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“Hearts Up” is the official e-publication of [keystounderstandinglife.com](http://www.keystounderstandinglife.com) (“Keys” website). Part of its purpose is to inform you, but mainly it is to lift your hearts up! The articles are intended to be substantial, giving you much to reflect on and work to experience with God; as such, the articles are “meaty.” The articles often build on the Scriptural concepts discussed in the [spiritual warfare materials](#) we offer, as well as in other “Hearts Up” editions and on the *Keys* website. “Hearts Up” articles are intended to support readers who seek the spiritual growth in Christ which comes from interacting well with the Lord during trials and real-life difficulties. We trust the material will challenge you to desire more in your relationship with Jesus Christ in terms of interacting with Him in real-life decision-making and problem-solving. In many ways “Hearts Up” is an on-going dialogue between readers of the *Keys Series* materials and the authors; so if there is a particular discipleship topic, issue, or sentiment you would like us to consider speaking to, contact us through our contact us page <http://www.keystounderstandinglife.com>. If you received this edition of “Hearts Up” from a friend and wish to learn more about other features which sometimes appear in this e-publication, visit [“Hearts Up”](#).

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SPIRITUAL WARFARE COMBAT TIPS

Satan’s Tactic: Where’s The Enemy? Who’s The Enemy? What’s Going On???

Throughout the history of warfare, one of the most difficult combat strategies to defeat is guerilla warfare. When employing guerilla warfare tactics, a combatant is not easily identifiable, ambushes are common, traps are carefully camouflaged, the attack is sudden and violent, and the resulting confusion becomes a weapon in and of itself.

Satan is a master of such tactics; at least that is my experience. For example, I arrive at work and my boss has a task for me to do, which I know nothing about. He wants it done by close of business. I don’t even know what questions to ask. My sunny day is now cast over by storm clouds.

Or, maybe I’ve had a good day at work and now I am headed home to my haven of rest, anticipating a wonderful meal with my family, a pleasant evening with my loving wife, and the enjoyment of my well trained and adoring children. The ending to that story doesn’t always turn out the way I want. Each of us has a variety of experiences in the midst of trials; loneliness and helplessness to alter the outcome are among them.

I used to think that such trials came because others didn’t have their ducks in order and their problems were just spilling over into my carefully ordered life. However in Ephesians 6:12 Paul dispels such allegations quickly when he writes, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” The nugget of truth of this verse is that in spiritual battles, our trials are really not external struggles with people or circumstances; they are internal spiritual conflicts within our hearts. In order to identify the enemy’s actual attack within us, in order to transform our perspectives once we’ve been attacked, and in order to take godly action having been attacked, we must interact with the Spirit of God.

In trials, the true enemy is not other people or unfavorable circumstances; the heart is being attacked by a spiritual being. Satan is as cunning as he is evil. That combination is deadly. Satan will use whoever and whatever is available to cause us to stop experiencing who we are in Christ during the trial. A common mistake is to think another person, or the circumstance itself, is the problem. To think in these terms is to overlook the real enemy, which is exactly what Satan wants to happen; he wants to remain invisible. He is using guerilla warfare tactics very effectively. Such an adversary requires constant alertness and spiritual awareness on our part, not always to prevent an attack, but to transform its effect upon us once the attack has begun!

For many of us, the focus of the gospel is the conversion of the unbeliever. That is an obviously genuine and critical issue for unbelievers, but once the unbeliever becomes a disciple of Christ, that individual’s need becomes something very different, but no less critical. The need for new believers

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is growth, i.e., discipleship. The first part of this deals with the basics of our faith. Discipleship in the basics includes learning about such things as: the forgiveness of sin, the sacrifice of the Son, the role of leaders in the Body, how to use God's written Word, instruction in baptism, eternal life and judgment, concepts of the old and new selves, renewing of the mind, walking by faith, believing without seeing, and that there are spiritual battles going on behind the external events we often experience (Hebrews 6:1-2; Romans 12-15).

