

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO ME?

David J Keyser PhD

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INTRODUCTION

Often after a person has been a Christian for a while, they begin to experience confusing or disorienting times. They may wonder, where is the joy, where is the excitement that I experienced at the first? They often feel that they are wandering in the woods looking for some of the old familiar signposts or markers. Things regarding their faith seem hazy or fog filled. They are going through a brief period of wandering in the wilderness.

Other Christians often tell them that such times are normal. After all, Moses and the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness, Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted and Paul spent years in obscurity before he began his ministry. These comparisons may apply somewhat to the individual walk of many believers, but they should not be accepted as normal or necessary. We live

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under a better covenant than the Israelites. Jesus had a unique mission to accomplish as did Paul. Many times the believer in this fog is experiencing one of three basic Christian experiences. Sincere Christians go through these repeatedly in their lives. God's Great Love for us causes or allows these experiences for our own good. Often when someone becomes a Christian by accepting Jesus Christ into their heart, they are convinced that nothing can ever get difficult again. It is not long before they learn that this is not the case.

In this book Dr. Keyser explains what these experiences are, why they happen to believers and what the believer can do to end them as soon as possible.

REMEMBER: Before we proceed any further we must remember that we live in a fallen world. Our existence is not idyllic. But it is victorious. One way or another we win. The verse is true that says that God causes all things to work together for our

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good. (Romans 8:28) All things do not work together for our good; but God is fully capable of turning any event to our favor.

What we are considering in this little book is not particularly about God turning events, it is about three things that we all experience. But we often spend a longer time in the fog than is necessary because we do not understand what to do to bring it to a conclusion.

We will approach each of these experiences by answering the following questions.

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

WHY IS IT HAPPENING?

WHAT CAN I DO TO GET OUT OF IT?

The answers to these questions are different for each of the three experiences.

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DISCIPLINE FROM GOD ¹

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

Since Father God is the perfect parent, he does not allow us to persist in doing things that will hurt us. Human parents do not let their children play in the traffic, eat rat poison or touch things that are very hot. Since God made us, he knows what is not good for us and disciplines us for our own good. Please understand, the Christian life is NOT about morals. Good morals can be achieved by following rules. The Christian life is about a RELATIONSHIP with God through Jesus Christ. When this life is truly lived, a person displays good morals, but rules will not change people, only new life in Christ can change us.

God's discipline in our lives is usually the easiest experience to recognize. This is because we usually know when we are doing something wrong. Our heart, conscience, tells us so.

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If a parent approaches a child with one of those “what did you do?” looks, the response is often, “Whaaat?!” When pressed the child will look guilty and often confesses to what he or she has done. When I taught eleventh grade American history, I noticed a student cheating while take a test. I announced that I had seen someone cheating and if they would simply write a sentence admitting it at the bottom of the test, we could talk later and they would not be embarrassed. To my surprise I received three confessions.

The first indication that we are out of the will of God is a lack of the divine peace. The more we displease God the more the Holy Spirit withdraws the peace of God from our life. Having once known this peace we yearn for it again. If the withdrawal of his peace does not bring us back to him, things will start going wrong in our lives. We lose the favor of people and things just don’t work out like they should. If we persist in wrong living, we can bring great hardship on ourselves. The longer we wait to return to God the harder it is to admit our errors.

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WHY IT IS HAPPENING

We are assured that every child of God will be corrected by God because he is a loving and active father. One thing is sure with father God's correction, it is not given at the convenience or need of the parent. It is solely given for our own good. It is for our profit so that we can further share God's own nature. And it will not last indefinitely. So we should not be surprised when it happens.

Discipline also has to do with inheritance. We have an inheritance from God which Jesus Christ paid for so that we can have abundant life here and in the afterlife. We will see that if we do not submit to discipline, we cannot have the inheritance.

In biblical and medieval times only a legitimate child could inherit. A king's son who had a mother who was not married to the king was illegitimate. He might become an important man, but he would never be king. As a matter of fact many illegitimate sons were proud to be sons of the king even though they could not inherit. James Stewart,

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Earl of Moray, was the half brother of Mary Queen of Scots, but he was illegitimate and Mary was not so James could not inherit. At the death of Mary her son James Stuart inherited the thrones of both Scotland and England. The scriptures teach us that to refuse our discipline from father God will cause us to share the place of the illegitimate son. Our inheritance is to share the very nature of God himself.

