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“Hearts Up” is the official e-publication of keystounderstandinglife.com (“Keys” website). When we want to alert one another to something important or perhaps even to a potential danger, we usually say, “Heads Up!!” To assist us in being alert to spiritual dynamics behind our real-life experiences, we offer “Hearts Up”! This monthly e-publication works to inform, but mainly to help lift our hearts up during trials! 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. Our materials often talk about interacting with the Holy Spirit with the heart; this interaction is not about speaking in tongues, but about hearing, understanding and embracing the counsel of the Lord with our hearts. 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. “Hearts Up” works to facilitate 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](#). 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, click the link below while connected to the internet or visit this menu button on the *Keys* website.



[Statement of Faith](#)

CONTENTS

Key In-Sights	4
The Bible’s Bigger Pictures	4
God gave us a brain, but will we use it to serve the Lord?	4
What does it mean to act “in Christ?”	6
What is the heart?	8
Hearing the Hymns	9
Endnotes	10

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KEY IN-SIGHTS

“It is amazing to me how often I blamed God instead of Satan for the undesirable feelings and unfulfilled desires I experienced in my life. While I believed in God very much, I really struggled to deeply embrace the simple observation that Satan is the father of the things in me which were actually fighting against the experience of peace in whatever came my way. It just goes to show how far off I could be in terms of recognizing the truth that God-given free will is really about making spiritual choices during spiritual battles. I really wasn’t being as responsible as I thought I was for dealing with life issues that are actually an extension of spiritual goings-on! I think that once I accepted that I was responsible to *participate spiritually* in my trials, I began to understand that being discipled in following Christ must be highly participative when it came to interacting with The Teacher, God’s Spirit. While I always ‘knew’ that I needed God, experiencing the *need* to be able to interact with Him took the idea of ‘being led’ to a whole new level.”

William J. Clark, Jr.

THE BIBLE’S BIGGER PICTURES

The following are three questions that have been asked by visitors to the *Keys* website.

God gave us a brain, but will we use it to serve the Lord
by simply setting our intentions to do so?

When conflicts between Satan and God arise within us, one way to look at it is to say that we permit ourselves to be persuaded by one or the other. Another way of saying that is to say we will choose to cooperate or obey with one or the other. Regardless of how we view it, godly decision-making and actions aren’t the result of just having certain conscious intentions to serve God (Mark 14:37-38; Romans 7:15-21; see also an example of this with Peter on the *Keys* website - [Can God Use Your Heart To Reach You?](#)).

In some trials it may seem that setting our conscious intentions properly is what enables us to understand the counsel and instruction of God’s Spirit, and to receive His assistance. While it may seem that our intentions are the key to discovering what God wants us to do or not do in a trial, it only seems that way. When a trial is tough or especially painful, it often becomes clear that a *conscious* desire to know God’s will for us is not enough to help us...

1. To be joyful in the trial (1 Thessalonians 5:16; James 1:2),
2. To give thanks and to be thankful for the trial (1 Thessalonians 5:18),
3. Or to get specific answers on what to do or not do in the trial (John 14:26; Galatians 5:25).

While God gave us a brain to think with, God did not design it to function independently of the spiritual heart during our trials! God designed the biology of our brains to react and respond such

that our thinking becomes “clouded” whenever our hearts are disturbed. When the thinking is clouded, the conscious intentions we have are not consistently sufficient to transform our hearts and cause our conduct to be godly in trials.

The mind and the heart are two critical aspects of God’s design which link our souls or spiritual being to our bodies. They must be “aligned” in Christ during a trial for us to understand what God wants us to do, and to do it. Salvation provides this potential; “keeping pace with the Spirit” makes it happen (Galatians 5:25). Aligning our hearts and minds in Christ involves transforming or changing something about us during a spiritual battle. In other words, renewal of the thinking, or mind, (Romans 12:2) requires the transformation of the heart (Proverbs 27:19) during trials.

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Godly action in a trial
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A trial involves more than just desiring to know what God wants us to do in it. Godly action in a trial starts by interacting with God so as to overcome Satan’s deception! When Satan is deceiving us, we have to change something in us in order to cooperate fully with The Teacher’s counsel and guidance (Galatians 5:25). Each of us has done this in one trial or another; each of us has aligned our total being in Christ in response to Satan’s attack in a trial.

Perhaps you can recall one of your own trials when you quickly recognized and rejected an obviously ungodly course of action, and you experienced the peace which transcends understanding (Philippians 4:7). That occurs when our cooperation with the Spirit happens at a very deep level within us. It can happen so quickly and unconsciously that we don’t recognize the “step-by-step” process. That process involved “keeping step” with the Holy Spirit: hearing His counsel, and transforming our hearts in response to Him. Because we don’t clearly recognize the intricacies of our part in exercising that spiritual discernment (1 Corinthians 2:12-14), it can be quite difficult to repeat our part intentionally during other trials.