The second part of discipleship involves development to spiritual maturity. Hebrews 5:11-6:3 describes this development as going beyond the elementary teachings of Christ. This is the aspect that cultivates spiritual seasoning (maturity) and consistency in dealing with the guerilla warfare tactics Satan uses against us. A disciple of Christ must keep pace with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25) in order to resist this ancient and skilled foe; we cannot do it with our Scriptural knowledge alone. To defeat Satan in such scenarios, the believer must be able to recognize the true nature of the spiritual battle and to utilize the guidance that the Holy Spirit makes available to us during the confusion of the battle. The Holy Spirit is not residing in you and me because there is no room for Him in heaven; He is within us to be immediately available to assist in defeating Satan's guerilla tactics in your heart and mine. Keep in mind, He is the voice of the Commander, and you and I are the foot soldiers. He is the One Who will guide us to victory over the enemy who seeks to devour us.

The truth of the matter is that our heavenly Father has given us His Spirit permanently, in order to help us see the situation clearly, to recognize the enemy, to avoid the pitfalls and traps that have been carefully placed by the enemy, and to empower us to repulse the enemy's attack. Let us not fall short in our abilities to hear the voice (the Holy Spirit) of our Master Christ Jesus, on a moment-by-moment basis in order to defeat the enemy. If we will but hear Him well, we won't be asking, “Where is the enemy?,” “Who is the enemy?,” “What is going on?” The Spirit seeks to keep us informed; we must listen to be informed. The spiritual warfare materials discussed on the *Keys* website, *A Disciple's Heart* and *Feelings 101: Pain to Peace*, are excellent resources to assist each of us in refining the various skills involved in listening to the Holy Spirit with our hearts.

KEY IN-SIGHTS

One of my favorite hobbies involves all things nautical – I don’t know why, but I have always enjoyed reading about ships. I’ve made models of ships, I like watching movies about ships (over and over, of ten times straining personal relationships I’m sure), and I even have been known to play a couple video games of the nautical genre. Of course I do enjoy it if I find myself near the coast – the salty air, ships, wind, waves ... arr! I like to visit ships that are open to tourists, battleships, sailing ships, submarines, anything that floats, did float, might have floated, was going to float, etc. Friends and family know that I am fascinated with the sea; I receive many gift items of a nautical and piratical nature: stickers, shirts, books, more movies (even black and white ones).

However, the truth is that none of that makes me a sailor! I actually have very little nautical experience. Compared to some landlubbers I have some of the terminology down – I can talk some of the talk. Of the times I have actually been on a ship on the ocean, I was miserable and got sick. I was really young and never went back on a ship that sailed the sea again! Somehow though, in my mind, I am very proud of my minimalist experience and I still revel in all things nautical. And that’s ok – shallow, definitely an experience of the mind (mind candy).

In sum, I seem to enjoy the idea of being a sailor much more than actually being a sailor.

If we aren’t careful, Satan can cause us to do the same thing in our relationships with God thus neutralizing our walks with Christ. Satan attempts this by reducing our relationships with Christ to “an idea about the relationship” such that we interact with Him and His Holy Spirit minimally during our trials. *That* is NOT ok. We must pay attention. We can think about God, talk at Him, go to church (His house), read His book (the Bible), know a lot about the Scriptural histories, give our offerings, and feel really good about all that. But the same dynamics of the mind which may permit a hobby to be a pleasant enjoyment of life (like the idea of being a sailor) can be used by Satan to deceive us in terms of how we live for God *during trials*. It is vital to be able to look inward with honesty, focus, and clear eyes that seek out changes He would make in us. This is new-self evaluation. When we evaluate ourselves before the Lord, we must both seek out and incorporate the Holy Spirit’s feedback through the heart. This implies we must also be able to understand exactly what He is communicating when He offers His counsel to us. The last thing we want to do is fall into the trap of enjoying the *idea* of being a disciple of Christ more than actually being one!

One of the challenges, of cultivating this kind of discernment and of spiritual warfare itself, is that there is no universal law that mandates, “You will always be aware if Satan is deceiving you.” This does not mean that we have to live our lives being paranoid; it is the nature of spiritual warfare. It simply means the truth is that Satan is The Deceiver. God’s Spirit will always try to inform us; the issue is we do not always listen or hear. Unless we pay attention to the Holy Spirit’s need-to-know counsel, input and instruction in our hearts during trials, we will not be aware when we are being deceived.

