Dr. A. W. Tozer was a prolific author, pastor and modern day prophet, and a key figure in “The Christian and Missionary Alliance” denomination. He pastored in Chicago for more than 30 yrs (1928-1959), was the author of more than 50 books, and the editor of *The Alliance Witness*. Tozer was an evangelical mystic in an age of pragmatic materialists; he was known for his emphasis on the deeper life; he begged Christians to please God and forget the crowd; and his legacy has impacted countless millions. The late *Warren Wiersbe* of the *Moody Church* in Chicago writes: “Happy is the Christian who has a Tozer book handy when his soul is parched and he feels God is far away.”

By
Dr. D. W. Ekstrand
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“THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY”

(A Brief Summary of Tozer’s Book)

This summary contains material on the following three sections of his book —

A. THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD — To say that God is immutable is to say that He never differs from Himself. All that God is He has always been, and all that He has been and is He will ever be. The law of mutation belongs to a fallen world, but God is immutable, and in Him men of faith find at last eternal permanence. Chance and change characterizes our busy little world of nature and men, but in Thee there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. In Thee we can rest without fear or doubt and face our tomorrows without anxiety. In a world of change and decay not even the man of faith can be completely happy; instinctively he seeks the unchanging. Writes Frederick Faber:

O Lord! my heart is sick,
Sick of this everlasting change;
And life runs tediously quick
Through its unresting race and varied range:
Change finds no likeness to itself in Thee,
And wakes no echo in Thy mute Eternity.

The words of Faber find sympathetic response in every heart; yet as much as we deplore the lack of stability in this fallen world, the very ability to change is a golden treasure — a gift from God. For human beings the whole possibility of redemption lies in their ability to change. The essence of repentance is this: the liar becomes truthful, the thief honest, the lewd pure, the proud humble. A man’s thoughts, desires, and affections are transformed, and he is no longer what he was before. So radical is this change that the apostle calls the man that used to be “the old man,” and the man he is now “the new man” — he is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him. The old man, even at its best, possesses only the life of Adam; the new man has the life of God (he becomes a member of a new and higher order of being — the eternal law of God is engraven forever on his soul).

What “peace” it brings to the Christian’s heart to realize that our Heavenly Father never differs from Himself. In coming to Him at any time we need not wonder whether we shall find Him in a receptive mood. He is always receptive to misery and need, as well as to love and faith. He does not keep office hours. Neither does He change His mind about anything. Today, at this very moment, He feels toward His creatures, toward and sick, the fallen, the sinful, exactly as He did when He sent His only begotten Son into the world to die for mankind. God never cools in His affections… He ever continues to stretch forth his hands unto us saying, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” God need not be coaxed, nor can He be persuaded to alter His Word or talked into answering a selfish prayer. In all our efforts to find God, we should remember that all change must be on our part — “I am the Lord, I change not” (Mal 3:6; Heb 13:8; Jam 1:17). We have but to meet His clearly stated terms, bring our lives into accord with His revealed will, and His infinite power will become instantly operative toward us in the manner set forth in the Scriptures of truth. I am reminded of the words of that wonderful hymn, “Great is Thy Faithfulness” — “There is no shadow of turning with Thee; Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not; as Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.”
B. THE JUSTICE OF GOD — Thy judgments are true and righteous altogether… Thy justice upholds the order of the universe and guarantees the safety of all who put their trust in Thee. We live because Thou are just — and merciful. Holy and righteous are Thy ways and all Thy works. In Scripture justice and righteousness are scarcely to be distinguished from each other. The same word in the original in English becomes justice or righteousness. The concept of God held by the psalmists and prophets was that of an all-powerful ruler, high and lifted up, reigning in equity — “Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne.” “Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways.” Justice embodies the idea of moral equity, and iniquity is the exact opposite — it is in-equity.

There is nothing in God’s justice that forbids the exercise of His mercy. God’s compassion flows out of His goodness… God spares us because He is good, but He could not be good if He were not just. God does what becomes Him as the supremely good God. God can be just and justify (make righteous) the unjust (unrighteous) through the work of Christ in atonement — justice is not violated but satisfied when God spares a sinner. Redemptive theology teaches that mercy does not become effective toward a man until justice has done its work. The just penalty for sin was exacted when Christ our Substitute died for us on the cross. Writes John, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just (righteous) to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn 1:9).

C. THE MERCY OF GOD — How shall we thank Thee enough, Holy Father, for Thy mercy which comes down to the lowest part of our need to give us beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and for the spirit of heaviness a garment of praise? What right have we to partake in such mercy? Did we not by our sins take part in that unholy rebellion which rashly sought to dethrone the glorious King of creation? And did we not in times past walk according to the course of this world, and live fully in the lusts of our flesh? Yea, we who were one time enemies of His who earned banishment shall enjoy communion with Him, and we who deserve the pains of hell shall know the bliss of heaven. And all because of the tender mercy of our God. God has always dealt in mercy with mankind and will always deal in justice when His mercy is despised. As judgment is God’s justice confronting moral inequity, so mercy is the goodness of God confronting human suffering and guilt; it is human misery and sin that call forth the divine mercy. To receive mercy we must first know that God is merciful — we must believe that God’s mercy is boundless, free and, through Jesus Christ our Lord, available to us now in our present situation. Reflect upon the words of the hymn writer Charles Wesley:

Arise, my soul, arise; shake off thy guilty fears;
The bleeding Sacrifice in my behalf appears;
Before the throne my Surety stands, my name is written on His hands.

My God is reconciled; His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for His child; I can no longer fear;
With confidence I now draw near and “Father, Abba, Father,” cry.
"THE DIVINE CONQUEST"

(A Brief Summary of Tozer’s Book)

This summary contains material on the following five sections of his book —

A. THE FORGOTTEN ONE — In neglecting or denying the deity of Christ the Liberals have committed a tragic blunder, because those who follow a merely human Savior follow no Savior at all — only an ideal — as such, He who called Himself the “Light of the World” is only a flickering torch. However culpable the act of the Liberal in denying the Godhood of Christ, we who pride ourselves on our Orthodoxy (right belief) must not allow our indignation to blind us to our own shortcomings — our blunder has been to neglect the doctrine of the Spirit to a point. The idea of the Spirit held by the average church member is so vague as to be nearly nonexistent, and this encompasses a surprisingly large number of earnest persons who are sincerely trying to be Christians.

In religion, a sharp distinction must always be made between “knowing about” & “knowing.” “This is eternal life, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” Notice it does not say that they may “know about Thee.” Knowing by acquaintance is always better than mere knowledge by description; thus we dare not conclude that because we learn about the Spirit that we actually know Him. Knowing Him comes only by a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit Himself. Strangely and historically the Holy Spirit has been given secondary status by believers, in large part because they have not properly understood His [thought-to-be] mysterious nature.