Whether a trial is hard or easy, the process of cooperating and changing in response to the Spirit is how we are disciplined by the Spirit to act as followers of Christ. But when those Spirit-directed changes are not so simple to see, our hearts don’t transform as quickly or easily. So, the task of cooperating with the Spirit may require us to take a more deliberate, “step-by-step” approach toward transforming Satan’s influence in us. That “step-by-step” process is about developing godly discernment and hearing with the heart. It involves capitalizing on the principles of listening to God, and it may be strengthened and increased through trials. It involves a combination of introspection (Psalm 4:4), prayer (Philippians 4:6), and an actual denial of our old self desires or motives (Galatians 5:17) during trials. Together, these actions on our part is what the Spirit uses to train us to keep in step with Him and changing so we can see Satan’s deceptions in a trial. In short, changing in response to the Spirit’s counsel to overcome Satan’s deceptions aligns us “in Christ.” This is possible because the Spirit’s counsel is not of Himself, but rather points to Christ (John 16:12-14).

The more we consistently practice the principles (“step-by-step” process) of interacting with The Counselor and Teacher in our hearts during trials, the more our conscious intentions will match our actual conduct in the trial.

***Feelings 101: Pain to Peace* is a personal discipleship tool and resource that walks believers through recognizing how the heart and mind work together in trials both when influenced by Satan and, more desirably, by God’s Spirit. The book looks at the 7 *Spiritual Principles* of interacting with and hearing the counsel of the Lord with one’s heart during a trial.**

What does it mean to act “in Christ?”

There are two perspectives of being “in Christ” during trials. Both apply to every trial. One is *God’s perspective of us*; the other is *the perspective of our actual conduct*. The former is eternally set and cannot be changed; the latter is not and can vary from trial to trial.

Because there are differences between those two perspectives, part of Satan’s attack includes influencing us such that we focus improperly on one or the other. When Satan succeeds, the result is we miss the spiritual mark in terms of our actual conduct during the trial at hand. How Satan attacks and influences you personally can be revealed by God’s Spirit when you study (diligently examine) your conduct, desires and motives during your trials.

Let’s look more closely at these two perspectives.

1. **God’s perspective.** (2 Corinthians 5:21) God sees us through the blood of Jesus’ sacrifice. From His perspective we are free from sin, not because we actually are sinless in conduct, but because Jesus’ blood covers all our sins: past, present and future. This is an eternal perspective. Because of God’s eternal nature and all-encompassing forgiveness, we are viewed as one “in Christ” *by God*. Because of God’s eternal and unwavering view of us through Christ, God is able and willing to offer us the power of His Holy Spirit. Because of God’s omnipresence and omniscience, He offers us the personal counsel of His Spirit in our hearts. Again, God’s perspective of us as sinless and whole is an eternal perspective that He willingly and consistently views through or “in Christ.”
2. **“Our actual conduct in a trial” perspective.** (2 Corinthians 7:1, Philippians 2:12-13, James 2:18) This perspective of being “in Christ” is in terms of our actual conduct and is NOT an eternal perspective. This perspective deals with our actual conduct *in a particular trial* when Satan attacks and the Holy Spirit is seeking to instruct (disciple) us in real-time during the trial. The truth is that our actual conduct varies from trial to trial and in this sense is not always “in Christ.” Whether our conduct is godly or ungodly in a given trial depends on the condition of the heart in a trial. Our duty is to allow the Spirit to teach, or disciple, us to change our hearts whenever Satan attacks us. Among other things, this involves learning from and studying the patterns behind our failures in past trials. Our duty is to become more consistent in changing who we obey in our trials.

When we are in a trial and we actually miss the mark and sin, the two perspectives both apply. From God’s perspective we are “in Christ,” we are clean and sinless. When we fail in a trial, then from the perspective of our actual conduct, we conducted ourselves as slaves to sin (Romans 6:16). From the perspective of our conduct, we are acting *AS IF* we are “in Satan” instead of “in Christ!” That is an identity issue. When we sin in a trial, then in that trial we failed to believe in and live according to God’s truth about us. So while from God’s perspective we are still “in Christ,” we mustn’t allow that to comfort us to the point where we excuse ourselves from working harder to change and allow God to mold us in Christ’s image (Hebrews 12:4-8). When we permit ourselves this ungodly comfort during or after a trial, we *quench the Spirit in that trial* and will likely repeat it in future trials.