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No matter how much we know *about* God, no matter how much we give, no matter how much we think *about* living for God, no matter how much we want from Him; none of that matters if we do not do our parts to hear Him when He speaks to us during real-life trials. For those things to really count, we must connect with the Lord in the life situations that upset us, set us off, confuse us, concern us, frustrate us, etc. None of those things matter if we do not seek out how He wants **us** to change **our** old selves in trial situations when Satan is making it *really* easy to see how the “other person” needs to change. Be on guard against Satan’s attempts to reduce your relationship with God to a mere concept or idea. Don’t leave out the practical application side of living for and listening to God. Set time aside for focused connection with God (including an examination of long past and recent past trials) so that when future trials arise, you will be better prepared to handle trials with Him more spontaneously.

Where to read more: The practical application side of all of these dynamics and issues places them in the arena of discipleship beyond the basics. [*Feelings 101: Pain to Peace*](#) looks more closely at these kinds of dynamics of the mind, as well as the corresponding dynamics in the heart, regardless of the area of life in which they manifest. Being able to recognize these dynamics within yourself is a skill set of the new self and can be cultivated by working more regularly and in a focused way with the Spirit in your heart. *Feelings 101* also provides lessons and tools for examining past trials in order to be more sensitive to the Spirit’s voice in future trials.

HEARING THE HYMNS

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus¹

The words of the following song were written by Charles Wesley, 1707-1788.

Verse 1 – Come, Thou long expected Jesus, Born to set Thy people free; From our fears and sins release us; Let us find out rest in Thee. Israel’s strength and consolation, Hope of all the earth Thou art; Dear desire of every nation, Joy of every longing heart.

Verse 2 – Born Thy people to deliver, Born a child, and yet a King, Born to reign in us forever, Now Thy gracious kingdom bring. By Thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone; By Thine all-sufficient merit, Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

This hymn is a familiar Advent carol invoking Jesus to come. The Jewish nation had looked for a deliverer whom God would send. God kept His promise! Jesus came—born to set His people free. Notice that Wesley asks that God’s people (*all* believers in Jesus, His Son) be set free from 1) fears and 2) sins that we might find peace in Him. He further asks that God’s Spirit rule in all our hearts (verse 2).

If we expect to experience freedom from fears *and* our sinful natures by finding peace in Christ, God’s Spirit must be ruling in our hearts during trials. Trials are the times in which our fears and sinful natures seek to assert themselves. The Teacher, the Spirit of God speaks to us, in times of trial, offering us His counsel of change and transformation. The Apostle Paul prays that believers may know the incomparably great power available through the Holy Spirit. He includes the mind-boggling statement: “That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead ...” (Ephesians 1:19-20). How appropriate that we remember that passage during this month especially, as we remember the resurrection of our Savior.

Our part is to recognize and claim that power of God’s Spirit within, by responding to His Spirit and not quenching Him during trials (1 Thessalonians 5:19). We who have placed our faith in Jesus’ sacrificial death to pay the penalty for our individual sins are indwelt by God’s Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17). His Spirit provides us the power over Satan’s attacks and our selfish desires to be freed from our fears and sins. When our hearts are disturbed, troubled, not at peace, that is our cue that Satan is attacking and the Holy Spirit is indicating something about us we need to change, accept, and perhaps give up. When we realize who we are in Christ Jesus, we can make the needed changes and walk in newness of life being transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:1-2). Then at that time peace reigns and the Holy Spirit is ruling in our hearts. Praise be to God for His unspeakable gift!

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KEYS WEBSITE ALERTS

The new navigation menus are completed and are now live on the website! Several of the larger pages are now broken down into smaller subpages with new names. The names of the original pages still remain the same. We don't think you'll have a problem finding your way around; the feedback we've received from the testing of the site is that the upgrade is much better.

A result of this changeover is that it will cause some of the links in older versions of “Hearts Up” to stop working. This was unavoidable; all of the links in this edition and future editions should work fine.

Last month we added a page for [Questions A Disciple's Heart Answers](#) (this is the new link for it). This month we have added a similar page for [Questions Feelings 101 Answers](#). This new page in the *Feelings 101* Section may be helpful to you when the topic of interacting with the Spirit comes up with other believers. Remember, interacting with the Holy Spirit during a trial, so that you can hear His specific guidance to you for that trial, is a completely different interaction than is speaking in tongues. *Feelings 101* does not address the subject of speaking in tongues.