How shall we think of the Spirit? A great deal can be learned about the Holy Spirit from the word spirit itself — the word spirit means existence on a level above and beyond matter; yet spirit has true being and is objectively real. The Bible teaches that He is God, that He is a Person, that every quality belonging to Almighty God is freely attributed to Him, and that He is endowed with every quality of personality — He knows, He wills, He loves; He feels affection, antipathy and compassion; He thinks, sees, hears, speaks, and performs any act of which personality is capable. The Holy Spirit can penetrate the human mind and the human spirit — He can invade the human heart and make room for Himself without expelling anything essentially human; the integrity of the human personality remains unimpaired. When we become children of God the Holy Spirit penetrates and fills our personalities and we become experientially one with God.

The Holy Spirit is God in contact with His creatures, doing in them and among them a saving and renewing work. Every act of God is done by all three Persons of the Trinity — God is never anywhere present in one Person without the other two. He cannot divide Himself. Where the Spirit is, there also is the Father and the Son (they are all omnipresent). Jesus said, “We will come unto him and make our abode with him.” For the accomplishment of some specific work one Person may for the time be more prominent than the others are, but never is He alone. God is altogether present at all times and in every place. Let us begin to think of Him as One to be worshipped and obeyed, and insist that He enter and occupy as Lord and Master within His own dwelling.
B. **THE ILLUMINATION OF THE SPIRIT** — Spiritual truth can never be grasped by the intellect, it must be given him from heaven (Jn 3:27). The Lord told Isaiah, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are My ways your ways” — God’s thoughts belong to the world of spirit; man’s to the world of intellect; and man’s thoughts cannot cross over into God’s. “How unsearchable are Thy judgments, and unfathomable are Thy ways!” Man by reason cannot know God; he can only know about God. Through the light of reason certain important facts about God may be discovered, but the deeper mysterious ways of God remain hidden to him until his mind/heart has been illumined from above. Wrote Paul, “The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness to him, because such things are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2:14). The most brilliant intellect may be imbecilic when confronted with the mysteries of God, because for a man to understand revealed truth requires an act of God — “except it be given him from heaven” (Jn 3:27).

**Jesus taught His disciples to expect the coming of the “Spirit of truth” who would teach them all things.** In a remarkable sermon on “The True Way of Attaining Divine Knowledge,” John Smith states the truth I have been attempting to share: “Were I indeed to define divinity I should rather call it a divine life than a divine science; it is something to be understood by a spiritual sens, rather than by some verbal description…. There is an inward beauty, life and loveliness in divine truth, which can be known only when it is digested into life and practice.” John Smith held that a pure life was absolutely necessary to any real understanding of spiritual truth — “But for the searching of the Scriptures and a true knowledge of them, an honorable life is needed, and a pure soul;” without a pure mind, a man could not possibly comprehend the Word of God. True spiritual knowledge is always associated with righteousness and humility and is never found apart from godliness and true holiness of life. Christians need to learn that truth consists not just in correct doctrine, but in correct doctrine plus the inward enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

C. **THE SPIRIT AS POWER** — Our Lord before His ascension said to His disciples, “Tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are imbued with power from on high.” Power came upon the Church as had never been released into human nature before. That supernatural potency is still active in the Church and has enabled her to exist for nearly 2,000 years; it was nothing less than God Himself entering into them with the purpose of ultimately reproducing His own likeness within them. This power came upon “powerless men” to meet their moral need — it is a spiritual power that gives us the ability to achieve spiritual and moral ends. Its long range result is to produce God-like character in men and women who were once wholly evil by nature and by choice. The Holy Spirit performs His blessed work by direct contact with the human spirit.

**The one ominous “weakness” in the average church service today**, says Tozer, is the absence of the Spirit’s power. In the average church service, the worshipper sits in a state of suspended mentation; a kind of dreamy numbness creeps upon him; he hears words but they do not register; his mind surrenders itself to a more or less pleasant mood which passes with the benediction leaving no trace behind. It does not affect anything in his everyday life. He is aware of no power, no Presence, no spiritual reality. The Spirit’s work in the hearts of believers it to make spiritual things real to the soul; this power goes beyond the limits of the intellect. In actual human experience this is most often felt in a heightened sense of the Presence of Christ; He is felt to be a real Person and to be intimately, ravishingly near. Prayer becomes a sweet conversation with someone actually there, and love for God and for the children of God takes possession of the soul. I think the greatest need in the Church today is the power of the Holy Spirit — “it is the Spirit that quickens.” Only the Spirit can save us from the numbing unreality of Spiritless Christianity.
D. THE HOLY SPIRIT AS FIRE — Scripture teaches that God in His essential nature is both inscrutable and incapable of being searched into or understood. This inability lies not in God but in the limitations of our creaturehood. We may live out a full lifetime and die without once having our minds challenged by the sweet mystery of the Godhead if we depend upon the churches to do the challenging. Thus it might be well to consider for a moment longer the divine inscrutability. What God is cannot be conceived by the mind because He is “altogether other” than anything with which we have had experience before. In actuality, God’s greatness cannot be conceived; nay, if we could conceive of it, He would be less than the human mind which could form the conception. Every possible statement that we can make about God expresses some possession or virtue of God, rather than God Himself — God is above all language and all thought; His attributes and greatness are beyond our powers of understanding, or even of thought.

Though God does not tell us what He is, He does tell us what He is like. He has used a number of similitudes to hint at His incomprehensible being, and judging from the Scriptures one would gather that His favorite similitude is fire — “our God is a consuming fire.” As a fire He spoke to Moses from the burning bush… in the fire He dwelt above the camp of Israel through all the wilderness journey… as fire He dwelt between the wings of the cherubim in the Holy of Holies… to Ezekiel He revealed Himself as a strange brightness of “a fire infolding itself” (Ezek 1:27-28). With the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost the same imagery was continued – “And there appeared unto them tongues as of fire, and they rested on each of them” (Acts 2:3). That which came upon each of them in that upper room was nothing less than God Himself; to their mortal eyes He appeared as fire. The God who had appeared to them as fire throughout all their long history was now dwelling in them as fire. The Shekinah that had once blazed over the mercy seat now blazed on their foreheads and invaded their redeemed human souls. Deity indwelling men! That is Christianity in its fullest effectuation.

The Holy Spirit is first of all a “moral flame.” He is called the Holy Spirit, for whatever else the word holy may mean it does undoubtedly carry with it the idea of moral purity. The Spirit, being God, is absolutely and infinitely pure… He is holiness itself. At the base of all Christian experience must lie a sound and genuine morality — no joys are valid, no delights legitimate where sin is allowed to live in life or conduct. “Be ye holy” is not a mere motto to be framed and hung on the wall — it is an extremely serious commandment from the Lord of the whole earth. “Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into heaviness” (Jam 4:8-9). The true Christian ideal is not to be happy but to be holy — by the way, joy and happiness result when there is holiness.