God takes the long view. Our growth into someone who resembles our father is his priority. We often want what feels good only for the present.

When we are being disciplined, we should not offer an inappropriate response. There are two kinds of rebellion; active and passive.

Active rebellion: If we rebel, we defiantly reject the discipline of God. We rail against it. We may even intentionally begin to act ever worse. When we do this, we are shaking our fist at God. This is not a good thing to do. God is always right and he can outwait us all.

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Passive rebellion: If we give up, we are then weakened and fall into all sorts of false trails which can lead us to a worse place. This is likened to letting our feet wander anywhere that is easiest. We no longer control our destiny. Then we often wander off and hurt ourselves in many ways.

If we rebel or give up, we cannot have our inheritance.

WHAT CAN I DO TO GET OUT OF IT?

In short, we should submit to God's discipline. Simply tell God that you are sorry and ask him to help you stop doing what is displeasing to him. Repent out of it. The sooner you repent, the sooner it will end. This only works for this experience. The other two are different.

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A TRIAL FROM GOD ²

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

The Greek word “peirazo” means to make proof of, to attempt, test, tempt. It is very important to remember that virtually all of the Greek scholars agree that the difference between the “tempt” interpretation and the “test” or “trial” interpretation can only be determined by the CONTEXT.

Sometimes it can even mean both tempt and test simultaneously depending on the context. ³

God tests every believer who shows promise. So, when God tests us, we need to realize that we have not done anything wrong. As a matter of fact, we have shown promise in our faith and the test or trial is actually a reward and not a punishment.

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WHY IS IT HAPPENING?

God tries or tests us in order to cause us to grow in our faith and in our relationship with him.

The greatest example of testing in the Bible is Abraham, the father of faith. In Genesis 22:2 Abraham was told to sacrifice his only son, the son of promise, to God. Abraham also believed that he had been promised many descendants through Isaac, but Isaac was still a boy and had no children at the time Abraham was told to sacrifice him. This causes Abraham extra grief because, as the father of faith, his faith was very important to him. He grieved at losing his only son. Then he had to deal with the fact that the promise of many descendants could not be fulfilled if Isaac was killed. Then he had to deal with the fact that he believed that he had heard God tell him two contradictory things. This is the essence of a trial by God, a faith situation that seems to be contradictory to what we know about God.

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The book of Genesis tells us that Abraham took steps to obey God and that God interrupted the sacrifice by stopping Abraham and providing a ram for the sacrifice. But Genesis does not tell us what Abraham was thinking at this time. Paul tells us in the New Testament letter to the Hebrews by direct divine revelation what Abraham was thinking (yes, Paul did write Hebrews.) Paul tells us that Abraham resolved the conflict in his faith by further believing that God would raise Isaac from the dead so that he could father many descendants. Imagine the impossibility of such a thought for Abraham.

The amazingness of this leap of faith is almost too much to comprehend. It is made all the greater by the fact that in Abraham's time resurrections were not commonly believed. Since Abraham's time we have examples of resurrections not only by the Old Testament prophets like Elijah and Elisha but also resurrections in the gospels and Acts. The greatest resurrection of all is, of course, the resurrection of Jesus himself because it makes possible the

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resurrection of every believer at the final day of resurrection. Abraham received Isaac back as resurrected symbolically when God provided the ram. Abraham had not brought a ram with him.

WHAT CAN I DO TO GET OUT OF IT?

