

the ■ ultimate Journey

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Rev. 4/6/01

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A LOOK AT LIFE-CONTROLLING PATTERNS

A seven-year-old child was seriously injured. It happened back when blood transfusions were a novelty. He needed several transfusions, but the hospital blood bank soon ran out of his type. Volunteer donors were on the way, but blood was required immediately. The only person there who could fill the gap right away, was his little brother.

In the frenzy to save the injured boy, the staff got parental permission, took his five year old brother aside and rapidly explained to him, that his brother would die if somebody didn't give him some blood right away. They asked if he would allow them to transfer some of his blood over to his brother. They assured him it would only sting his arm a little bit, and that is all he would feel. The boy's eyes widened. Then, he gulped, looked at the floor, and finally, after several moments of serious deliberation, he nodded his head in agreement.

An hour later, the crisis had passed. Other donors had arrived, and the child was saved. After leaving the surgery suite, one of the doctors passed the little brother as he rested on his gurney. The surgeon congratulated him on helping to save his brother's life and for being so brave. The boy nodded, then looked up at the man with searching, soulful, tear-filled eyes. There was a quiver in his voice as he asked:

“Doctor, how long...how long...
before I die?”

Suddenly it became apparent, that this little boy thought he was under a death sentence! His child's mind reasoned that since his brother was dying due to blood loss, the adults were asking him to give his blood, and be the one to die instead! He had undergone the transfusion and its aftermath, in silent agony, feeling total abandonment and rejection, convinced that his parents, the doctors and the nurses had decided to keep his brother around and get rid of him instead!

From his perspective, he was absolutely, logically correct in his assessment. Nevertheless, he never thought to question his own viewpoint and understanding. In addition, understandably, he had not been given much time to ask anyone for details. However, the truth was, that his naive, inexperienced thought patterns, were leading his mind down a totally wrong 'cattle chute,' and into the corral of a tragically false and horrifying conclusion. That little boy's misunderstanding is a classic example of what we are trying to deal with—partial truth that automatically leads to a gross misunderstanding, and therefore produces ongoing damage. That state is called—delusion.

Fortunately, the surgeon was able to reassure him that he had taken in the situation through a false paradigm. He was not going to die. His brother was not being preferred over him. He and his brother were both going to be just fine. His parents and the other adults would never think of doing such a

thing to him. He was too important, valuable and loved, for that to enter their minds.

When the boy realized the Truth his inner misery began to melt away under the warm rays of the doctor's reassurance. Once in touch with Reality as it really was, He realized that he was important, valuable, safe and loveable. That restored his emotional well-being. As Jesus once said,

“... The truth will set you free.”

(John 8:32)

But can you imagine the damage that false pattern did—all the while he thought it was true? Many abused, neglected children actually do go through entire lifetimes suffering real rejection and abandonment that burn gaping holes in their souls! They live a nightmare, with damage that cannot be denied or explained away. They stagger under the weight of heartbreaking, crazy-making patterns about themselves and about life, that people they loved and trusted branded into their brains. That is all that they know about ‘reality.’ But that is not all there is.

Are you struggling with something like that yourself? Have you been harpooned and led to believe that you are worthless, useless, unimportant, unacceptable, unlovable, and no good? Could it be that you’ve tried to ‘forget about it,’ and stuffed it down deep inside some subconscious filing cabinet, and aren’t even aware of it any more? Could there be some toxic, festering pockets of emotional acid locked up within you? Have you been on a treadmill of performance, trying

all this time to ‘make up for how inadequate, defective, and unlovable you think you are? Have you become addicted to something you’ve learned to use to numb the pain of it, out of your conscious remembrance?’

Not all are as fortunate as the little boy who got a timely, straight explanation, not by a long shot. Like our retired friend in our introduction, they are caught in false, crazy, mind set patterns for decades, and never have them cleared up. Many die still convinced that their naive, childhood assumptions and the patterns they developed, are absolutely true.

Why does that happen? Because mentally and emotionally they got stuck and remain ‘adult children.’ Their minds still follow false mistaken childhood thought patterns. Children are not very far along in human development yet. They are inexperienced, naive, and do not have much ‘editing’ ability. Those who are stuck at that childhood point, retain those same childish viewpoints and thought patterns, for decades.

Adult children had caretakers and authority figures that really did not know what they are doing! They were not wise, effective caretakers and teachers. Often, they themselves were wounded children, inexperienced and immature, operating in adult bodies. In addition, sometimes, they were downright, out of control—abusers! All of these things contributed greatly to the problems of their hypnotized victims.

The main reason why they stay trapped is that later, when they can do something about it, **they never admit to themselves and to the people in**

their life, that they have a problem, and need help.

Help is available, and God is ready to meet and help them in their need. But they never reach out. They never begin the struggle to learn new patterns and grow. Therefore, they remain—adult children—totally stuck, knowing nothing about renewing their mind and nothing about living free, and experiencing well-being.

God designed our brains to work in a certain way. We are habit creatures. Habits are **PATTERNS** that we learn to follow repeatedly. As we grow and learn to fit in, we gradually develop our versions of the lifestyle patterns that prevail around us. They become the mental structure that will repeatedly determine how we will think, interpret, feel, speak, act, and react. Cultures, politics, media, religion, families and the way any significant individuals treat us, deeply influence the way we learn to see things and go on thinking, as a result.

We automatically obey these set patterns. They steer and determine our outcomes, from a subconscious ‘auto pilot’ control center deep within us. Everything is fine if our patterns are true and healthy. But should they prove defective, we are in big trouble—because we are pre-programmed to automatically fail.

We derive patterns from our own fallen human nature, our original, family system, and our culture. They begin developing right at the beginning, when we are compliant, naive children. By puberty, we are already deeply established in them. The patterns are now like ‘riverbeds,’

dug and worn into our brain. Now they actually channel and influence our mental energy, like riverbeds channel water. They affect us like mental, filtering ‘eyeglasses,’ with a particular prescription and tint that determine how everything will look to us and what it will mean.

These life-controlling patterns are called: **PARADIGMS** (pronounced: pair-a-dimes). If they are based on God-given wisdom, they bless and enhance your life. If they are false, crazy and sinful, they force you, down mental ‘cattle chutes,’ channeling all your perceptions and thought processes, between their solid walls.

When you reach the damaging destination they are forcing you to, you end up trapped in their pre-determined ‘corral,’ like it or not. After you have allowed yourself to enter the walls of the ‘cattle chute, it is as if your own brain closes the door behind you, and you have very little choice, but to go on, to the inevitable outcome.

Because our brains tend to follow and obey the paradigms we have already accepted as true, we are prone to accept anything new that comes at us, **IF** it seems compatible with our pre-existing paradigms. It will then feel comfortable and agreeable to us. In addition, we will have no trouble accepting, favoring, and assimilating it.

This is the reason why you will instinctively make a beeline toward a little cluster of people you already know, should you walk into a large reception hall, packed full of strangers. The strangers would not fit your paradigm of having a good time.

However, those you already know, and are familiar with, would.

On the other hand, any data that seems alien to what you are already used to, (even if it is God's Revelation) makes your brain balk and automatically tend to filter out the incoming data. You will want to distance yourself from it. You will feel disturbed and uneasy, compelled to resist or even shut down. The automatic resistance you feel may be so great, that you will actually tend to bail out of the situation by changing the subject, getting angry, arguing, withdrawing, sabotaging, or even nodding off to sleep.