The Holy Spirit is also a “spiritual flame.” In the book of Acts the mood among God’s people is heavenly. A victorious spirit is found there, a spirit which could never be the result of mere religious belief. The joy of the first Christians was not the joy of logic working on facts — the moral happiness of the Creator had taken up residence their hearts and they could not but be glad.

The flame of the Spirit is also “intellectual.” Reason, say theologians, is one of the divine attributes — “the wisdom from above is reasonable” (Jam 3:17). “Come, let us reason together,” says the Lord (Is 1:18). It is only required that the Christian intellect be fully surrendered to God (Rom 12:2; Eph 4:23; 5:10, 17; Col 1:9) — how cold and deadly is the unblessed intellect… but a Spirit-
filled mind is a joy to God and a delight to all men of good will. I can’t help but wonder if there is anything on this earth as exquisitely lovely as a brilliant mind aglow with the love of God. Such a mind sheds a ray of healing which can actually be felt by those who come near it. Virtue goes forth from it and blesses those who merely touch the hem of its garment. The old churchman Bernard of Cluny referred to it as “a sensitive and shining intellect warm with the fire of the in-living Spirit…. [that has the] ability to rest the soul and raise the mind to rapturous worship.” No unblessed intellect, however sure its genius, would be remotely capable of producing such a work. The blight of the Pharisee’s heart was “doctrine without love”—it was religion that put Christ on the cross; religion without the indwelling Spirit. Sadly, this is often the description of “fundamentalists” today—people who pride themselves on their orthodoxy (right belief). We are safe only when the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and when our intellects are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

**The Spirit is also a “volitional flame.”** The deep disease of the human heart is a will broken loose from its center—the disease of disobedience and revolt. In accord with this underlying need for the healing of the will, the Holy Spirit, when He effects His gracious invasion of the believing heart, must win that heart to *glad and voluntary obedience to the whole will of God.* The cure must be wrought from within; mere outward conformity will not do. Until the will is sanctified the man is still a rebel just as an outlaw is still an outlaw at heart even though he may be yielding grudging obedience to the sheriff who is taking him to prison. The Holy Spirit achieves this inward cure by merging the will of the redeemed man with His own. This is not accomplished at one stroke… it is a longer process than we in our creature impatience wish. The most advanced soul may be shocked and chagrined to discover some private area within his life where he had been, unknown to himself, acting as lord and proprietor of that which he thought he had given to God. It is the work of the in-living Spirit to point out these moral discrepancies and correct them. As the work of God advances in the heart the Christian finds himself free to choose whatever he will, and he increasingly and gladly chooses the will of God as his highest conceivable good. Such a man has found life’s highest goal. He has been placed beyond the little disappointments that plague the rest of men. Whatever happens to him is the will of God for him and that is just what he most ardently desires. But it is only fair to state, writes Tozer, “that this condition is one not reach by many of the busy Christians of our busy times.” Until it is reached, however, the Christian’s peace cannot be complete—he remains spiritually disquieted and discontented—it is such which poisons his joy and greatly reduces his power.

**Another quality of the indwelling Fire is “emotion.”** Our ability to “feel” is one of the marks of our divine origin. Holy feeling had an important place in the life of the Lord Jesus. “Who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross” (Heb 12:2). Even on the night of His agony He “sang a hymn” before going out to the Garden of Gethsemane. And after His resurrection He sang among His brethren in the great congregation (Ps 22:22). That alcohol, sensuality, and man-made theatre are necessary to stimulate the feeling of pleasure, shows us that the world’s artificial pleasures are all but evidence that the human race has to a large extent lost its power to enjoy the true pleasures of life and is forced to substitute in their place false and degrading thrills. The work of the Holy Spirit is, among other things, to rescue the redeemed man’s emotions, to restring his harp and open again the wells of sacred joy which have been stopped up by sin. The spiritual love of Christ will make constant music within our hearts and enable us to rejoice even in our sorrows.
E. THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE — That every Christ can be and should be “filled with the Spirit” would hardly seem to be a matter for debate among Christians. I want to boldly assert that every Christian can experience a greater measure of the Holy Spirit far beyond that received at conversion, and I might also say, “far beyond that enjoyed by the rank and file of orthodox believers today.” It is important that we get this straight, for until doubts are removed faith is impossible, and God will not surprise a doubting heart with a fresh effusion of the Holy Spirit. The Bible clearly teaches that God’s desire for believers is that they be “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Eph 5:18). Tozer writes, “Before a man can be filled with the Holy Spirit…

1. He must be sure he wants to be. Many Christians want to be filled, but their desire is a vague romantic kind of thing hardly worthy to be called “desire.” They have almost no knowledge of what it will cost them to realize it. Are you sure you want to be filled with a Spirit who demands that He be given the reigns (lordship) of your life? Are you willing to let your personality be taken over by another, even if that other is God Himself? If the Spirit takes charge of your life He will expect unquestioning obedience in everything, and He will not tolerate in you the “self-sins,” even though they are permitted and excused by the vast majority of Christians. By self-sins I mean self-love, self-pleasing, self-pity, self-seeking, self-confidence, self-righteousness, self-aggrandizement, self-defense. You will find the Spirit to be in sharp opposition to the easy ways of the world and of the mixed multitude within the precincts of religion. He will be jealous over you for good, and will take the direction of your life away from you. He will reserve the right to test you, to discipline you, and to chasten you for your soul’s sake. He may strip you of many of those borderline pleasures which other Christians enjoy, but which are to you a source of refined evil. Through it all He will enfold you in a love so vast, so mighty, so all-embracing, so wondrous that your very losses will seem like gains and you small pains like pleasures. Yet the flesh will whimper under His yoke and cry out against it as a burden too great to bear. And you will be permitted to enjoy the solemn privilege of suffering to “fill up that which is lacking in Christ’s afflictions” (Col 1:24) in your flesh for His body’s sake, which is the Church. Now, with those conditions before you, are you sure you still want to be filled with the Holy Spirit? If this appears severe, let us remember that the way of the cross is never easy — since when is “death” pain free and easy?

