spirit,  
Pure in heart that we may be  
Good ground in which the seed of life  
May grow abundantly,  
Until the final stage is reached  
And You are satisfied  
And have Your priceless, chosen pearl,  
Your joy complete, Your Bride.

Lord, keep us poor in spirit  
and purified in heart,  
That growing up in us You may  
bring forth Your counterpart.