Have you ever encountered someone you just could not understand? At those times, you may feel like pulling your hair out and screaming in frustration: 'why can't you see what I am trying to tell you? I cannot believe you're saying that!' We see this all the time in matters of religion, personal style, and politics.

The other person probably feels the same as you do. It is not always malice or stupidity. Often the impasse arises because each of you is using a paradigm that contradicts that of the other. Each pattern, structure or system has its own perspective slant (eyeglasses) and line of logical reasoning (cattle chute). It will make perfect sense and seem 'normal' to whoever is used to operating in it—even if it is obsolete, wrong, or actually crazy.

Your conflicting mental structures lead each of you in opposite directions. Yet each feels perfectly correct, justified, and convinced that the other is wrong. In order for the two of you to come to a mutually satisfying, workable

agreement, one, or both must undergo a massive paradigm shift. At least one, must 'see a new light,' convert over to, absorb and adopt a new viewpoint and pattern that his or her internal, mental guidance system can accept and begin to follow.

The internal computer or guidance system is an impersonal mechanism. It does not care what you program into it. It listens to you and to whatever you tell it to heed. It accepts whatever you give to it, just like a photographic plate will take whatever it is exposed to, even if it is false or wicked.

However, once you have programmed it with lots of repetition, it works automatically and continues to run you and your life, according to what you gave to it. You program it first. Then, once it is programmed, it automatically runs your life accordingly.

Thus you can have learned skill, learned success, learned clumsiness, learned sadness, learned rage, learned fear, learned inferiority, learned victimhood, learned depression, learned isolation and learned helplessness. These are all paradigms or patterns that people adopt and slavishly, automatically, obey thereafter. It is something they pick up along the way. It is not who they really are. However, an unsuspecting victim of such a pattern will tend to identify with it. That is very powerful Reality. It deserves your serious attention.

Until you can seriously acquire new patterns, the old ones will be automatic formulas or prevailing recipes. They will run your life, like car tires that continually slip into deep, pre-formed ruts in a dirt road. The danger is that we can easily develop

‘paradigm sclerosis’ and stop growing. We can get so set in our ways that we identify with our paradigms and are stuck with them. Instead of realizing that we merely picked them up along the way (like mud on a car bumper), we think our paradigms are who and what we are! Nevertheless, the truth is, if we picked them up along the way, we can lay them down along the way. Otherwise, it would be impossible to repent or renew our minds.

Imagine a little girl, deeply traumatized by sexual abuse when between three and seven years of age. She is emotionally stuck and entranced with those very deeply impressed childhood viewpoints and issues. She is convinced she is bad, dirty, guilty, and disgusting. She sees herself as a pile of hopelessly damaged goods. She becomes and identifies with the horror inflicted on her. She cannot grow beyond those old, traumatic experiences and the thought patterns to which they gave rise. So, even now, her thoughts, perspectives, decisions and emotional climate are all still controlled by the same, three to seven year old issues, mind-set, anger, toxic shame and fears.

Now, because of her mind-set, she is a compulsive controller. She operates in naiveté, immaturity, rigidity, magical thinking, and insensitivity to the needs of others. She will frequently regress to the part of her brain where the deeply embedded childhood feelings, perspectives and patterns are stored. She will think, feel, talk, look, expect and act like a wounded child, trapped within an adult female’s body, living in the past, not really in touch with the current reality going on around her.

The traits she repeatedly exhibits are appropriate for wounded children. But, in people already several decades old—married, with children and major career responsibilities—those same traits are highly offensive, intolerable and disastrous for everyone concerned.

Such a person would be living out the definition we use for codependency. It goes like this:

Codependency is a false, damaging pattern of living, derived from our fallen human nature, our original home, and the culture we live in. It causes:

- 1) Arrested personal growth and development.
- 2) Compulsive hyper-sensitivity to whatever is going on around us,
- 3) A habitual lack of awareness of what is really going on within us. If we fail to have this treated, it will result in massive spiritual blindness, and life-controlling addictions.

Such destructive patterns and the ‘stuckness,’ or arrested personal development they cause, is why terms like, ‘**codependency,**’ ‘**abuse victim,**’ and, ‘**adult children of dysfunctional families**’ were coined.

People still connected to and controlled by the patterns of the past, will not grow beyond them emotionally or spiritually. The mental and emotional ‘cords’ tethering them to the past relationships must first effectively be cut. But adult ‘children’ are misled, wounded, unhealed people, so preoccupied and enmeshed in childhood patterns and inner distress, that they can’t grow past them and develop properly. They do not

make effective spouses, parents, and leaders or care takers because they simply have not developed the maturity and skills necessary. The past preoccupations must be resolved and their own needs must first be met.

Children, by nature are in constant need of care. They cannot do much for themselves. Their caregivers are in charge of doing such things. Nevertheless, if the appointed caregivers did not properly meet their emotional needs, they grow physically, but not emotionally. If they marry and

have children, the children of these adult children will probably not get their emotional and developmental needs met properly either. You cannot give what you do not have. You cannot teach what you do not know. You cannot lead others where you yourself have never been. Children, preoccupied with their own neediness, cannot successfully raise other children and effectively fill their emotional tanks -- until they go back, and get their own tanks filled first.

AND THEN—THE JUDGMENT

(Rom. 2: 12-16)

When God reveals Himself, and we finally see the Truth about Him, we suddenly also see our own state of total, spiritual bankruptcy and corruption of heart. Then, we no longer think of comparing ourselves to other people that we think we can look down on. Instead, we stand in stark contrast to the holy, perfect standards of God. He became Human, and lived a life so perfect and beyond our best efforts that it drives us to despair of ever being able to even come close to matching it.

We feel naked, before the devastating purity and uncompromising Justice of God's judgment. He will not measure us against each other. He will use the perfect plumb line of Christ, against which He will measure each human and every deed. After that inner 'lightning flash' of revelation, we can see that Christ's perfect Human nature exposes and discredits our sinful, corrupt nature. The two are totally incompatible and mutually exclusive. Our fallen nature then appears like a facial tissue daring to approach and get close to a roaring blast furnace!

We are bankrupt. But our Creator yearns for intimate union with each of us! It is as if the blast furnace agonizes to find an effective way to redo the tissue's nature, to convert it from that of combustible paper, to that of fire. In such a case, the tissue would be 'reborn,' regenerated, into a little 'flame.' Suddenly, it would be completely at home, safe, and forever

compatible with, the white-hot Fire in the roaring blast furnace.

The awesome re-creation process by which God saves and bonds His beloved humans to Himself is what I call, *The Christ-Life Solution*. It makes marvelous transformation and divine union totally possible. It is within our grasp to truly see and receive the immense Love that is behind everything the God of the Bible does and says. We can learn to appreciate His hatred of the terminal cancer called 'Sin,' because it keeps us away from Him. When we understand what He is really doing, and why, and for whom He does it, it is impossible for us NOT to trust and marvel at the great Goodness, Mercy, and Love He pours out on our behalf.