The [Google] *Feelings 101* book preview can now be viewed [on www.Feelings101.com].

With the website menus completed, are very close to releasing *Feelings 101: Pain to Peace*. With that release we will be adding the Supplemental Information Section to fall with in the Keys To Understanding Life Series navigation menu.

STATUS OF THE *SERIES*

A Disciple's Heart:

We have acquired a few more free promotional codes for the Apple™ iPhone version of ADH. We are offering this strictly to our “Hearts Up” subscribers and their friends, etc. If you would like one for yourself or someone you know, contact us.

Feelings 101: Pain to Peace:

We are still working on the Supplemental Information Section (downloadable handouts, question and answer pages, training video(s), links from the e-book versions to the website, etc.) in order to complete it's additions to the Keys website. We would greatly appreciate your continued prayer support for us and for our web and publishing support teams, particularly over the next couple weeks or so.

HEART TO HEART

The Relationship between Church Health and Believers’ Successes in Their Own Spiritual Battles

This month’s Heart To Heart article focuses on answering the following questions. These questions deal with the same kinds of issues but from different directions. [These are a collection of frequently asked questions from church leaders as well as *Keys Series* readers.]

1. We have a strong church, but it seems to have hit a plateau. While new believers join, other, spiritually hungry believers continue to leave. What can we do to keep hungry believers from just leaving?
2. *A Disciple’s Heart* (ADH) answers some conceptual questions about the Holy Spirit’s teaching role. Why doesn’t ADH tell us [church leaders] how to put together a discipleship program to educate believers in listening to the Holy Spirit’s counsel during real-life trials?
3. Do you have any suggestions on ways to present or share *A Disciple’s Heart* with other believers?

Here is where we are headed to get the answers.

1. To answer the first question about how to keep hungry believers from leaving, we need to zero in on the kind of spiritual “hunger” the *Keys Series* materials work to address. We also need to look at what is the “measure” being used to gauge spiritual health.
2. To understand the answer to the second question, it is important to recognize that we (the authors, the *Keys Series* materials) do not separate practical application from the lessons about the trials themselves. This is critical. **The “how to” parts of the *Keys* material (like *Feelings 101*) assist believers to interact with the Spirit of God to identify, examine, and transform the spiritual dynamics within their trials. The personal, private and confidential nature of most believers’ trials is such that they will tend not to be inclined to share these important details in normal church venues.** At this point in time, discipleship beyond the basics is most often best begun on a one-on-one basis with the Spirit of God through structured individual study in the privacy of their own homes.
3. The suggestions for sharing *A Disciple’s Heart* are relevant for all three questions above and we’ll come to that last.

The above questions are inter-related, so while aspects of this discussion may seem to resonate with one question more than the others, we trust it will be beneficial on the whole. Let’s get started.

Believers may leave a church Body for a variety of reasons, not all of which are negative. Believers may leave a church Body in ways that maintain connections, communication, understanding, support and love within the spiritual family... or perhaps not. Believers bear responsibility to ensure they clearly understand God’s will for them and for treating their spiritual family with respect and love in the process of fulfilling His will.

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Believers often have a variety of differences in what they consider to be their spiritual needs. Some believers may be perfectly content and fulfilled by what is being offered. Their spiritual needs *are* being met; others, no. Spiritual needs could include: better programs for one's children, more Christians of one's own age, a Bible Study group that goes deeper into Scriptural knowledge, a stronger outreach program, a particular kind of outreach program, a particular kind of ministry program, etc.

While a church Body may have to address various spiritual needs, the *Keys To Understanding Life Series* spiritual warfare materials can assist churches to retain believers who have a willingness to become more aware of when their trials are happening, who seek assistance in dealing with trials, who seek a stronger sense of God's presence in trials, and who seek a greater ability to do their parts in understanding what God would have them do in trials. To understand how the *Keys Series* can help with this, it is important to acquaint ourselves with the concern for church health, what happens to the spiritual family when the church's health is in trouble, and how *A Disciple's Heart* encourages those who seek to have a greater experience of God during real-life trials.

One of the factors that precipitated the writing of *A Disciple's Heart* is the growing concern for church health in America today. At some point we came across an organization called The Barna Group. They do a lot of the surveys and statistical work that churches and denominational groups use for the purpose of evaluating church health, the nation's values, spiritual trends, etc. They have done much to support and assist the Church, and to raise awareness and concern for the health of the church Body. They have a really informative website, and we encourage you to visit it.