2. The desire to be filled must be all-consuming. It must be for the time the “biggest thing” in your life; it must be so intrusive that it crowds out everything else. The degree of fullness in any life accords perfectly with the intensity of true desire. We have as much of God as we actually want. One of biggest hindrances to the Spirit-filled life is the theology of complacency so widely accepted among gospel Christians today. I doubt whether anyone received that divine fullness without first experiencing a period of deep anxiety and inward agitation. Religious contentment is the enemy of the spiritual life always. The biographies of the saints teach that the way to spiritual greatness has always been through much suffering and inward pain. The phrase, “the way of the cross” still means what it has always meant — the way of rejection and loss. No one ever enjoyed a cross, just as no one ever enjoyed a gallows. The Christian who is “seeking better things” and who has to his consternation found himself in a state of complete self-despair need not be discouraged — despair with self, where it is accompanied by faith, is a good friend, for it destroys one of the heart’s most potent enemies and prepares the soul for the ministration of the Comforter. A sense of utter emptiness, of disappointment and darkness can be the shadow in the valley of shadows that leads on to those fruitful fields that
lie further in. If we cooperate with God He will take away the natural comforts which have served us as mother and nurse for so long and put us where we can receive no help except from the Comforter Himself. He will tear away that false face and show us how painfully small we really are. When He is finished with us we will know what our Lord meant when He said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit” (Mt 5:3).

We can be sure, however, that in these painful chastenings we shall not be deserted by our God. He will never leave us nor forsake us. He will keep us as the apple of His eye and watch over us as a mother watches over her child. His love will not fail even while He is taking us through this experience of “self-crucifixion” so real, so terrible, that we can express it only by crying, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” Now, let us keep our theology straight about all this — there is not in this painful stripping one remote thought of human merit. We do not by suffering earn the anointing for which we yearn, nor does this devastation of soul make us dear to God nor give us additional favor in His eyes. God couldn’t love you any more than the day He went to the cross and died for you; and He will never love you less. The value of the “stripping experience” lies in its power to detach us from life’s passing interests; it serves to empty our earthly vessels and prepare us for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The filling with the Spirit, then, requires that we give up our all, that we undergo an inward death, that we rid our hearts of that centuries-old accumulation of Adamic trash and open all rooms in our soul to the heavenly Guest.

The Holy Spirit is a living Person... we can please Him or grieve Him. He will respond to our timid effort to know Him and will ever meet us over half way. However painful the crisis-experience may be that draws us to a fullness of the Spirit, we must ever remember that it is only a means toward something greater — the life-long intimate walk in the Spirit, being directed, taught and empowered by His mighty Presence. The Spirit-filled walk demands certain things from us:

1. **We must live in the Word of God as a fish lives in the sea.** Like the psalmist, we should “meditate day and night” in the Word (Ps 1:2); we should love it and feast upon it and digest it every wakened hour of the day. When the business of life compels our attention, we will keep the Word of Truth ever before our minds.

2. **We must be taken up with Christ.** The Spirit’s present work is to honor Christ, and everything He does has this for its ultimate purpose. So we must make our thoughts a clean sanctuary for His holy habitation. He dwells in our thoughts, and soiled thoughts are as repugnant to Him as soiled linen to a king.

3. **We must have a cheerful faith** that will keep on believing however radical the fluctuation in our emotional states may be.

The Spirit-filled life is not a special de luxe edition of Christianity to only be enjoyed by a certain rare and privileged few who happen to be made of finer and more sensitive stuff than the rest. Rather, it is the desired normal state for every redeemed person the world over. It is that “mystery” which was hidden for ages, but is now made manifest to His saints. God desires to make known to us what is the riches of the glory of His mystery among the gentiles, which is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col 1:26).
“BORN AFTER MIDNIGHT”
(A Brief Summary of Tozer’s Book)

**FAITH IS A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION**, and that’s where so many Christians err. Today all is made to depend upon the initial act of believing — at a given moment a “decision” is made for Christ, and after that everything is automatic. Though this is not taught, this is the impression. In our eagerness to “make converts” we allow our hearers to absorb the idea that they can deal with their entire responsibility once and for all by an act of believing. In the Book of Acts faith was for each believer a “beginning” – not an end; it was a journey, not a bed in which to lie while waiting for the day of our Lord’s triumphant return. Believing in the early church was an attitude of the heart and mind which inspired and enabled the believer to take up his cross and follow the Lord. How could anyone know that their conversion had been genuine? There was only one way – they continued steadfastly against serious opposition. To make converts today we play down the difficulties and play up the peace of mind and worldly success enjoyed by those who accept Christ. The truth of the matter is: should a person refuse to repent, he will suffer alone in this life without hope… should he repent, he will suffer with Christ for awhile, but in the midst of his suffering he will enjoy the Lord’s loving consolation and inward support and be able to even rejoice in tribulation. The first believers turned to Christ with the full understanding that they were espousing an unpopular cause that could cost them everything. They knew they would henceforth be members of a hated minority group with life and liberty always in jeopardy. Shortly after Pentecost some were jailed, many lost all their earthly goods, a few were slain outright and hundreds “scattered abroad.” They could have escaped all this by the simple expedient of denying their faith and turning back to the world; but they steadfastly refused to do so.

**THE KEY TO HUMAN LIFE IS THEOLOGICAL.** The Bible declares that God made man in His image. Man’s body does not hold the key to his true nature; that key is found in his spirit which, alienated from God is yet susceptible of reclamation and full restoration to God through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. *To know man we must begin with God.* The flaw in current evangelism lies in its humanistic approach — it is frankly fascinated by the great, noisy, aggressive world with its big names, its hero worship, its wealth and its garish pageantry. To the millions of disappointed persons who have always yearned for worldly glory but never attained to it, the modern evangelist offers a quick and easy short cut to their heart’s desire — peace of mind, happiness, prosperity, social acceptance, publicity, success in sports, business, the entertainment field, and perchance to sit occasionally at the same banquet table with a celebrity — all this on earth and heaven at last! Certainly no insurance company can offer half as much. In this quasi-Christian scheme of things God becomes the Aladdin lamp who does the bidding of everyone that will accept His Son and walk the aisle. The total obligation of the sinner is discharged when he accepts Christ. After that he has but to come with his basket and receive the religious equivalent of everything the world offers and enjoy it to the limit. Those who have not accepted Christ must be content with this world, but the Christian gets this one with the one to come thrown in as a bonus. This concept of Christianity is in radical error. Invariably it begins with man and his needs and then looks around for God — true Christianity reveals God as searching for man to deliver him from his ambitions. Always and always God must be first. The gospel puts the glory of God first and the salvation of man second. God’s glory is and must forever remain the Christian’s true point of departure. Anything that begins elsewhere is not NT Christianity.
THE TRAGEDY OF WASTED RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY. We must not forget that a man may attend church for a lifetime and be none the better for it. The writer to the Hebrews says that some professed Christians were marking time and getting nowhere spiritually. They had plenty of opportunity to grow, but they had not grown; they were still babes. So he exhorted them to leave their meaningless religious activity and press on to perfection (Heb 5:11-6:3). It is possible to have motion without progress, and this describes much of the activity among Christians today. Activity that does not result in progress toward a goal is wasted, yet most Christians have no clear end toward which they are striving. On the endless religious merry-go-round they continue to waste time and energy. There is usually one of three causes for a lack of growth — ignorance of the Scriptures, unbelief or disobedience. Tozer thinks most Christians are simply uninstructed. Just about any convert in the twentieth century was almost certainly told that he had but to take Jesus as his personal Savior and all would be well, that he now had eternal life and would most surely go to heaven when he died. As such, the new convert finds himself with a hammer and a saw and no blueprint. He has not the remotest notion what he is supposed to build, so he settles down to the dull routine of polishing his tools once each Sunday and putting them back in their box. Some Christians don’t grow because of unbelief, and others live in a state of disobedience. The instructed, obedient Christian will yield to God as the clay to the potter, and the result will not be waste, but glory everlasting.
I did a complete chapter by chapter summary of this book by Tozer, and placed under the “additional studies” link under the title “Following Hard After God;” that title best describes for me the essence of the book. Since I have shared this material in the past using that title, I decided to continue using it on this website. The study that follows below only covers Tozer’s work on “Apprehending God” and “Restoring the Creator-Creature Relation.” I trust you will find both of these reads meaningful.