Our Creator warns that each will give an account to Him. That does not depend on whether we like it or not. It does not depend on whether we agree or give our permission or not. He warns us that **IT WILL MOST CERTAINLY HAPPEN!**

He further warns us not to dare presume to approach His blast furnace of judgment as a self-centered, Christ-less, corrupt, independent agent. He does not want us to be devastated, forsaken and apart from Him forever. He wants us to be intimately, eternally, bonded to and compatible with Him and His Nature. That is why He took our sin and guilt upon Himself and nailed Himself with it to the Cross. He faced His own, roaring

blast furnace of Judgment, in our place, and sacrificed Himself, so that He could protect us, pay our penalty, and set us free to be one with Himself in a new, reborn, resurrected state.

Dare we miss the point? Dare we fail to heed His warnings? Dare we deny that our sinful, impure nature **must** be completely transformed and made compatible with His. Dare we remain content with our own pathetic efforts to ‘improve’ instead of listening to Him, and begging Him to make us into something entirely new?

We could never effect such profound and radical change by ourselves. Only He, our Creator, can. And He will, through His Christ-Life Solution. He gives us patterns that bypass the horror of eternal Condemnation. Through God’s patterns, we can realign our minds, and ‘re-wire’ our brains, to appropriate, identify with, and personally enjoy the wonderful, supernatural results of His Salvation.

The Apostle Paul worded it like this, in his letter to believers in Rome:

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern (paradigm) of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Replacing old paradigms with God’s paradigms) Then you will be able to test and approve (personally experience) what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Rom. 12:2)

Ponder the implications in these commands:

- First—All original patterns from this world, even the most religious ones, have one thing in common—*THEY RESIST AND OPPOSE GOD’S PARADIGMS!* Because, even at best, they are **humanistic, or, self-centered!**
- Second—God’s paradigms are completely different. They give a completely different view of things, with a completely different priority system and viewpoint. They are ***CHRIST-centered!*** The Spirit of God, through the Apostle Paul, commands believers to appropriate the new, rather than allow themselves to be squeezed back into the mental paradigm molds of their original, self-centered, pre-Christ existence.
- Third—he implies that without renewing our minds, we will never personally experience the transforming, astounding results promised. The next step—once we see the light—is to allow the Holy Spirit to empower us to act out the patterns. Without that, it is nothing more than theory, dreaming, and hot air.
- Fourth—When we remove internal resistance to Christ’s absolute Lordship over us, we become psychologically and emotionally able to truly love and obey God with *ALL* our heart, with *ALL* our soul and with *ALL* our strength. That is when we truly can know and live with God. (Cf. Jer. 29: 11-13; James 1:5-8).
- Fifth—The inner ‘lightning flash’ of revelation, brings us into active agreement. Then we grow in faith, leaving the ‘baby food’ stages behind. We hunger for more solid, substantial spiritual food. Christ-centered paradigms prepare the way for God to reveal Christ in us, and then through us! A level,

highway appears, in the barren desert of our once Godless, heart and mind. Christ-Life enters and freely flows through us, like rivers of Living Water. He transforms the desert in us and around us into a lush, green oasis.

- Sixth—this happens as soon as our thought patterns coincide with, and actually mirror **GOD’S ABIDING, INDWELLING PRESENCE WITHIN US.** When we truly consider our independent, self-centered life to be dead, and realize that we are powered solely and exclusively by God Himself, then our brain will allow us to experience that awesome mystery for ourselves.
- Seventh—*You cannot transmit 220 power through 110 wiring.* It is impossible for the Holy Spirit to transmit the Power and Fruitfulness of Christ-Life

(Scripture calls that ‘the new man’) through self-centered attitudes, perceptions, wiring and patterns of fallen, rebellious Adam (‘the old man’).

The computer that runs our personal life (mind, brain, and nervous system) has been sabotaged. Satan slipped a deadly ‘virus’ called, ‘THE LIE,’ into our ‘hard drive.’ (‘You shall be as God by your own efforts.’) As long as we buy into that delusion, the prince of darkness embeds his talons into our very soul, and deprives us of Christ’s Salvation.

The false data of Satan’s Lie contaminated all data in our data banks, so that God warns us:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight” (Prov. 3: 5-6)

THE SEED

Scripture tells us that life is governed by God's sovereignty, but that it also operates according to His laws of 'sowing and reaping.' (Cf. Gal. 5:7-10) That being the case, let's consider a basic element of this beautiful creation that God has made—the awesome mystery of the life that is contained in seeds.

Allow me to construct a hypothetical scenario to illustrate. Let us consider a tiny grain of corn. Imagine that Earth has, in every region, a climate in which this little corn seed can grow and thrive.

Now imagine a capable gardener who has the wisdom to see seeds for what they really are. He only has this one seed. However, because of his deep understanding of the Creator's ways, he respects and accepts this seed, just the way it is, as an awesome treasure.

He expertly plants and begins to tend that one seed. Then, when it has grown and born fruit, he begins to parlay its fruit, season after season. He keeps it going, on and on, and on, and on.

If that were possible, how much of the earth's land surface would that kind of gardening eventually cover, with the life that was contained within that, one, apparently insignificant seed? The answer of course would be: 'ALL OF IT!'

In addition, if there were twenty billion other, identical planets available, how much of their land surfaces would that continuous gardening cover with what that original little seed produced? Again, we would end up with the same, astounding answer: 'ALL OF THEM!'

Who would have guessed that such astounding potential could be contained in

something so small and so seemingly insignificant as a seed of corn? How could something so little, be so unbelievably limitless? In addition, how immense must the Mind of the Creator of all seeds be?

Notice how many different seed varieties that Creator has produced. Notice how many of each kind He has given us, and notice how many of them are so totally disregarded, mistreated, neglected, and wasted—by us.

The secret to unlocking the power within seeds is that you must accept, love, and encourage them tenderly and gently, to grow and grow. Conversely, you dare not despise, reject, abandon, or abuse them. Otherwise, come harvest time, you will reap nothing of any value. You will have to learn how to beg. No. Serve the seed, and the seed will grow for you and bear you much fruit. Neglect it, and it remains dormant – and so does your life.

We must learn the wisdom of gardening seeds. With so much power and wealth in our hands, how could there be so much poverty and hunger, emptiness and sterility in this world? With so much to work with, how is it that we spend so much time and energy focusing on what we think is wrong, or missing, and bemoaning what we think we don't have? How foolish that would be.

Now think some more. Think back to the moment of your conception. At that beginning point of your life, what were you? As what did you begin? Yes, that's right, semen – that is the Latin word for—A SEED! You were a microscopic,

insignificant, seed. You, the seed, fertilized the egg in which you began to develop, and thereby became one of those awesome human beings, created by God.

You were not large or impressive then. But look how far you have come and how much you developed since then. You are tremendously different now. Who would have guessed then, what you have grown to be now? Yet, what is seen in you now, was always contained, potentially, even back there at the beginning, when you were so tiny.

But how much more of you remains to be unfolded and appear from within? Of course, that will happen only if you allow yourself to develop and (like a wise gardener), stimulate and tend to your own growth.

So, where are you now? Are you a Ph.D.? Or one of those 'geniuses' that everybody raves over? If you stay on track for a genius level of growth and development, then you will probably use ten to twenty percent of what you have to reveal to the world. If you are not a genius or a Ph.D., then what are you on track to develop and reveal to the rest of the world? One percent? Two? Less? Do you think your Creator is content with that percentage of development? Do you think that is all He intended? And will that truly satisfy and fulfill you?