Therefore, Abraham solved his faith crisis by going higher. He came up to God's way of thinking. But not only was this significant that Abraham believed that God would raise Isaac but he also began to share the grandest thought of all with God. Abraham believed in the resurrection of the long promised and sacrificed son. Abraham and Sarah had to wait a long time for the long promised Isaac. The fallen human race had to wait a long time for Jesus to come. At the transfiguration in Luke 9:31 we are told that Moses and Elijah appeared to Jesus and talked about the conclusion of the great sacrificial plan which would end in the resurrection of Jesus. In I Corinthians 2:9 we are told that we could not possibly imagine the greatness of God's plan for our salvation. But through trial Abraham shared God's grandest secret thought, the resurrection of

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the long promised Son. For this Abraham, to our knowledge, was not tested again and he is called the “friend of God.” (James 2:23) Imagine the fellowship with God that only Abraham had. As far as we know, nobody knew about Abraham’s test results except God. It does not matter who else knows. God knows and he is pleased with our growth. Although no one can initially earn God’s favor through good works, eternal rewards are based on our obedience to God and our obedience itself brings many rewards.

The way out of test is to endure and go higher. You cannot repent out of it and you cannot rebuke it. Remember it is a reward for your faithfulness.

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AN ATTACK OF THE ENEMY ⁴

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

An attack of the enemy, Satan or his minions, is not something God wants you to accept.

Such an attack is usually harsh and threatening. It can come in the form of a strong temptation to do what you know you should not do. A lot of lies come to your mind which are designed to lead you astray, make you angry and confuse you. It can also come in the form of disorientation and fear. It is indiscriminate. There seems to be no reason for it. Negative things can even begin to happen if you allow it to continue. When this happens, remember that God is not upset with you and you did not do anything wrong. You are not being tested by God. Also, merely enduring it will not end it.

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WHY IS IT HAPPENING?

It is happening because Satan and his forces are eternally outside the redemption of God. They are condemned and in time face eternal punishment. Human beings while they live on earth always have a chance to turn to God. This is why they are hated by the enemy. Furthermore, the enemy hates Christians even more than other humans because they have already entered into an eternal covenant relationship with God. This makes them special targets of Satan's anger.

WHAT CAN I DO TO GET OUT OF IT?

It is important to develop your confidence in your authority over these spirits which you have in the name of Jesus and in the power of his shed blood.

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Such an attack must be rebuked. Resist the Devil. Pray and then say aloud, “I rebuke you Satan, in the Name of Jesus. The blood of Jesus is against you. You must stop this attack on me and my loved ones. Go away and do not return.”

Make this pronouncement until it stops and then pray to the Father that all of your peace will return. God wants you to learn to use this delegated authority. When you are a new or baby Christian, God providentially protects you. As you grow, he still protects providentially but he also wants you to learn to use your authority. ⁵

This is an easy and quick thing to stop. Enemy forces must obey you in the Name of Jesus. The more success you have doing this the more confident you will become in your authority in Jesus. You have no authority of your own in this, you must use the delegated authority of the Name of Jesus. If you are not a believer, it will not work as it should.

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WHY THE WRONG RESPONSE WON'T WORK.

You cannot rebuke a trial from God. You cannot rebuke a chastening from God. You can repent out of a chastening. There is no need to repent of a trial. You cannot repent out of an attack. You need to rebuke an attack from the enemy. Each incident has its own way out.

What if you are not sure which of these experiences you are having? Pray earnestly for guidance or consult another believer who understands such things.

YOUR CONFIDENCE AND YOUR AUTHORITY ⁶

You will not have confidence with God if your own heart, conscience, is condemning you. There is a double answer to this problem. One, God is greater than you heart. Two, if we repent and do good, our confidence rises. To believe that God can overrule your guilty conscience you must believe in the free grace of God. If you think that you must earn your way with God, you will be stuck in a bog of guilt and no confidence. Take authority by the grace of God if you are a child of God even when you have no confidence. Repent and practice good works and your confidence will grow. Remember, good works are the result of our faith and not the reasons for it.

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APPENDIX

WHY WE BELIEVE THAT PAUL WROTE THE NEW TESTAMENT LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

There is an abundance of opinions about the authorship of the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews. The original King James translators were so sure that it was Paul that they entitled it so. Paul's name does not appear in the book in any Greek manuscript. Since it was Paul's usual practice to follow Roman form by starting with the name of the writer, some think that since Hebrews does not begin that way then Paul did not write it. This is not necessarily true. Let us consider, Paul started out as the great persecutor of Christians. Long after his dramatic conversion he was suspected of

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acting Christian so that he could catch and persecute even more Christians. It would not have been wise to start a letter to Hebrew Christians in his day with his own name. Many believers would have stopped reading immediately. However, what the Jews did respect was the name of God. Paul starts Hebrews with “God . . .” What better way to capture their attention?