Our desire to experience the awesome possibilities in Christ must motivate us to become more consistent in refraining from quenching the Spirit! Our past sins should motivate us to become more spiritually alert and responsive to God’s Spirit. In seeking to act “in Christ,” it is the Spirit’s guidance and counsel to us that provides the answers for how to have a heart filled with peace and love in the specific trial at hand. Being more responsive to God’s Spirit is what we need in each trial in order to feel and experience the deepest possible inner sense of identity in Christ. However, it will involve facing fears and sometimes “losing” according to the world (John 14:27).

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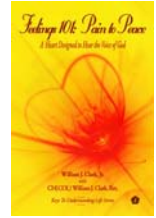
One of the problems we have is that we tend to view ourselves mostly through God’s eternal perspective such that we end up failing to scrutinize our actual conduct in a trial! It is possible to cling to God’s perfect and eternal perspective so much that we sometimes do not criticize or argue with our old selves! In other words, sometimes we don’t partner with the Spirit and His counsel in order to overcome and see through Satan’s deceptions.

It is true that Satan’s attack(s) on us does not affect God’s perspective that we are “in Christ.” However, Satan’s attack can affect OUR own inner sense of identity in Christ – this is what affects our conduct! The inner sense of identity we are talking about here is the one that determines who we choose to obey, and it is proven to God via our actions and heart. When we don’t catch our old self at work, we lack the discipline and a sense of urgency in finding out how God’s Spirit is trying to counsel us to change in the trial. The result is that we may sin and not even be aware of it. In other words, we are conducting ourselves in the old self and not even realizing it.

Being “in Christ” from the perspective of actually acting like it means submitting the totality of our being to be aligned in Him, one trial at a time. Again, our spiritual being includes our hearts and our minds (including the conscious and UNconscious parts), which God designed us to use in trials. We cannot control, change, or become aware of the contents of our hearts or our UNconscious identity thoughts except by interacting with the Spirit of the Lord within. This was not always easy for Jesus (Matthew 26:36-46 is an example of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane), and it doesn’t always

come easy for us. The key to aligning our hearts and minds “in Christ” begins with the heart and the act of recognizing one’s trials. When we are aligned “in Christ,” our hearts will be at peace, and we know what He wants us to do (John 18:11 is an example of Jesus’ response to being arrested).

***Feelings 101: Pain to Peace* focuses on how to discover Satan’s deception, and how to discover what the Spirit’s guidance is to you during a given trial. Its personal discipleship training tools and exercises help readers to do their parts to interact with The Teacher more consistently in trials.**



What is the heart (spiritual heart, as opposed to the biological heart)?

Godly success in trials starts with recognizing disturbances in our hearts, so that “in Christ” we can transform them to peace!

Godly success in trials *starts* with recognizing disturbances in our hearts, so that “in Christ” we can transform them to peace. (Remember, just because that sentence doesn’t mention the Holy Spirit, it doesn’t mean the Holy Spirit is not directly involved in assisting us to conduct ourselves “in Christ!”)

The Greek word for heart is καρδιά and spiritually it refers to feelings, emotions, desires, passions, motives, urges, etc. We understand the

concept that sometimes our hearts are “stirred.” Our hearts may be “moved” in various ways. Translated in light of the spiritual meaning of heart, these are times we are being spiritually alerted to something. Obviously there are times in life when we are staunchly certain as to what is “on our hearts.” During those times, our hearts are being “disturbed” spiritually. To say our hearts are disturbed does NOT necessarily indicate that is inherently a bad thing; a heart disturbance is simply an experience. The issue is how we interpret that experience and whether we transform disturbances to peace.

When our hearts are disturbed, we feel things and we have certain desires. Sometimes our desires are godly and at other times they are not. Our feelings/desires drive us to action; this is how God designed our hearts to work. Proverbs 27:19 indicates that the heart reflects the essence of a person. Perhaps you can see that how we interpret our heart disturbances and whether we transform them or not impacts our walk with the Lord during a trial.

The spiritual heart is the seat and center of the human being. Our hearts can condemn us (tell a fault about us personally) during trials (1 John 3:19-20). Or, our hearts can give us confidence before God (1 John 3:21). This characteristic of the spiritual heart is directly related to the work of the Holy Spirit (1 John 3:24) as He seeks to counsel us (John 16:13-14). When our hearts condemn us, they are not at peace (Colossians 3:15), and we will not do God’s will (1 John 3:21-22). When our hearts are at peace, they assure us before the Lord and we follow the commandments of the Lord (1 John 3:18-24).

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The spiritual heart is a dynamic tool that God designed us with so that we could live in the visible temporal world, yet experience the invisible spiritual world. God designed the heart to be the instrument by which we wield our free will spiritually! So, while using our brains is important, we can't think our way to God; it is by the heart that we believe.