Why are most magnificent human seeds, with such awesome, God-given, blueprint specifications so universally under-developed? What is putting a lid on us? Why are we developing and using so little of what God has put into us?

Could abusive treatment and neglect do it? Could false paradigms, and the crippling wounds, rejection, abandonment, fear, and shame that come from such treatment be to blame? Yes. I believe those are major reasons for such universal mediocrity. It certainly is

not God's idea. But we are too scared to take God's immense visions for us seriously.

God must heal our wounds, with our cooperation, and replace the awful mental thought patterns that cause so much havoc and damage in His Garden of Creation. Because of these things, the Garden has become a barren, desert wilderness.

However, do not despair. God does not. Every desert is loaded with trillions of seeds. They have been there for centuries, ever since the beginning, dormant. He put them there! And they are still full of potential life and creative power, just waiting to be gardened.

Find a way to water the desert and presto, wherever the water can reach, the seeds, lying dormant there, will swell, burst, and explode into lush, fruitful life. This can be true in your life, even if it is now a desert. God has a magnificent way to abundantly 'water' the deserts contained in countless people's lives.

Do not obsess over the dry, barren, desert-like aspects of your life. Forget about what is wrong. Forget what you do not have. If it is missing, you cannot garden it and work with it. So, don't waste any time and energy over what isn't there. Seeds may not look like much, but at least they are there, waiting for you to work with them. If it is not real, then you have nothing to work with. If you cannot work with it and take care of it, then forget about it.

Start looking for the seed-like aspects of the Kingdom of Heaven. It has invaded the earth. It is all around you. Notice what is here, that you can work with, even if it is as small as a mustard seed. The big deal is that it is there, and if it is, you have got something substantial, with

endless potential, to work with and to garden.

But you have more than just one seed. You have endless amounts of seed contained in each part of the garden of your life. Look again at all your real assets: your family, health, friends, your job, property, knowledge, experience, your God-given talents and gifts, and any reality you happen to find yourself in right now.

It may be a desert, but for Heaven's sake, look at all of the seeds imbedded within it! Now that you know what could be done with even one seed, consider what you could do with so many. Can you learn to accept, care for, and garden what is real in your life to mature fruitfulness?

LET'S THINK ABOUT IT:

There are some basic characteristics common to all seeds, in terms of what they all do and need, in order to be productive and fruitful. For example:

- All they can be in the future is genetically coded into them. Their Creator does that right from the beginning. A corn seed has the secret of what it is going to be, at every stage, within it. A melon seed has the secret of what it shall be, encoded within as well. They already know what they are. They cannot be anything else. It is only a matter of allowing them to unfold and reveal what is within them, to the rest of the world. False paradigms wreak havoc with our true self and true makeup, by leading us off track and preventing us from following the God-given patterns that would properly feed, nurture, and develop us.
- Thus, it is silly to try to shame, embarrass, or reject a melon seed because it is not more like the corn

seed or the acorn. You do not deal with it according to the way you would wish it would be. You deal with its true nature as it really is. You develop it and work with it. You draw it out of itself! You do not expect to change a melon seed into something else that is outside of it. You work with the melon seed as it is, with great respect for it and the One that created it. Then you help it to grow and fully develop so it can bear it's God-intended fruit.

- Seeds do not work the way critics would want them to work. They work according to what God made them to be. They are what they are, because of what God put into them—take it or leave it. They have nothing in their inner makeup that would enable them to be anything other than what God has created them to be.
- And why should they have to try? To demand that they be otherwise would be extremely crazy, and downright abusive. Unfortunately, this very type of abuse is inflicted on human being seeds, at various stages of their development, all the time, e.g., 'Why can't you be more like your brother?' 'Why must you be so inquisitive? Why can't this pastor be more like that one? Thus, in order to be successfully developed, every seed must first be respected, accepted, for itself, just the way it is, and gardened according to its God-given specifications.
- Seeds need to be accepted for what they are, but they also need

wise, timely gardening. They must be given a safe, nurturing kind of treatment and atmosphere in order for them to thrive and grow to full maturity and fruitfulness. (This is true for natural, physical life, and supernatural, spiritual life as well.) They need proper space and enough security to allow them to unfold and develop. They need someone that is not afraid of variety and uniqueness. They need someone to recognize what God has created in each seed, so he or she will have the wisdom to know what the needs and proper seasons of each seed are and care for them accordingly.

- Seeds need validation and permission to be exactly what they are, without apology or shame. Seeds do not thrive and grow properly when they are mistreated, rejected, or neglected. But as soon as they get the tender, loving acceptance and care that they need, they get healthy and grow at an amazing rate. This nurturing, safe, caring provides 'optimum growing conditions'. It would be like a greenhouse atmosphere, calculated to give the seeds everything necessary to enable them to achieve 100% (or as close to that as possible) growth and maturity.
- Seeds need to be protected from noxious, toxic elements in their environment if they are to achieve maximum health and growth. The more a seed is damaged and deprived of basic necessities, whether it be vegetable, animal, or human, the less of its true potential fruitfulness it will develop and make actual.

- When a seed is put into proper growing conditions, it always produces its own kind. It yields more than was originally planted, and the yield always comes at a later season, right where it was planted. Thus, wise gardeners learn to be patient with the seeds and work according to the God-given laws that govern them.
- Seeds develop gradually rather than suddenly. And the end of the growth process is universally predictable. There is no guesswork, no need to wonder what will happen. Once the seed planting process is begun and allowed to progress, the end results (if you understand the nature of the seeds), come harvest time, are certain.

In The Christ-Life Solution, we learn to integrate the paradigm of The Seed in the way we view ourselves, other people, and the situations of our life. **The way you 'garden' a seed, becomes our pattern for the way we have a healthy, relationship—with ourselves, with God, and with others.** It teaches us the impact of Paul's words in Galatians 6:7-10, when he warns us: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked. For as a man sows, so shall he reap..."

That all-important, God-given paradigm gives us a sense of direction and an instinct for what would be true, right, nurturing, and appropriate in how we treat others and ourselves. And it gives us a sense of what would be damaging, inappropriate and foolish. It teaches us that even every thought, reaction

judgment, and choice, is a seed, planted in the field of our mind, and in the minds of others. And it helps us realize that once the seeds are accepted and planted into our own minds, predictable results are sure to follow.

This law is a wonderful motivation for really digging into God's revealed Word, for learning Christ-Life principles, and for maturing into healthy self-management and control, accountability, responsibility, and wise forethought. It is freedom because it gives us free choices with predictable results that we have the power to choose. Thus intelligent, cooperative use of that freedom can affect the future quality of our life enormously.