APPREHENDING GOD — It was Canon Holmes of India, who called attention to the inferential character of the average man’s faith in God — to most people God is an inference, not a reality… He is a deduction from evidence which they consider adequate; but He remains personally unknown to the individual. “He must be,” they say, “therefore we believe He is.” To most people, God is but an ideal, another name for goodness, or beauty, or truth… or He is law or the creative impulse back of the phenomena of existence. These notions about God are many and varied, but they who hold them have one thing in common: *they do not know God in personal experience*. While admitting His existence they do not think of Him as *knowable* in the sense that we know things or people.

Christians, to be sure, *go further than this, at least in theory* — they have been taught to pray, “Our Father, which art in heaven.” But for millions of Christians, God is no more real to them than He is to the non-Christian. They go through life trying to love an ideal and be loyal to a mere principle. Over against all this cloudy vagueness stands the clear scriptural doctrine that God can be known in personal experience — “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” “My sheep hear my voice.” The whole of Scripture is toward this belief. What can all this mean except that we have within our hearts *spiritual organs* by means of which we can know God as certainly as we know material things through our familiar five senses. The *spiritual faculties* of unregenerate men lie asleep in their nature, unused and for every purpose dead — they may be quickened to active life again by the operation of the Holy Spirit in regeneration.

**Faith enables our spiritual sense to function.** Where faith is defective the result will be inward insensibility and numbness toward spiritual things. This is the condition of the vast majority of Christians. The eternal world will come alive to us the moment we begin to *reckon upon its reality*. Reality is that which has existence; it does not depend upon the observer for its validity. God is real. He is real in the absolute and final sense that nothing else is; all other reality is contingent upon His. The great Reality is GOD, who is the Author of all created things, including ourselves. God has objective existence independent of and apart from any notions which we may have concerning Him. The worshipping heart does not create its Object. Faith creates nothing; it simply reckons upon that which is already there. *God and the spiritual world are real;* we can reckon upon them with as much assurance as we reckon upon the familiar world around us.

**Spiritual things are there inviting our attention and challenging our trust.** Our trouble is that we habitually think of the visible world as real and have doubts regarding the reality of any other world. We do not deny the existence of the spiritual world, but we have reservations about its reality. The world of sense intrudes upon our attention day and night — it is here, continually assaulting our five senses, demanding to be accepted as real and final. But sin has so clouded the lenses of our hearts that we cannot see that other reality, the City of God, shining around us. The world of sense triumphs,
and the visible becomes the enemy of the invisible, the eternal. At the root of the Christian life lies belief in the invisible. The object of the Christian’s faith is unseen reality — if we would rise into that realm, we must break the evil habit of ignoring the spiritual. We must shift our interest from the seen to the unseen, for the great unseen Reality is GOD (Rom 8:24-25; Col 1:15). “He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarmer of those who seek Him” (Heb 11:6) — this concept is basic to the life of faith. By the way, carefully note the “italicized” words in that verse, they are all highly emphatic, so re-read that verse and give very strong emphasis to each of those words.

If we truly want to follow God we must seek to be “other-worldly.” If we are to follow Christ, we must deliberately choose the Kingdom of God as our sphere of interest. This “other world” is the object of world’s disdain and the subject of the drunkard’s mocking… yet, it must be our carefully chosen goal and the object of our holiest longing. As believers, we must avoid the common fault of pushing the “other world” into the future — it is not future, but present. It parallels our familiar physical world, and the door between the two worlds are open to us. The soul has eyes with which to see and ears with which to hear; feeble they may be from long disuse, but by the life-giving touch of Christ alive now and capable of sharpest sight and most sensitive hearing. As we begin to focus upon God the things of the Spirit will take shape before our eyes. Obedience to the word of Christ will bring an inward revelation of the Godhead (Jn 14:21-23). It will enable us to see God. A new God-consciousness will seize upon us and we shall begin to taste and hear and inwardly feel the God who is our Life and our All. More and more, as our faculties grow sharper and more sure, God will become to us the great All, and His Presence the glory and wonder of our lives. May this be your prayer —

O God, quicken to life every power within me, that I may lay hold on eternal things. Open my eyes that I may see; give me acute spiritual perception; enable me to taste Thee and know that Thou art good.

Make heaven more real to me than any earthly thing has ever been.

Amen.

RESTORING THE CREATOR-CREATURE RELATION. The cause of all our human miseries is a radical moral dislocation, an upset in our relation to God and to each other. At the Fall man adopted an altered attitude toward God, and in doing so he destroyed the proper Creator-creature relation in which, unknown to him, his true happiness lay. Essentially, salvation is the restoration of a right relation between man and his Creator. Much of our difficulty as seeking Christians stems from our unwillingness to take God as He is and adjust our lives accordingly. We insist upon trying to modify Him and to bring Him nearer to our own image. The flesh whimpers against the rigor of God’s inexorable ways and begs for a little mercy, and a little indulgence of its carnal ways. We must come to God on His terms and learn to love Him for what He is, and as we go on to know Him better we shall find it a source of unspeakable joy that God is just what He is. As the self-existent One He gave being to all things, and all things exist out of Him and for Him; every soul belongs to God and exists by and for His pleasure. We owe Him every honor that it is in our power to give Him. Our everlasting grief lies in giving Him anything less. The pursuit of God will embrace the labor of bringing our total personality into conformity to His.