It is entirely possible that no man living during Paul’s time could have had the knowledge of Judaism through intense study and the knowledge of Christianity by direct revelation as did Paul. Paul was a giant in both arenas. The Letter to the Hebrews was written by such a giant. The thought processes, the relationships between the old and the new, and the flow of reasoning all sound like Paul. Hebrews “looks like Paul, sounds like Paul and smells like Paul.” It is Pauline in every form. The theology is the theology of Paul as also set forth in Romans

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and his other books. The entire book is merely “pitched” toward the Jews.

Then there is the direct mention of Timothy in Hebrews. “Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly.” (Hebrews 13:23) Timothy was Paul’s primary disciple to the extent that we refer to anyone’s special disciple as their “Timothy.” Who else would have mentioned Timothy in this manner?

The strongest point often made against Paul’s authorship of Hebrews is that the Greek style is not the same as in Paul’s other letters. Yet it is well known and even alluded to by Paul that he often used an amanuensis. An amanuensis was someone who took dictation and set it on paper, or parchment. Paul makes reference in four different letters to a section in his “own hand.”⁷ So, of course, the style of every letter is going to be affected by the amanuensis. Such helpers

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rarely delivered a written document that was a verbatim copy of what was told to them. But the sense remained true to the original speaker.

Paul wrote Hebrews. This is important to the primary subject of this little book since two of the experiences are heavily based in Hebrews. Hebrews show no tendency of reducing the importance of any of Paul's works.

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OTHER BOOKS BY DAVID J. KEYSER PhD

Please see www.booksofffaith.info or Amazon for these books.

Reign: The Millennium

When the Emperor returned from the invisible realm, several things happened. First, the believers who had died in faith were resurrected and given their Immortal bodies. Second, the believers who were living on the earth at the time of the return were transformed instantly and given their Immortal bodies. Third, those living at the time of the return who were not believers remained mortal and fell under the rule of the Emperor and the Immortals who serve Him. The mortals are born, bear and raise children and die as all mortals do. Fourth, the Enemy and his legions are bound for the Thousand years. Mortals still seek to rebel against the Emperor because of their fallen nature. Fifth, those who had died who were not believers remained in their graves until the end of the Thousand year Reign. This is the double book edition which contains Reign: We See Him As He Is & Reign II: A Story Of The Seventh Millennium. ISBN/EAN13: 1470172496 / 9781470172497

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A Man Approved Of God

This is a book about the humanity of Jesus Christ. The material is taken from my PhD research in Edinburgh and St. Andrews, Scotland. To deny either the humanity or the divinity of Jesus Christ is to lose sight of the true wonder of the Incarnation. ISBN/EAN13: 1470167646 / 9781470167646

Hear Their Tiny Cries

This is the story of a man who finds a cause; the prolife cause. This cause soon takes over his life and involves many other people; tiny babies who were not supposed to live but do live and grow into unique and productive human beings. ISBN/EAN13: 1470101610 / 9781470101619

Elika Of Harod

Elika Of Harod was one of King David's Mighty Men. He is listed as one of the Mighty in the Biblical book of II Samuel. However, in the book of I Chronicles, which was compiled in the time of King Solomon, he is omitted. Did he fall from favor with the young king? This is a mystery. This fictionalized account is fascinating. ISBN/EAN13 1475083688 / 9781475083682

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Great Scot

Edward Irving (1792 - 1834) was a Scottish pastor and Reformed theologian who was put into a position by the circumstances of his day that required him to prove to his own satisfaction that one could be both Reformed and Charismatic or Pentecostal. He produced much in a short time and was apparently subsequently driven to poor health and an early death by the controversy that he did so much to fuel. Irving wrote as a theologian defending experience. He was deposed from the Kirk in 1833 for heresy regarding the humanity of Christ and died of pneumonia in 1834. Irving's followers formed the Catholic Apostolic Church, but Irving died shortly thereafter. The continuation of that denomination was a work of Irving's followers not of Irving himself. Ultimately, Edward Irving is not remembered for his pneumatology but for his Christological position on the true humanity of Jesus. Irving hoped to see revival in Scotland and he believed that a recognition of Christ's true human nature and of his dependence on the Holy Spirit during his 33 years on earth would contribute to this revival.