From that base, we learn a new way of seeing ourselves, seeing others, and taking care of the real, actual seeds God has entrusted to our care. Then, once we learn the patterns of gardening ourselves, we branch out and learn to apply the same paradigm to learn a brand new, creative way to nurture our relationship with God and with everything and everyone else around us. For example:

- A word or a concept could be a seed for a letter, a story, a book, a series of books, a scientific breakthrough etc.
- A brief encounter with any other person could be the seed of a wonderful friendship, or a marriage, or a partnership of some kind, or a massive organization, ministry, national movement etc.
- A simple, menial task or the human need that corresponds to that task could be the seed of a productive career, a genius-level solution, an entire industry, or a dynamic, high-

impact ministry. The paradigm we choose to view these things through can force us to overlook opportunities under our nose, or to take them as far as they will take us. But remember, how it all turns out after you first encounter it, will depend on what paradigm you choose to view it through and respond.

- A situation that most people would call 'a problem' could be the seed of a brand new idea. It could become an invention, a lucrative product many people would need and want, a new venture in a new direction that nobody ever thought of before.

Learn and absorb the Christ-Life way of seeing Reality (with a view toward always overcoming evil with good). From then on, whether it's at home, at work, on the streets, at church or in your support group, view all of Reality as a seed—THE SEED OF A CREATIVE OPPORTUNITY. It is an opportunity for God's Presence and Activity to grow and develop in you, and to overflow from you. And it is an opportunity for Him to garden you, making you more and more of a mirror for His awesome Wisdom, Power, Love, and Fruitfulness. If He can do that, He will be able to garden the Reality that is all around you as well – through you!

Any reality, when it first arrives, is unfinished. It is RAW MATERIAL. It's waiting to see how you will choose to view it (through what paradigm), how you will choose to react and respond to it. What will you choose to do with it, and what will you will decide that it will do to

you or for you? You will respond either from a God-centered, 'gardener' paradigm, or from a critic/abuser paradigm.

Reality, in that sense, is viewed as your garden, the raw material part of your life. And you get to choose what you will allow God to do with that ground, and what you, in cooperation with Him, will choose to plant in it, now that you know the laws of sowing and reaping.

That of course will set a whole, cause and effect, chain reaction in motion, that will eventually result in some kind of growth or crop—come harvest time. And you, the one who chose what you would plant in it, must sign your name to the result and claim responsibility for whatever it ends up to be.

When you use this paradigm seriously, you begin developing "Gardener Eyes." You learn to respect and see the awesome Divine potential inherent in each seed of Reality. You also develop new 'wiring' for a lifestyle pattern geared toward freedom, creativity, personal responsibility, success, and

good results, or, in short, mature Christ-Life.

We will constantly refer to this paradigm in the course of our work. As we move on, it will deepen in meaning and richness, and will become more a part of the way you will learn to think and look at whatever is happening in your life.

The new thought patterns that will gradually form within you will be compatible with Christ's Agape Love, and the Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Gentleness, Faithfulness, Goodness and Self-control that His Presence within causes to flow through us. These are Christ-Life characteristics. And they must have compatible Christ-Life mental paradigms and wiring so that the Holy Spirit can transmit them into us and bless the world around us -- through us.

THE GARDENER

“I am the true vine, and My Father is The Gardener.” (Jn. 15: 1)

In human relationships, there is a heavenly level of maturity and skill. God commands us to operate from it. It is: to be able to regard the Reality of each moment of our lives, the way God Himself looks at it, i.e., through God’s ‘Gardener Eyes.’

The Gardener’s paradigm gives us a whole new attitude toward whatever is and whatever happens. It enables us to ACCEPT Reality as it is, and lovingly work with God, in the midst of it, no matter what it may be. It enables us to care for it, rather than adding to the abuse and damage, it has already suffered.

A skillful gardener can take wild, untamed land and gradually transform it into a beautiful, well-ordered, productive garden. He accepts whatever Reality he first encounters, in the sense that he is willing to start with that and go to work on it. He sees the possibilities and potential for good within it, and plies his skill to make it appear, until he transforms it into a beautiful, fruitful garden.

*The essential pattern in The Gardener’s way of dealing with Reality is to **be open to it, accept it, and then, use your response to transform the raw material within it into something good.** The Gardener mentally and emotionally remains open to whatever it is, and accepts it the way it is. A gardener always starts by accepting the Truth, just the way it is.*

That is not to say that God is fatalistic, or a slave to circumstances, like a helpless victim. It does not mean He is comfortable with sin and wrongdoing. It only means He can easily handle anything. The Agape Love of God,

accepts the Reality, and works with it the way it is. Then He goes on from there. He does not split in two directions at once, working with Reality but at the same time wishing it would go away or be something else. God, The Gardener does not think that way. That wastes time, energy and produces nothing good. He overcomes any evil found in Reality, by the awesome Creative Power of His Agape Love Nature.

Thus those, in whom the Spirit of God lives do not have to resort to all sorts of insane, craven, escape mechanisms. They do not live in contempt, or fear, simply because they lack the skill to cope or deal with the way things really are. They do not look to themselves alone, they look to the perfect image and likeness of The Gardener, Christ, Who has promised to live and work in and through them!

So to one, in whom Christ lives, present Reality is full of dormant seeds. They are already there, always. We can begin the planting, nurturing, and growing process that is necessary for eventual fruitfulness. At any stage of that process, bad, wrong things may befall us. The seeds we try to grow may be woefully immature, mere sprigs, not doing well at all. They may start out, diseased, bruised, spotted or somehow, ‘not good enough.’

But, because The Gardener lives in us, we can trust in His infinite Ability. He can easily handle it. He can accept it, as is. Then He wisely discerns what that particular plant needs in order to recover, heal, and begin growing properly. The Gardener can see it the way it is, but he

also sees how it will be, once He has taken care of it and has given it what it needs to be well and yield fruit.

It is how great artists like Michaelangelo work. They see a large block of granite, but they see something else too. They see the magnificent form of a statue hidden within. People without his wiring cannot see it. But he can. So too, God, The Gardener, is intent on bringing to light the beauty and potential that He originally put into this particular part of Reality. Thus we lovingly learn to see what He sees, and begin to discover what God has already put within each and every seed, each and every person, each and every circumstance.

*Because of this way of operating, The Gardener is consistently prosperous, successful, and effective. So are they who put all their trust in Him and follow His ways. **Remember: we are talking about human relationships and whatever circumstances in which you find yourself! There are no exceptions.***

*God's workers in the Garden engender a lot of gratitude, respect, friendship, and loyalty on the part of the 'plants.' They welcome him (her) and seek their company. They give their trust, cooperation, and love to them. And, they thrive and bear fruit under their care. **AND EVERYBODY WINS, EXCEPT FOR SATAN!***

God sees us through His Gardener Eyes, even when we are His sworn enemies. He is not a victim of our behavior, or a slave to our circumstances. He is always free to be Himself. HE IS LOVE. Thus He gardens anyone who will allow it, and converts, even His sworn enemies, into gardeners. Then they begin to share in His Agape Nature, and learn to give it away to the ever-greening Garden. When God's Garden is dealt with according to His paradigm, everyone

concerned becomes a total beneficiary and prosperous winner.

Before God regenerates and trains us, we look at the world through critic/abuser eyes. We are selfish, self-centered and predatory. Our nature is Eros. Because we are so convinced that there are not enough good things to go around, we selfishly grasp the best and finest for ourselves, even if it deprives, hurts or kills others. But God's Agape is an infinite Source of Blessing. Agape wants the best and finest for all others, even if it kills Him. It is our fallen human nature to love whatever is willing to be and do what we want. But if it stops, or changes the way it performs for us, we reject and abandon it. It no longer conforms to what we think it ought to be. So, we judge it to be 'not good enough,' and trash it. Thus, our response to a bad thing always makes it end up even worse.