The moment we make up our minds that we are going on with this determination to exalt God over all we step out of the world’s parade. We shall find ourselves out of adjustment to the ways of the world, and increasingly so as we make progress in the holy way. Our break with the world will be the direct outcome of our changed relation to God. Man is forced into making a choice between
God and money, God and personal ambition, God and self, God and pleasure, God and human love. “Be Thou exalted” is the language of victorious spiritual experience. Man’s deep disgrace lay in his moral derangement, his unnatural usurpation of the place of God. We must of necessity be servant to someone — either to God or to sin. The sinner prides himself on his independence, completely overlooking the fact that he is the weak slave of the sins that rule his members. The man who surrenders to Christ exchanges a cruel slave driver for a kind and gentle Master whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light. God was our original habitat and our hearts cannot but feel at home when they enter again that ancient and beautiful abode. Nothing can restore order in the soul until our hearts make the decision to “exalt God above all else.” Saith the Lord, “Them that honor me I will honor.” The man of God throughout Scripture set his heart to exalt God above all, and God accepted his intention as fact and acted accordingly — not perfection, but holy intention made the difference. Let us always keep in mind that God’s desire is toward the sons of men who will make the once-for-all decision to exalt Him over all. In them God finds a theatre where He can display His exceeding kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. With them God can walk unhindered; toward them He can act like the God He is. God wants “all of us,” and He will not rest till He gets all of us — no part of man will do.
“THE ROOT OF THE RIGHTEOUS”  
(A Brief Summary of Tozer’s Book)

NO REGENERATION WITHOUT REFORMATION. In the Bible the offer of pardon on the part of God is conditioned upon intention to reform on the part of man. In our current popular theology pardon depends upon faith alone. Now we recognize this as being the expression of a commendable revolt against the insipid and unscriptural doctrine of salvation by human effort. The converted man is both reformed and regenerated. And unless the sinner is willing to reform his way of living he will never know the inward experience of regeneration. This is the vital truth which has gotten lost under the leaves in popular evangelical theology.

FAITH IS A PERTURBING THING. The early Lutherans said, “Faith is a perturbing thing.” The faith of Paul and Luther was a revolutionizing thing — it upset the whole life of the individual and made him into another person altogether. It laid hold on the life and brought it under obedience to Christ. It took up its cross and followed along after Jesus with no intention of going back. Little by little the whole meaning of the word “faith” shifted from what it had been to what it is now — faith now means no more than passive moral acquiescence in the word of God and the cross of Jesus. Such a faith as this does not perturb people — it comforts them. The Christian faith is not something a person can trifle with; it does not yield to experimentation; it commands or it will have nothing to do with a man. Its power cannot reach any man who is secretly keeping an “escape route” open in case things get too tough for him. The only man who can be sure he has genuine faith is the one who has put himself in a position where he cannot go back. His faith has resulted in an everlasting and irrevocable committal, and however strongly he may be tempted he always replies, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou alone hast the words of eternal life.”

TRUE FAITH BRINGS COMMITMENT. Many professing believers talk as if Christ were real and act as if He is not. Our actual position is always revealed by the way we act, not by the way we talk; thus the proof of our faith is revealed in our commitment to it. Any other kind of belief is only a pseudo belief. Pseudo faith always arranges a way out to serve in case God fails it. Real faith knows only one way — it is either God or total collapse. For each of us the time will surely come when we will have nothing but God. Health and wealth and friends and hiding places will all be swept away and we shall have only God. To the man of pseudo faith that is a terrifying thought, but to the man of real faith it is one of the most comforting thoughts the heart can entertain.

NO SAVIORHOOD WITHOUT LORDSHIP. Man appears to have a positive genius for twisting truth until it ceases to be truth and becomes downright falsehood. The doctrine that says a sinner may be saved by accepting Christ as Savior without yielding to Him as Lord has become an extremely popular position. It is highly doubtful whether any man can be saved who comes to Christ for His help, but has no intention of obeying Him. Scripture tells us to place our trust in the “Lord Jesus” (not just “Jesus”) for salvation (Rom 10:9-13; Acts 16:31). This is the truth that has been twisted out of shape. I would like to offer the following comment here: obviously no one can come to Christ without an abiding faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, a faith that fully rests in Christ. If an individual consciously refuses to acknowledge “the lordship of Christ” (i.e., he is holding out full allegiance), his faith is a pseudo faith... but to not have the issue of “His lordship” fully understood upfront is a completely different issue. If the individual is fully trusting Christ, I believe he is saved, and the Holy Spirit will subsequently lead him in the matter of the “lordship of Christ” throughout his life.
“THAT INCREDIBLE CHRISTIAN”

(A Brief Summary of Tozer’s Book)

WHY THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GIVEN. A few generations ago the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer was neatly reduced by various Bible teachers to one thing: to impart power for service. This view was supported by Acts 1:8 — “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses.” Though that is indeed true, that is not the whole truth. The two great verbs that dominate the life of man are be and do — what a man is comes first in the sight of God; what he does is determined by what he is, so “is” is always of first importance. The primary work of the Holy Spirit is to restore the lost soul to intimate fellowship with God through the washing of regeneration (Jn 1:13; 3:3-6; Tit 3:5; Ezek 36:24-27). Though the Spirit surely desires to impart gifts and power for service, holiness and spiritual worship come first.

THE DIVINE INDWELLING. “If a man love Me,” said the Lord Jesus, “he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him” (Jn 14:23). That this abiding is within the man is shown by these words: “you in Me and I in you” (Jn 14:20). Christ said of the Holy Spirit: “He shall be in you” (Jn 14:17). Paul writes, “Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Cor 3:16). Paul called this wonder of the indwelling God a rich mystery: “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col 1:26-27). God does not dwell passively in His people: He wills and works in them whatever His holy nature moves Him to do (Phil 2:13). When we fail to cooperate with the holy impulses of the in-living Spirit…when we go contrary to His will as it is revealed in the Scripture…we hinder His work by our willfulness and unbelief. The contest between the indwelling Deity and our own fallen propensities occupies a large place in New Testament theology. But God has provided “His Spirit” for our deliverance from the bondage of the flesh — the whole thing is set forth in Romans 6-8. Briefly, it is through a spiritual crucifixion with Christ followed by resurrection and an infusion of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing automatic about His operations within us — He works in conjunction with our cooperation (that’s faith). We are to learn what He wants us to be, and pray and work to prepare for Him a habitation. What kind of habitation pleases God? a “pure heart” and a “single mind.” He desire but sincerity, transparency, humility and love — He will see to the rest.