Before we look more closely at the health of the local church Body and how it relates to the needs believers may have in dealing with their trials, it is important to note that the results of surveys are not representative of every single church leader or church Body. However, for us, the information has played a role in crystallizing our awareness that discipleship beyond the elementary teachings of Christ is not as widely understood within the Body as we thought and hoped. It speaks to us about the need for training in going beyond the basic teachings of Christ and Christianity (Hebrews 5:11-6:3, 12:4-12; see also March 2010 “Hearts Up”, The Bible's Bigger Pictures article: *Questions On Discipleship Beyond the Elementary Teachings About Christ*).

Some of the survey stats on The Barna Group's website are what you'd expect to see; others may surprise you. Were you to peruse some of the surveys, you might notice when it came to “measuring” spiritual health or growth for individual believers within the Body, the measurements sometimes have little to do with practical application during trials. They sometimes have little to do with the believer's ability to hear the Holy Spirit's counsel so as to know exactly what God wants the believer to do or not during the trial; the believer's confidence that he/she can work with the Spirit to discover exactly what Satan is seeking to accomplish in the attack against the believer; or the believer's confidence level in being able to work in concert with God's Spirit to transform the disturbances of the heart to peace. The measurements of spiritual health for believers in a church Body are more often related to attendance, giving, comments about the sermon, etc. Again, as we understand it, that criterion was not selected by The Barna Group, *but by the church leaders being surveyed!* This is important! *This point is being made here not to be critical, but to say urgently that it matters how we believe spiritual health is “measured.”* When we believe the Body's health is “Hearts Up”, ISSN 2155-5826, is the official e-Publication of Keys To Understanding Life, © 2010, William J. Clark, Jr. Individuals may download “Hearts Up” for free at www.keystounderstandinglife.com. For individual use only; commercial or non-profit organizations (including church organizations) may not distribute or circulate without first receiving permissions; send requests to www.keystounderstandinglife.com.

waning, the measurements we use can inadvertently dictate how far we go in addressing the actual spiritual problems. The measures by which we gauge spiritual health influence what we believe God would have us do in terms of our part of working to heal it. Depending on how we measure spiritual health of the Body, our solutions may or may not be assisting believers who seek assistance in hearing the Holy Spirit’s counsel more clearly during trials.

Surveys measure statistics using what we call *statistical triggers*. (When the trigger is “pulled,” whatever is being measured is “shot.” Sometimes that is good; in the case of spiritual health that is not good.) *Statistical triggers* that often indicate declining spiritual health could be a steady decline in attendance, giving, volunteer support, etc. While that isn’t good, those are just the *statistical triggers*. What’s worse is that they only become apparent *after* “**spiritual triggers**” have been pulled, so to speak! *Statistical triggers* relate mostly to the local Body level and higher (church associations, entire denominations, etc.). The “**spiritual triggers**” we are talking about here relate mostly to individual believers. It is important for believers to recognize these in their own lives because they relate to their individual relationships with God! By “**spiritual triggers**,” we (the authors) mean all manner of unique spiritual battles individuals face in their lives that result in a number of issues. One of those issues might deal with changes in priorities or a lack of change in priorities toward the local Body. In other words, the spiritual battles in believers’ lives might result in changes in attendance (change in priorities), changes in giving (for example, maybe some were not giving anyway which might reflect a lack of change in priorities), etc. The spiritual battles also affect the greater parts of the believers’ lives. When believers have difficulty hearing the Spirit’s counsel in even some of their problem-solving and decision-making processes, it opens the door for Satan to create problems on the job or in family relationships, creating various stresses, frustrations, life questions, financial issues, you name it.

Whenever believers lose spiritual battles, something gives, or is given up. When it becomes apparent that the things being given up by a number of believers are starting to affect a particular church Body, then by that time a significant number of believers have already been experiencing a significant number of losses in their personal spiritual battles. From this perspective, by the time a decline in attendance or finances is noticed, the personal spiritual crisis for individuals has already been going on for some time, whether it is recognized as such or not. A fund-raiser, a drive for new members, etc. may solve the problem indicated by the *statistical trigger*, but it has not necessarily solved the problem of keeping members seeking practical application training from leaving the local Body when that need isn’t being met. This doesn’t mean efforts like fund-raisers or new-member drives are wrong; they simply may not be the only useful solutions. There are many variables that come into play here; hopefully you are beginning to see the relationships involved.