God is not at all like that. He is the God of the Resurrection! He delights in bringing what is dead back to Life! He loves whatever is, on this earth, regardless of what shape it is in. He wants to do whatever it takes to restore it to His original specifications He means it nothing but good, because He is Good. He knows the potential that He Himself put into His own Creation. He knows that if it gets what it needs, it will fully recover, bear abundant fruit, and become an immense harvest for our greatest benefit, and for His eternal glory.

Our critical, abusive paradigms cause us to be prejudiced, discriminatory, and abusive to ourselves, and to various aspects of Reality. We like and accept only certain kinds of weather, certain kinds of treatment, certain kinds of work, certain kinds of people, certain situations, feelings, and certain outcomes. But others

we abhor, avoid, forsake, and, whenever possible, destroy.

The more we do that, the less of real life we are wired to effectively handle, the more damage we do, and the more stress and disappointment we let ourselves in for. Why? Because when we discriminate and abandon sections of our garden plot, a lot of our Reality goes to weeds and gets even drier, sicker and more barren than it was before we arrived on the scene!

Neglect of the Garden generates anger, fear, insecurity, hopelessness, and negativity. These become the power and motivating force in our life. Then, after so much neglect, when the garden is truly 'not-good-enough.' We scorn, reject, and abuse it even more. Thus, we become powerless, impoverished slaves to circumstances we ourselves keep creating.

Nevertheless, Reality is still Reality. It will not go away or change, just to suit our egocentric expectations. Perfectionist, critical attitudes program us to shut down in many areas and circumstances. They lock us into anger, sadness, self-pity, depression, powerlessness, fear, and relational failure. They program us to shun certain people and situations, to judge, fear, attack and abuse them. Why? It is the negative pattern through which we are used to viewing Reality. With such a paradigm, nothing will ever be 'good enough.' How could a poor, fallen, demon-possessed world ever be 'good enough?'

*With such a paradigm, it is psychologically impossible for us to **REJOICE IN THE LORD, ALWAYS.** The best we can do is to rejoice in Him as long as everything is happening according to our wants and likes. At those times, we see God as 'good enough.' But at those other times, when we're not getting our way, He's not good enough. So we doubt Him, gripe, complain, get angry, become fearful and run away, as our taskmasters—the unacceptable circumstances*

and the feelings they generate—would dictate. That is the paradigm of an enemy of God and a craven, powerless slave! But the Kingdom of Heaven is not a matter of negative talk. It is a matter of Life-giving Positive Power!

*The Christ-Life Solution offers a brand new way of viewing and dealing with Reality. We practice viewing it, no matter what it is, or how it first appears, as nothing more than raw material, an opportunity to experience more and more of the risen Christ within us, and His ways. **From now on, we learn to consider all Reality, no matter what it is, as an integral part of the Christ-Life Course that the Holy Spirit wants to teach us. It is the raw material for the lab work of our ongoing Christ-Life training and growth!***

Now we learn to deal with Reality, the way it is, no matter what it is, as an opportunity to unleash and discover more and more of God's Wisdom and Goodness where it really counts—in every day life. We will learn to cooperate and interact with Him. We present all things to Him, and watch Him go to work with them, as He lives and expresses Himself through us.

*We will learn to view life, the way great oil painters view a blank canvas, or sculptors view unshaped blocks of granite or composers' view a random pile of musical notes. **RAW MATERIAL! Potential**—waiting for the Divine Artist, working through a human instrument to uncover and reveal all the good and beauty contained within. The good is already here, but God and Sons go to work, to make it manifest.*

We want to develop and install the wiring for "Gardener Eyes" into our own paradigm system. Gardener Eyes are

Creator Eyes, Heavenly Father Eyes, Artist Eyes and Freedom Eyes. With that kind of wiring, we learn to face, accept and work through Reality, in synchronization with God, regardless of what it is. Without this paradigm, we will have to fear and dread the Truth. We will try to twist Reality around into something else to suit our expectations, or else run away from it, because we won't know how to deal with it any other way.

According to God's original blueprint specifications, His plan for humanity is stated in this way:

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” (Gen. 2:15)

The Gardener Himself designed us to be His image and likeness. They were to do everything together, as One. Adam was entrusted with the care, protection, and nurture of the garden of God's Creation. And even now, that the world and our nature are fallen, that is still our function and purpose—to see to it that our Father's Garden thrives and is fruitful. But how can we tend and care for it when we resent, curse, fear, reject, condemn, and abandon it? Crazy, isn't it?

While it is true, that creation is now fallen, and has been corrupted, and badly damaged, The Gardener's agenda is to redeem, restore and heal it. Fallen or not, AGAPE, not judgment and condemnation, is still the Law of God for man's underlying motivation on this earth. If we learn to faithfully garden God's Garden, God, and the Garden can grow, cultivate, and garden us! To the extent that we reject and abandon the Garden, to that extent, we cannot be gardened ourselves.

Man is still to be the mirror image of the Gardener. That is the reason why he is to become very skilled in the ways of God and His Love. The world situation gets worse by the minute. The desert is expanding. We

really need gardeners, desperately. The world is crawling with critics and abusers. It's infested with them everywhere, especially in the realm of organized religion! We are ready at the drop of a hat to slander, undermine, sever, amputate and even maim and kill – for God. But notice—this very, very important point bears repeating:

You cannot tend and garden any bit of Reality, unless you first learn to accept it, just the way it is, even if it does not seem to be 'good enough' at first. Gardeners do not abuse and trash wounded, diseased plants. They nurse them back to health and help them to recover and begin growing and producing again.

Thus, a student in God's Gardener Academy approaches all and any bit of Reality with this way thinking:

- Who is the Creator, Lord and Owner of this bit of creation?
- Does Christ in me respect the Ownership of the Creator of this part of creation? Does He view it out of God's Agape Love, or does He view it through the eyes of a condemning, rejecting critic?
- Shall I deviate from what Christ does and view this through the eyes of a critical, abusive victim-slave, or should I view it through the eyes of a free-choice child of my indwelling gardener God?
- Am I to be overcome by the evil in this, or does the One that lives in me want to work through me to overcome the evil with His awesome, infinite God?

- What shape is this bit of Reality in, and what does it need from God working through me, to help it get healthy and grow properly?
- What are the seeds of opportunity for good that the Holy Spirit wants to show me hidden in the sands of this desert?
- What needs to be done right now, in order to make this bit of Reality better than when we first found it?
- To whom should I turn for the Wisdom, Power and Resources I need to know what this wounded part of The Garden needs?
- How can I honor, please and glorify the One that is here to reveal Himself through me?
- Should I fear this, or should I be in awe and respect of God?

LET'S THINK ABOUT IT:

This paradigm of The Gardener, and the 'gardener eyes' will be tools for us to use

from beginning of the Christ-Life Course until we step into eternity. They are tools for dealing with Reality, just the way it is, out of love and confidence, rather than out of dread and contempt. Get used to these tools. Use them in everything. Wire yourself to do everything with God and out from His awesome, indwelling Presence.