WE ARE SAVED “TO” AS WELL AS “FROM.” The evangelical community has been preoccupied with what we are saved from rather than what we have been saved to. Paul writes in his letter to the Thessalonians: “You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” The Christian is saved from his sins and the wrath to come (the negatives), but he has been saved to newness of life (the positives). When we are occupied with the positive things, these bring health to the soul; spiritual life cannot feed on negatives. There is an art of forgetting, and every Christian should become skilled in it. Forgetting the things which are behind (Phil 3:13-14) is a positive necessity if we are to become more than mere babes in Christ. Fifty years of grieving over our sins cannot blot out our guilt; but if God has indeed pardoned and cleansed us, then we should count it done and waste no more time in sterile lamentations. Into the empty world vacated by our sins and failures rushes the blessed Spirit of God, bringing with Him everything new — new life, new hope, new enjoyments, new interests, new purposeful toil, and best of all a new and satisfying object toward which to direct our soul’s enraptured gaze. Right here is where the weakness of much current Christianity lies — particularly we have not understood that we are saved to know God, to enter His wonder-filled Presence through the new way and remain in that Presence forever. We are called to an everlasting preoccupation with God.
THE NEED FOR DIVINE ILLUMINATION. A person doesn’t need to be godly to learn theology; it may be grabbed as easily by a sinner as by a saint. But what God has to say to the “pure in heart,” that alone is reserved for the saint. Spiritual truths cannot be received in the ordinary way of nature — “The natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit; they are actually foolishness to him; he cannot understand such things because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2:14). Spirit-enlightened knowledge requires divine illumination. The New Testament draws a sharp line between the natural mind and the mind that has been touched by divine fire. When Peter made his good confession, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” our Lord replied, “Blessed art thou Peter, for flesh and blood hath not revealed that unto you; such knowledge only comes from My father who is in heaven.” Both Paul and John concur with this truth in their epistles. Remember, it is entirely possible to have theology without illumination — and such theology results in “dead orthodoxy.”

THE SANCTIFICATION OF OUR MINDS. To think and be aware that one thinks is to be conscious; life without consciousness is but a vegetative state, having no meaning and being of no value to the individual. By the way, it is not our deep profound thinking that shapes our characters, but the quiet attention of the mind to the surrounding world day after day throughout our lives — habits of thinking are what create character. External things are the raw material only; the finished product is whatever the mind makes of these things. Judas Iscariot and John the beloved lived in the same world, but oh how differently they interpreted it. The same may be said for Cain & Abel, Esau & Jacob, Saul & David. Here we learn that circumstances do not make men; it is their reaction to circumstances that determines what kind of men they will be. What can we Christians do? Paul gives us the answer — “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil 2:5). The mental stuff of the Christian can be and should be modified and conditioned by the Spirit of Christ which indwells his nature. God wills that we think His thoughts after Him. The Spirit-filled, prayerful Christian actually possesses the mind of Christ, so that his reactions to the external world are the same as Christ’s. Yet, this is not automatic — to do His gracious work God must have the intelligent cooperation of His people. He did not give us minds for no purpose. If we would think God’s thoughts we must learn to think continually of God. We must think of the surrounding world of people and things, against the background of our thoughts of God. The thoughts of the experienced Christian quickly move toward God and from God out to His creation. To be heavenly minded we must think heavenly thoughts, striving constantly to keep attention on the kingdom of heaven which is within us. Obviously, this does not come naturally to anyone; it requires a heart after God and a disciplined thought-life (2 Cor 10:5; Phil 4:8-9). God must have all our thoughts if we would experience the sanctification of our minds.
“OF GOD AND MEN”

(A Brief Summary of Tozer’s Book)

WE NEED “MEN OF GOD” AGAIN. The church at this moment needs men, bold men, men who are not frightened by threats of death because they have already died to the allurements of this world. Such men will be free from the compulsions that control weaker men. They will not be forced to do things by the squeeze of circumstances; their only compulsion will come from within or from above. This kind of freedom is necessary if we are to have prophets in our pulpits again instead of mascots. These free men will serve God and mankind from motives too high to be understood by the rank and file of religious men who today shuttle in and out of the sanctuary. They will make no decisions out of fear, take no course out of a desire to please, accept no service for financial considerations, perform no religious act out of mere custom; nor will they allow themselves to be influenced by the desire for reputation. Another characteristic of the true prophet is “love” — the free man who has learned to hear God’s voice and dared to obey it has felt the moral burden that broke the hearts of the Old Testament prophets, and wrung streams of tears from the eyes of the apostles. The free man has never been a religious tyrant, nor has he sought to lord it over God’s heritage; it is fear and lack of self-assurance that has led men to try to crush others under their feet. The free man is a co-worker with Christ and an instrument in the hand of the Holy Spirit.

THE “CROSS” DOES INTERFERE. Just how radically has our religion interfered with the neat pattern of our own lives? Is there a refusal to come under total domination? Jesus said, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” The man with a cross no longer controls his destiny: a cross becomes an all-absorbing interest, whereby the individual moves on toward the place of crucifixion. “If any man will,” said our Lord — thus every one of us must make a voluntary choice. Truth is a hard mistress; she never consults, bargains or compromises. She cries from the top of the high places: “Receive my instruction, and not silver” — after that every man is on his own; he may accept or refuse, receive or set at naught as he pleases. God does not coerce. Let a man become enamored of Eternal Wisdom and set his heart to win her, and he takes on himself a full-time, all-engaging pursuit — thereafter he will have room for little else; his whole life will be filled with seeks and findings… self-repudiations… tough disciplines and daily dyings as he is being crucified unto the world and the world unto him. Were this an unfallen world the path of truth would be a smooth and easy one. Had the nature of man not suffered a huge moral dislocation there would be no discord between the way of God and the way of man. I assume that in heaven the angels live through a thousand serene millenniums without feeling the slightest discord between their desires and the will of God. But not so among men on earth. Here “the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; these are contrary one to the other” (Gal 5:17). In that contest there can be only one outcome — we must surrender and God must have His way.

The Christian is a man of heaven temporarily living on earth among fallen men. We must not get the impression, however, that the Christian life is one continuous, unbroken irritating struggle against the world, the flesh and the devil. The heart that learns to “die with Christ” soon knows the blessed experience of rising with Him, and all the world’s persecutions cannot still the high note of holy joy that spring up in the soul that has become the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.
EACH HIS OWN CROSS. Notice the words of Jesus, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross (not My cross), and follow Me.” The whole dreadful work of dying which Christ suffered was something unique in the experience of mankind. It had to be so if the cross was to mean life for the world. The sin-bearing, the darkness, the rejection by the Father were agonies peculiar to the Person of the holy sacrifice. To claim any experience remotely like that of Christ would be more than error — it would be sacrilege. Every cross was and is an instrument of death; each man is to die on his own cross. The Christian as a member of the body of Christ was crucified along with his divine Head. All subsequent experience of personal crucifixion is based upon this identification with Christ on the cross (cf. Rom 6:3-11). In the practical, everyday outworking of the believer’s crucifixion his own cross is brought into play — the believer’s own cross is one he has assumed voluntarily. Jesus said, “If any man will, let him” — in saying that He placed the whole matter in the hands of the Christian. He can refuse to take up his cross, or he can stoop and take it up and start for the dark hill. The difference between great sainthood and spiritual mediocrity depends upon which choice he makes. What Christ intends is that each believer should count himself dead with Christ, and then accept willingly whatever of self-denial, repentance, humility and humble sacrifice may be found in the path of obedient daily living — that is the believer’s cross, and it is the only one the Lord has invited him to bear.