As believers, church health is an issue in which we all may share interest. And while statistical data of church health is important, what is most important to a particular believer is whether that believer believes he/she is adequately trained to be able to interact with God’s Spirit so as to hear the counsel being given for any trial he/she faces and to be at peace in that trial. Believers who are not adequately trained in this area and who stop attending the church Body may describe it as, “I have a lot going on right now,” or “I’m just trying to get my life together.” Believers who are not adequately trained in this area and remain with the Body often describe it as “something is missing in my walk,” or “I am seeking more,” or more generally, “I’m just not getting what I need.” These things sound pretty vague, and they are. This is part of what makes solutions difficult to recognize. “Hearts Up”, ISSN 2155-5826, is the official e-Publication of Keys To Understanding Life, © 2010, William J. Clark, Jr. Individuals may download “Hearts Up” for free at www.keystounderstandinglife.com. For individual use only; commercial or non-profit organizations (including church organizations) may not distribute or circulate without first receiving permissions; send requests to www.keystounderstandinglife.com.

and to address. The fuzziness, however, is the trademark of the presence of the Illusionist (Satan), whose goal it is to prevent us from seeing solutions clearly in the Light of God’s counsel and wisdom; let us seek that out.

What makes it tough for churches to assist believers in connecting with the permanently indwelling Spirit of God during trials is that sometimes believers have a hard time verbalizing what they seek in their walks. At other times believers know what they need, but are afraid they might be the only ones needing it, so they don’t say anything for fear they might find themselves out in left field alone. In these cases church leaders may often remain unaware who has the need and desires assistance. When one or two believers are hungry for training in seeking out the Spirit’s counsel in trials and aren’t getting it for whatever reason, this is “low hanging fruit” which is not being harvested. This affects the local Body, and initially it may or may not be noticeable in ways that can be measured statistically.

But when a number of believers in the same Body struggle in clearly hearing the Spirit’s counsel during their trials, this does affect the local Body, and eventually will likely become noticeable in ways that can be measured statistically. Keep in mind that individual believers, due to the deceptive nature of Satan’s attacks, may not be aware they are struggling in trials. They might describe it simply as experiencing “tough times,” or “having to deal with normal life stuff.” Still, this affects their walks with God, which in turn eventually affects the local Body’s well-being. When that happens, it triggers certain kinds of attention at the local Body level. This can prompt any number of programs or revitalization responses in an attempt to meet the needs that threaten the local Body’s well-being. Every church Body faces this at some point. It is spiritually normal and is a result of the spiritual battles faced by individual believers who make up the Body of Christ.

These issues are not uncommon and the reality is there are many reasons for this, all of which aren’t necessarily within the power of church leaders to control or change no matter how much they would like to (i.e., don’t blame it all on the church Body). It was with all these things in the mind and heart that *A Disciple’s Heart* was written. The church Body may assist interested members by recommending individual training tools for believers to pursue in depth, one-on-one with the Spirit of God. This may appear to be a different role for the church, particularly when it comes to individual study programs which the church doesn’t have to administer or lead. **However, the discipleship environment for spiritual growth that the church Body is encouraging is the one which Jesus’ death and resurrection secured for us... the one between the individual believer and the permanently indwelling Holy Spirit of God, The Teacher, The Author of the written Word of God, The Counselor, The Guide, The Comforter.**

Believers need to be encouraged to examine and work with the Lord in detail on their own trials in a focused and structured way, but the personal and confidential nature of that work will not, more often than not, lend itself to “discipleship training” in classroom style venues like Sunday Schools, Vacation Bible Schools, retreats, etc. The *Keys Series* materials enable the church Body to acknowledge the personal, confidential, and private nature of believers’ trials, and at the same time encourage believers to build up and connect with The Teacher within, the Holy Spirit of God to get the counsel and guidance they need in dealing with those trials. The *Keys Series* maintains that it is necessary for believers to connect with, interact with, and be a healthy part of their local church Body. Believers must continue to be educated and encouraged by the local church Body. The “Hearts Up”, ISSN 2155-5826, is the official e-Publication of Keys To Understanding Life, © 2010, William J. Clark, Jr. Individuals may download “Hearts Up” for free at www.keystounderstandinglife.com. For individual use only; commercial or non-profit organizations (including church organizations) may not distribute or circulate without first receiving permissions; send requests to www.keystounderstandinglife.com.