All Reality created by God has been blasted and wounded by Satan's rebellion. This is especially true of Mankind. But God is here to redeem, regenerate, recapitulate, reinstate, and restore it all. We are called to stop believing, obeying and mirroring Satan in his quest to destroy what God has created. We are to believe, obey, trust and mirror God in His quest to bless, water and transform the desert into a lush, green, fruit-bearing oasis.

THE CRITIC

*God reveals the original critic in Genesis 3. That dubious honor goes to Satan, who appeared to the man and the woman in the form of a serpent. If you read the creation account, you see that God was totally pleased and delighted, with His work of creation. Creation was Reality and Reality was perfectly acceptable to God. Repeatedly, He judges the results and calls it “Good!” And when He had finished with mankind, His masterpiece, He called them **“VERY GOOD!”** That was God’s judgment. That’s what He put into them and that’s what He saw when He regarded them.*

*God, The Creator, justly determines what Reality is and is not. But Satan decided he had a better idea. He was unhappy with the Reality God had created. Thus, He rejected it and The One Who created it. God and His ways were not good enough for Satan. What God had made him to be was not good enough. He wanted more—to be number One—to be as God. He created a false, alternative reality—in his own mind, for his own purposes. **It was a false, substitute paradigm of him as a divine being. It was not real; he just wanted it to be. He created La-La Land.***

God created all beings to depend upon Him for all their needs. He is committed to care for and protect, or ‘garden’ His Creation. That is Reality. For any creature to try to get along without God would be impossible unreality, or madness.

Just thinking up an alternate reality in your own mind does not make God’s real Reality disappear. Institutions are full of people who swear to be Napoleon Bonaparte! But that does not stop them from being who they really

are. Nothing stops God’s Reality. But failure to accept it makes a person crazy.

Satan was displeased with who and what he was. It was not ‘good enough.’ Then he began to pick apart the human Reality that God had placed in the Garden. He had a spiritual, mental and emotional disease called ‘Toxic Shame.’ It is a highly contagious disease—rebellion against God, His Reality, Creation, and His ways. Satan transmitted it to the two original humans and through them, to every other human generated ever since.

This sick shame causes you to be your own worst critic, to view yourself as flawed, defective and unacceptable. It creates an insane urge to take matters into your own hands to try to do something about it, to create an alternate self, an alternate world that will somehow be better, by conforming to your own expectations and specifications. It is the act of deifying your own understanding, rather than worshipping God and obeying what He reveals.

But since it is not real Reality, it leads to endless frustration. You cannot get real results from unreal ingredients. But as long as the toxic shame persists, you cannot stand your true self and the way your life really is. It is unacceptable. You, as you are, are unacceptable. So you get this endless urge to do something to try to get away from who and what you really are, and to get away from other unacceptable things as well. To do that, you have to try to create an alternate world, my world -- ‘my life.’

This alternative set of expectations—the way he thought things ought to be,

became Satan's false paradigm. But if what you think, believe, or do is based on a false paradigm, it cannot possibly turn out in a healthy, satisfying, fulfilling and productive way. If you shun God and try to draw from a fake, unreal one you made up for yourself, the real Reality that is right under your nose cannot be tended, protected and gardened to productive fruitfulness. When you fail to adequately Garden, your garden, it becomes 'weed-infested, dry, and barren.' So your fake one doesn't produce real fruit and neither does the real one you are abusing and rejecting.

That is the essence of what being a critic is. He starts by using this paradigm to judge himself. God called this 'eating of the tree in the center of the garden.' It was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Satan taught the humans to try to judge God:

"Shame on you, you are not good enough. You can be better than what you are now! Why don't you take matters into your own hands and try to become something better?"

Critics cannot connect with Reality. It is not good enough for them, because it does not conform to their expectations—the way, **they think, it 'ought to be.'** A critic's bag of expectations appears much more real and important, to the critic, than Reality itself! **He is obsessed with the way he wants reality to be, to the point of scorning, rejecting abandoning and trashing the actual reality that's really before him.**

In the mental institutions, those who stay busy trying to be Napoleon, can never really be who they really are. The tragedy of that is, that who they really are, can never be gardened. You cannot heal, nurture or garden something that you refuse to admit is real and belongs to you. You can only take care of whatever you are first willing to accept—just the way it is—and own.

The Reality we have to work with may not be that much at the beginning. In this fallen world, it never starts out 'good enough.' Remember the corn seed? You never start out with planets full of power and wealth. You always start with a seed. But why trash it? **It is the only real Reality around!**

Wouldn't it be better to take care of what you have, nurture it and garden it to more and more growth and productivity? Harvest time would be a lot more exciting if we did that, rather than working harder and harder to be something, or have something, other than what Reality really allows. What good is it to moan over what you do not have, or what you have already lost? Look at what you really have!

LET'S THINK ABOUT IT:

Wrap up a little corn seed and put it in a beautiful Christmas package, then give it to a critic, who does not know the awesome mystery of infinity that is contained in a seed. Watch his face when he opens the package and sees what is inside. What will he do and say?

"This is some kind of a joke... right?"

And when he discovers that it is not a joke, that the seed is all he is getting, he will probably snort something like:

'What good is this stupid thing? It isn't good enough. I don't want it.' (In gardener school, we call that sort of attitude and response: 'Peeing on the plants.')

Then he throws the seed away and forgets about it. And yet, if he had the Wisdom that comes from having 'Gardener Eyes,' he would be willing

to start with that little, insignificant-looking bit of Reality. He would **accept it, just the way it is**, and care for, nurture and parlay it into an absolute fortune of abundance, freedom and power.

He would be mirroring the Love God has for us, and all His Creation, and he would mirror the wise way God habitually deals with us, **even though we all start out being His enemies!** Instead of mirroring God, the person, intent on being a critic, mirrors the sour, negative, discriminatory contempt of The Serpent. But remember, whatever you habitually reflect -- you serve.

After the fall, none of us has been 'good enough,' by God's standards. But wonder of wonders, we have a God who is not a critic. He is The Gardener of all gardeners. He even deals that way with the worst of humans, those who have done nothing but be critics and abusers.

It is for them and such as them, that He became Human Himself, and came to the rescue of those very, unlovable and undeserving people. It was on their behalf, to shield them that He said with His dying breath:

“FATHER, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING.”(Lk. 23:34)

And He commands us to deal, on that basis, from the Gardener's paradigm, with ourselves and with one another. (Jn. 15:9-17)

Critics think they are qualified to perform the God function of judging what shall pass and what will not. God warns them not to do it because of a spiritual and psychological law that is real and will not change:

“Do not judge, and you will not be judged...For with the measure you use, so will it be measured to you.” (Lk. 6:37,38).

Critics insist on judging based on self-centered exploitation (Eros). The criterion is, 'How well can you perform for me? What can you do for me? What can I get out of you? Then when it does not measure up to their homemade expectations, (what seed could?) they judge, reject, abuse, and abandon Reality.