RELIGION SHOULD PRODUCE “ACTION.” The supreme purpose of the Christian religion is to make men like God in order that they may act like God. In Christ the verbs to be and to do follow each other in that order. True religion leads to moral action. The only true Christian is the practicing Christian (all Christians bear fruit — Jn 15:5-8; 1 Jn 3:17; 4:7-8 — no fruit? no life!). Such a one is in very reality an incarnation of Christ as Christ is the incarnation of God, thought not in the same degree and fullness of perfection. Just as the fullness of the Godhead was and is in Christ, so Christ is in the nature of the one who believes in Him. Cicero, the Roman orator, once warned his hearers that they were in danger of making philosophy a substitute for action instead of allowing it to produce action. What is true of philosophy is true also of religion. The faith of Christ was never intended to be an end in itself nor to serve instead of something else. This error has lowered the moral standards of the church and helped lead us into the wilderness where we currently find ourselves; faith is not a substitute for moral conduct but a means toward it. James’ words burn with irony: “If a brother or sister be without clothes, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled;’ and you fail to provide for their needs, what does that profit you?” Likewise, John sees the incongruity in substituting religion for action: “Whoever has the world’s good, and sees his brother in need, and fails to meet his need, how does the love of God dwell in him? My little children, let us not love in word... but in deed and truth.” A proper understanding of this whole thing will destroy the error of somehow thinking that religion devoid of action is genuine.
“MAN, THE DWELLING PLACE OF GOD”
(A Brief Summary of Tozer’s Book)

THE “ONCE-BORN” AND THE “TWICE-BORN.” According to Scripture, there are two classes of human beings — the once-born and the twice-born. Such a distinction was taught by the Lord Jesus: “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God — that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (Jn 3:3, 7). Those who are twice-born crystallize around the Person of Christ and cluster together in like-groups, while the once-born are held together only by the ties of nature, aided by the ties of race, or common political and social interests. Our Lord warned us that the twice-born would be persecuted; once-born Cain slew twice-born Abel. The hostility that exists between the once-born and the twice-born is known to every student of the Bible. Jesus said, “If you were of the world, the world would love you; but since you are not of the world, the world will hate you” (Jn 15:18-20; Lk 21:17; Jn 3:20). There is a difference of moral standards between the once-born and the twice-born — they have opposite ways of life. Essentially there are two spirits abroad in the earth: the spirit that works in the children of disobedience, and the Spirit of God — the spirit that dwells in the once-born is forever opposed to the Spirit that inhabits the heart of the twice-born (Gal 5:17). The believer should fully realize that two human races occupy the earth simultaneously: a fallen race that sprang from the loins of Adam, and a regenerate race that is born of the Spirit. That distinction ever needs to be in the mind of the believer.

DOES GOD ALWAYS ANSWER PRAYER? There are numerous sweet notions about prayer that are highly injurious to the souls of men. One such notion is that God always answers prayer — either by saying Yes or by saying No, or by substituting something else for the desired favor. But that is not what the Bible teaches. According to Scripture, to receive an answer to prayer two elements must be present: 1) A clear-cut request made to God for a specific favor (not praying in sweeping generalities: “God, bless the whole world!”); and 2) A clear-cut granting of that favor by God in answer to that specific request. Furthermore when we go to God with a particular request there are two conditions that we must meet: 1) We must pray in the will of God; and 2) We must be living lives that are pleasing to God. It is futile to beg God to act contrary to His revealed purposes. To pray with confidence the petitioner must be certain that his request falls within the broad will of God for His people. The second condition is also vitally important — God has not placed Himself under obligation to honor the requests of worldly, carnal or disobedient Christians (Ps 66:18). He hears and answers the prayers only of those who walk in His way. “Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight (faith — Heb 11:6).… If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you” (1 Jn 3:21-22; Jn 15:7). Thus to receive answers to prayer we must meet God’s terms. Of certain persons James says plainly: “You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures” (Jam 4:3). The truth is that God always answers the prayer that accords with His will as revealed in the Bible, provided the one who prays is living a life that is pleasing to Him; that he is obedient and trustful (Ps 37:4; Prv 16:3; Heb 11:6; 1 Pet 5:7; 1 Jn 5:14).

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOUND DOCTRINE. It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of sound doctrine in the life of a Christian. Right thinking about all spiritual matters is imperative if we would have right living: sound character does not grow out of unsound doctrine. The word
doctrine means simply religious beliefs held and taught. It is the sacred task of all Christians to be certain that their beliefs correspond exactly to truth. A precise agreement between belief and fact constitutes soundness in doctrine. We cannot afford to have less. The apostles not only taught truth but contended for its purity against any who would corrupt it. Paul, John and Jude in their NT epistles resisted every effort of false teachers to introduce doctrinal vagaries; they poured scorn upon those evil teachers who would mislead the saints. While truth itself is unchanging, the minds of men are porous vessels out of which truth can leak and into which error may seep to dilute the truth they contain. The human heart (the flesh) is heretical by nature and runs to error as naturally as a garden to weeds; and the unattended garden will soon be overrun with weeds — the heart that fails to cultivate truth and root out error will shortly be a theological wilderness.

Basic unbelief is back of human carelessness in religion. Haziness of doctrine has always been the mark of the religious liberal. When the Holy Scriptures are rejected as the final authority on religious belief, something must be found to supplant it — historically that something has either been reason, sentiment or humanism, as seen in liberal churches today; they do not quite give up the Bible, neither do they quite believe it, and the result is an unclear body of beliefs. Let me add a comment here — this is the essence of interpreting Scripture allegorically or spiritualizing the text, rather than literally interpreting it in its historical context (i.e., letting the Word of God say exactly what it says!). To treat Scripture simply as allegory results in everyone arriving at his/her own understanding & interpretation, which is the essence of our relativistic, post-modern world. Ultimately those in this school conclude that there is no such thing as absolute truth; everything is relative! Tozer says this “spiritual fog” has begun to creep into many evangelical churches as well — essentially it consists of a milky admixture of Scripture, science and human sentiment. Furthermore, he says, there are some evangelical preachers today who are now laboring under the impression that they are “advanced thinkers” because they are rethinking evolution and even divine inspiration itself. The truth of the matter is, they are merely “timid followers of modernism” — fifty years behind the parade! Little by little, evangelical Christians are becoming increasingly ashamed of being found unequivocally on the side of truth. Moral power has always accompanied definitive beliefs. Great saints have always been dogmatic. Today we need a return to a gentle dogmatism that smiles while it stands stubborn and firm on the Word of God that liveth and abideth forever.