ISBN/EAN13 1475093152 / 9781475093155

Pentecost 1830

In 1829 the "Irvingite" revival broke loose and many received the Spirit in the West coast of Scotland and in

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Irving's Scottish church in London. But it was not the miraculous that got Irving in trouble with the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian.) It was his widely preached and published belief in the humanity of Jesus Christ.

ISBN/EAN13: 1470148129 / 9781470148126

Ultimate Freedom

Why another book on Galatians? Many would consider Paul's letter to the Galatians as second only to his letter to the Romans in importance. It has been said that if you were to be stranded on a desert island with only one book from the Bible, that Romans would be a very good candidate to take along as it so clearly lays down the primary principles of the Christian faith. Some would take a Gospel, perhaps Mark or John. Others might prefer something else. At any rate, Galatians is a sort of 'little Romans' as it deals with the same primary concerns. In the end everyone has different insights to various parts of scripture and if you read enough of them, you will certainly be wise in the things of God. I believe, however, that I have some unique insights into scripture as the result of over 40 years in teaching and ministering and studying the scriptures and theology. Even if I do not have some unique insights, if you study Galatians for any reason you can only be richer for the experience.

ISBN/EAN13: 1470140012 / 9781470140014

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No Darkness At All

This short commentary on three of the pre-eminent letters of the New Testament can be read as a Bible study aid or as a devotional. Truly John, the Beloved Disciple, knew much about his Lord and his Friend Jesus that we need to take in, learn, and live. John's philosophy of the faith is at the same time simple, encouraging and challenging. ISBN/EAN13: 1470158809 / 9781470158804

The Greater Part Of Love

Hassan Belvedere, Jamie Hudson and Jane Anne Cutter grew up together. Jane Anne couldn't get either Hassan or Jamie to notice her much as they were growing up but when she ran into them again after college she had really blossomed. They ended up fast friends with each of the men secretly hoping for a chance to get closer to her. Jane Anne fell for Ali the first time she saw him. Little did any of them know that these three would end up involved in some of the wildest espionage cases in American history. And then there were some things that were most frustrating to Hassan but easily accepted by Jane Anne, the extra parts to each case that could not be explained. ISBN/EAN13: 1470180685 / 9781470180

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¹ And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.”

If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; lest there *be* any fornicator or profane person like

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Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears. Hebrews 12:5-17 NKJV

² But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*, of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” concluding that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. Hebrews 11:16-19 (NKJV)

³ Strong’s Number 3985 *peirazó*: to make proof of, to attempt, test, tempt "originally to test, to try which was its usual meaning in the ancient Greek and in the LXX. The word means either test or tempt. Context alone determines which sense is intended, or if both apply simultaneously.” (Strong’s Concordance, www.biblegateway.com)

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⁴ Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. James 1:12-15 (NKJV)

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. James 4:7-8 (NKJV)

And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Matthew 17:18 (NKJV)

⁵ I write to you, little children,
Because your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake.
I write to you, fathers,
Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning.

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I write to you, young men,
Because you have overcome the wicked one.
I write to you, little children,
Because you have known the Father.
I have written to you, fathers,
Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning.
I have written to you, young men,
Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you,
And you have overcome the wicked one. I John 2:12-14
(NKJV)

⁶ Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. I John 3: 18 - 22 (NKJV)

⁷ I Corinthians 16:21, Galatians 6:11, II Thessalonians 3:17, Philemon 1:9

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About the author:

David J Keyser PhD has served as an international theology teacher and college adjunct faculty. His earned degrees include a B.S., an M.Div, an M.S., a Th.M., and a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology. His interests include the humanity of Christ, The Holy Spirit, Biblical fiction, and the rights of the unborn.