difference is that believers have structured individual study tools to deal with the details of their own trials, including:

1. Increasing the believer’s awareness of when Satan is attacking and when God’s Spirit is seeking to provide specific, unique counsel to the believer in the heart.
2. Discovering patterns in Satan’s attacks against the believer.
3. Discovering what are the kinds of changes God would have the believer to make in attitudes, behaviors, preferences, motives, thoughts, concerns, values, etc.
4. Allowing the Holy Spirit to transform the believer’s troubled heart to peace during the trial, regardless of the outcome of the trial.
5. Discovering the Holy Spirit’s specific counsel for the believer in a given trial based on who the believer is as a child of God and considering any roles that come into play in the believer’s trial.
6. Submitting to The Teacher to discover answers to questions the believer may have, to include determining whether the questions are appropriate to ask or not.
7. Submitting to the Lord’s discipline so as to maintain a peaceful heart and have faith, regardless of the outcome of the trial.

These practical application skill sets can be enhanced as the believer improves his/her ability to cooperate with The Teacher within. In supporting its interested believers in this area, the church Body ensures those members are better equipped to fully integrate the Scriptural and spiritual teachings learned from the local church Body and written Word of God into their real-life trials. While all its members will not be prepared for discipleship beyond the basics at the same time, this is also spiritually normal and is demonstrated in Scripture. *A Disciple’s Heart* talks to the important role the church Body plays in preparing believers to take these one-on-one steps with The Teacher. This also includes training believers in the first two of the five essentials (Key Concept, page 37 of ADH) to discipleship beyond the basics, as well as the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

The *Keys Series* begins with *A Disciple’s Heart* (ADH). There are a couple things that are important to understand about ADH, especially before sharing it with someone else. The subtitle is “An Introduction to Opening Your Heart to God.” If you’ve read ADH, then you know that it doesn’t come straight out and say, “You (the reader) need to be discipled beyond the basics now, and here’s how it works.” First, while discipleship beyond the basics is available to all believers, we (the authors) don’t know the reader or what God wants for that person at the time of the reading. Second, even if the reader did need to be discipled beyond the basics, what really matters is whether the reader believes that is the most important thing to his or her relationship with God. If readers pursue discipleship beyond the elementary teachings of Christ, it cannot be as a result of being caught up in a moment of excitement due to being persuaded by some great verbiage or selling points by us (the authors) or anyone else. Satan will take full advantage of that. It must be because of their love for Christ as His disciple and their deep conviction that it is God’s will for them. ADH is designed to assist the reader in making that determination for him or herself. While it presents a number of other key features and possible progression benchmarks, generally speaking ADH is a self-evaluation tool for believers; it points to the Scripture’s invitation to go further in one’s relationship with Jesus Christ! **This is important to communicate to believers who are seeking more connection with the Lord in their trials.**

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For these reasons, ADH highlights the approach to the Scriptural concept of “discipleship beyond the elementary teachings of Christ” in a way that raises very critical questions to which discipleship beyond the elementary teachings is to provide answers. How do we hear the Holy Spirit’s guidance? How do we know if we are praying for the right things? How do we recognize when Satan is attacking us each time he attacks? While just last month we published a page to the *Keys* website listing a great many questions ADH does answer, many of those questions deal with determining what discipleship beyond the elementary teachings is to do or not do for a believer. This is quite different from the “how to” discussions and exercises (which is what *Feelings 101* is about). Some readers have found this approach quite disconcerting because ADH essentially challenges believers to determine whether they have certain practical application/Christian living skills. If readers determine that they don’t, this implies that they may have a spiritual need that is currently not being addressed. ADH basically comes out and says that, though one will have to address this need, having it is part of the normal spiritual growth process. Some readers may see this as undesirable as opposed to empowering. We like the idea of needing God and needing discipleship, but not *that* much! People in general (sometimes even believers) frequently do not like having important, unanswered questions. Having questions is a vital, healthy part of “seeking more.” **Encouraging believers to have questions and courage in seeking to improve their relationships with God and His Holy Spirit within is important when sharing about *A Disciple’s Heart*.**