An important part to being disciplined by God's Spirit in the heart involves not only being sensitive to the disturbances in our hearts, but in being skilled to transform them in accordance with the counsel of the Holy Spirit. **These are among the Scriptural discipleship skills on which *Feelings 101: Pain to Peace* focuses.**

HEARING THE HYMNS

If You Will Only Let God Guide You¹

Verse 1: If you will only let God guide you And hope in Him thro' all your ways,
Whatever comes He'll stand beside you, To bear you thro' the evil days;
Who trusts in God's unchanging love Builds on the Rock that cannot move.

Verse 2: Only be still, and wait His leisure In cheerful hope, with heart content
To take whate'er the Father's pleasure And all discerning love have sent;
Nor doubt our in most wants are known To Him who chose us for His own.

Verse 3: Sing, pray and swerve not from His ways, But do your part in conscience true;
Trust His rich promises of grace, So shall they be fulfilled in you;
God hears the call of those in need, The souls that trust in Him indeed.

The words and music to this rich and moving hymn were written by Georg Neumark (1621-1681). Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878) translated the words into English many years after the original writing. Still, this steadfast and enduring hymn appears in some of today's hymnals!

Verse 1 challenges us to allow God to guide our lives, and to enable us to bear up under whatever evil (trials) comes our way. It reflects what Jesus said in John 16:14 that He would provide His followers with the indwelling Holy Spirit so we would permanently have the opportunity to be guided, taught, comforted, and empowered to live life for Him. This guidance comes as we listen to God's Spirit with our hearts. (The spiritual heart is the Greek word καρδιά and it means the seat of a human being, which includes feelings, inclinations, wants, motives, emotions, etc.).

Verse 2 expresses the thoughts from Romans 8:28 which tell us that even in the unpleasant experiences of life God has a purpose. By acknowledging that Satan is attacking when our hearts are disturbed, we can interact with God's Spirit to transform those painful experiences to peace. Yes, to

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be still and “take whatever the Father has sent in love” as disciples of Christ, it is possible for us to “be of cheerful hope and heart content,” especially in times when others, who are caught up in the cares and interests of the world, are distraught, unfulfilled and captured by worry or dissatisfaction!

It is not easy to accept hardship, pain, or persecution by embracing the idea of taking “whate’er the Father’s pleasure and all discerning love have sent” (verse 2). We must consider, however, that we are to be molded in the image of Christ—remember how the Lord Himself handled such things!

Verse 3 admonishes us as children of God to “sing, pray, and not to swerve from His ways.” The writer says “do your part in conscience true.” This concept of conscience isn’t the same for believers as it is for the world. It doesn’t mean we are simply to do what comes naturally to our desires. Fighting spiritual battles is never that trite! We know that determining what to do in a situation requires awareness of the old part of us, which is influenced by Satan. This is an aspect of spiritual warfare which we must always take into account. In other words, when we seek to demonstrate God’s ways in our lives, we are to actively seek out and to know with certainty what The Guide, The Teacher, the Holy Spirit is telling us to do!

God gave His children freewill. He will not force us to choose to trust Him. He will not force us to work to be joyful during trials, or to allow Him to guide us. But, what a blessing to know that our Creator God loves us so much that He cares what we experience in life! What a blessing to be able to live life knowing God will never leave us nor forsake us as we do our part and trust His guidance!

HEART TO HEART

If you write poems, psalms, lyrics or prose of faith, and would like to share one of them with others in a “Hearts Up” edition, you may submit it for consideration for the *Heart To Heart* feature. You may also submit a personal story or testimony of your own to share how one of the articles or the *Keys* materials helped you draw closer to God during a trial. You can email your submission through the [Contact Us](#) page or send it to the snail mail address provided on that webpage. Be sure to read the **Contribution Guidelines** before sending us your submission. You can view those guidelines by clicking the link provided on the contact page itself.

ENDNOTES

¹ “If You Will Only Let God Guide You,” Georg Neumark (1621-1681) as quoted in *The Baptist Hymnal*, Convention Press, Nashville, TN, 1991, 57

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We decided to include the following information on gifts and donations in response to questions some of our readers have asked. We have not been in the habit of pressing for, or even asking for, financial support. While “Hearts Up” is offered to readers at no cost, our ministry is indeed a faith ministry.

If you find this e-publication beneficial to your walk with Christ and would like to give a financial gift to the *Keys To Understanding Life* ministry, you may do so by mailing your gift to our Snail Mail Address (our current Snail Mail Address is always listed on the [Contact Us](#) page on our website).

Our ministry is not yet a non-profit ministry, although our goal is to be a fully non-profit organization by 2012. As it is, at this time any gift that is given is a “true gift” in the sense that it is not tax deductible.

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