The *Keys To Understanding Life Series* doesn’t leave readers hanging. ADH indicates that there are five essentials to going beyond the basics. When we have the need for training in discipleship beyond the basics, it is because we typically lack one-on-one training with the Spirit in the following two essentials:

1. Recognizing and working with the dynamics of the heart and mind;
2. The Scriptural, spiritual principles which govern the process of hearing the Spirit’s guidance with the heart during a trial (which every believer has used in some trial or another – the point is to be able to do it deliberately with The Teacher).

This is important to communicate with others. These two essentials are the ones around which all the unanswered questions usually arise; answering them, however, first requires being aware one has a need to have them answered. *Feelings 101: Pain to Peace* is the *Keys Series* resource which handles walking believers through the individual study and practical application training to hone their skills in the above two essentials. It is a very deliberate approach to discipleship beyond the basics. In this aspect of discipleship, the focus is hugely on personal, practical application. Discipleship beyond the elementary teachings of Christ requires the respect, time and focus of being a disciple of Christ. You will work to keep pace in walking with Him, though you may not see Him. You will work to do your part in hearing Him, but perhaps not with your ears. Yet there is no Sunday School teacher to prepare the class in advance. There is no large group for one to get lost in if one really isn’t feeling up to participating. Either the believer does his/her spiritual work with The Teacher within, or the focused spiritual work in the two essentials above doesn’t get done until later, if at all. Nobody else can live certain parts of your life for you, and developing your part of your relational skills with God is among those parts.

We are pressing to release *Feelings 101* soon. [Note: At the time of reissue of this April 2010 edition, *Feelings 101: Pain to Peace* has been released.]

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With a heart that is at peace in Christ, good communication is an important part of sharing the opportunities for discipleship beyond the elementary teachings of Christ. We are always reminding ourselves that it is most important for us first to seek it in our own relationships with God; do the same for yourself. Before sharing with another, examine your own heart first. If you are certain God would have you to share *Keys* materials with others, do so softly leaving them free to make their own decisions with the Lord. Discipleship beyond the elementary teachings can only be pursued with a deep love of God; so there is no value in striving to convince someone to pursue it. Later, when the convincing wears off, and they have drawn attention to themselves on the spiritual field of battle only to find it is about service to the Lord and not self-glory, where will they be?

[Note to accompany reissue: As indicated at the beginning of this article, it was written from the perspective of questions asked to the authors by some church leaders, and also of some individuals who have profited from *Keys Series* materials and who are interested in sharing them with others. If you, the reader, are in a situation where you are satisfied with your local church Body in all respects except that you feel you are “looking for more” in your personal relationship with God, we would encourage you to consider checking out the individual discipleship materials available in the *Keys Series*, particularly *Feelings 101: Pain to Peace*. If you choose not to try *Keys*, try someone’s. The point is to find some ***Scripturally-based, individual discipleship training tools*** that help you ***connect with God*** more ***consistently*** during times when you ***aren’t*** sitting in church. The point is that if you are looking for “more,” there is much you can do by working to intentionally strengthen your part of interacting with God’s Spirit within when it comes to your life’s trials. You may find that by developing your part of connecting with the Lord in your real-life trials at home and work, then your sense of fulfillment will be increased when you are connecting with the local Body during the more regularly scheduled times.

Relationships within the Body are extremely important to maintain. Maintain them if at all possible. If cultivating your individual relationship with God improves your fulfillment within the Body, you will end up having something significant to share with others later to encourage them if they face similar issues. Be certain that individual discipleship tools will challenge you to look at your life, and that in and of itself can be a sacrifice for each of us in different ways. The rewards in the Lord are great, but the old parts of us hate it. However, if we desire to connect with the Lord, then He will use our hearts to connect better with us, and later as we change He can use our hearts to strengthen the Body... all without ever starting a new program, just starting with us and our deep love for Him!]

ENDNOTES

¹ “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”, Charles Wesley, (1707-1788) as quoted in The Baptist Hymnal, Convention Press, Nashville, TN, 1991, page 77

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