And, later, when the rejected, abandoned part of the garden understandably does not produce much, the critic will really get bent out of shape and reject and abuse it even more. **To have critic eyes, is to be an abuser of what God has created, even if you only do it to yourself!**

Critics would take a corn seed and shame, blame and reject it for not being a full silo, or for not being an acorn, or a rose. Critics cannot accept Reality as it is and grow it into the beautiful thing that God created it to be. They assume:

- 1) God did not know what He was doing when He created the Reality so they try to take matters into their own hands and make it become something else. That violates the nature of the seed. Or,
- 2) If they accept the corn seed for what it is, they expect it to be a full-blown harvest right up front. If they cannot have the full harvest right away, they criticize the seed that could produce it, reject it, and throw it away because they

will assume that it is not 'good enough.' Critics know very little about God's pre-set growth seasons, or the laws of sowing and reaping. They want everything 'yesterday,' or else.

Remember: whether a critic realizes it or wills it or not, when they follow the paradigm of a critic, they are being

driven and corralled by the mental structure of the Serpent in the Garden of Eden. They gorge themselves on the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. They mirror the Serpent and embody his sick, dark, destructive mind.

THE BEACH BALL OF TRUTH

You are in the swimming area of a recreational lake. It is a beautiful day and there are many other people there. Everybody has a brightly colored beach ball and no two are alike. But these beach balls are not like ordinary ones, as we shall see. Along the entire lake and beach area, we notice that everybody is doing something different with his or her beach ball.

*You too have your beach ball, like those of the others. It is your **Beach Ball of Truth**—the Truth about you and your life, past and present. But there is a problem. You are so ashamed of your real self and your real life, and the real feelings you've developed, that you are overcome by an absolute terror of letting your **true** beach ball be seen by any of the other people.*

You run to the concession stand and purchase another beach ball that you think looks better. You run back out to the water and wade in. Now you begin to play with the other beach ball. At the same time, you do everything you can to stay on top of the real one to make sure that it stays completely submerged beneath you and never pops up into the light of day. You are terrified lest anybody see it and know that it is yours.

*You go through the motions of interacting with those around you. You chat, you joke and try to play with them a little. But your main preoccupation, what you are **really** doing, is spending tremendous amounts of attention and energy, struggling and wrestling to make sure nobody notices that there is another beach ball that you're keeping under water. You wiggle and wobble trying to stay atop that buoyant, slippery thing. And it wiggles and wobbles too, trying*

to obey God's laws of Creation to rise to the surface and to the light of day.

But you are determined not to allow it that freedom. Because you think you are so ugly, inadequate, repulsive and unacceptable, you grimly keep your beach ball of Truth hidden and stuffed down under the water, any way you can manage to do it. You dare not ease up for one second. If you do, that relentless, buoyant truth will get away from you, leap out of the water, and give you away. You wish you could rest, but the Truth Beast in the depths, must not show its ugly, shameful head. If it does, you will be exposed for the weak, helpless, limited, incomplete and dependent basketcase you really are.

That must not happen. You cannot quite remember why. It is just an unbreakable rule, an ancient taboo you have gotten used to obeying. You must control and repress the ball at all times. So you fight and struggle to stay on top of it, without a break in concentration. To let it slip out from under your control is unthinkable. You would rather die than let your true self be seen and known.

People around you see your choppy, erratic behavior. But they think you are just learning to swim, playing and having a good time. At least you hope that is what they think. But that is not it at all. You are a great swimmer, not a beginner. And you are having a miserable time. You are not enjoying yourself at all. You are scared to death. You hate yourself and your life. You are mortified and ashamed of them. You do not dare be seen in public with them.

Each minute is an eternity. What agony! It is like being on trial for your very life and survival. You sense so much danger, such terrific stress. It is really wearing you out. You hope something happens to distract people and make them focus attention on something else. You wish they would get tired and go home so you could finally stop having to stuff the beach ball, and catch your breath. At least then, you could leave the water too, and slink to your home where you would be alone, unobserved, and safe.

As you continue your grotesque gyrations, you notice some other people. They seem to like their beach balls. They are not even ashamed of them! They are bouncing them around on the water's surface. They, play catch, trade, exchange, share, and enjoy.

They look like they are having such a great time. They are not laughing at each other's beach balls. They are not criticizing or condemning, or putting anybody down. You would sure like to join in. It looks like so much fun and freedom. If only you could be like them. But of course, you are—so different—such a special case.

If you did what they are doing, everyone would be shocked. They would know you are the world's ugliest and most grotesque monster. They would probably throw up! You would be stripped naked under bright spotlights in a crowded arena filled with vicious, mocking jeering critics. They would heap tons of scorn and ridicule on you and chew you to pieces. No, you do not dare.

So, for hours and hours, months, years, decades, for as long as it takes, you stay atop your beach ball of Truth, to make sure it stays out of sight. And you keep wondering, 'What would it would be like, to be free to just be, free to be 100% okay' and at peace with Reality, just the way it is?'

LET'S THINK ABOUT IT:

People who have suffered abuse, ridicule, rejection and a lot of criticism feel shame like that. As long as they are shame-based, they are condemned to live like this all the time. They do not know what freedom it is to be yourself. They are hyper-intense. Their pressure level is usually at the 'lid blowing level.' Their intensity level is habitually on 'on the brink' mode, as if they were perpetually on trial for their life! They feel the crushing pressure of being in the World Series, the NBA championship, the Super Bowl, and any other big stakes issue knowing they're totally unprepared and not equipped, all at the same time.

They cannot have fun. They do not know what it is. To them, this is about living or dying, not fun. For some reason, fun is against the rules of their inner system. They are condemned, by their pre-programmed rules, to hide, control, pose and posture, manipulate and deceive. They will also be very quick to criticize other people's beach balls of Truth, as a diversionary tactic to keep attention away from their own.

That is what they are convinced they must do in order to 'be okay' and feel safe. They have been doing it for so long, they could not imagine what it would be like to not do it any more. So they keep it up, and assume everybody else has to be that way. So, no one is safe.

They know no other way of life. They will never experience real, intimate, human connecting and bonding. In order to share yourself and bond with others, you would first have to accept yourself. If you

do not, you will not have a self to bond to others or share with them. You cannot share what you will not first own. So, anything you do try to share, will be as shallow, phony, and unsatisfying as trying to eat latex hamburgers or plastic tacos.

People, who live in this kind of Toxic Shame, are living out of a sinful, fear-based, lone wolf system. Their rules for avoiding intimacy go something like this:

- **I cannot trust anybody.** It is not safe for me to be real. When I try to be who I am, reveal where I am, say what I think, or express my true feelings, I will be shamed, blamed, rejected and abused in some way. I must keep everyone at arm's length or I will surely be hurt.
- **I cannot talk about real issues.** Let sleeping dogs lie. Let's have peace at any price, and not cause any more trouble than we already have. If I cannot say anything 'harmless' or inane, then I will not say anything at all. If it is not good enough the way it is, I will trash it, hide it, and get some counterfeit substitute. I will give the impression that it is really I. I can't allow anyone else to bring such things up either. Talking about theirs might stir mine up. We cannot have that.
- **I cannot reveal my true feelings.** I will pretend, and make others think what I want them to think, so nobody will know what's really going on with me. If I am angry, I will say I am not. I will say I am just tense and tired. If I am needy, I will distract myself with other matters. If I am hurting, I will find a way to numb out. I will get drunk,

overwork, take dope, have some kind of unreal sex, and get lost in the boob tube or something else. I will freeze and numb my feelings with whatever works. Then I will not have to face and care for what's really going on in my heart of hearts.

- **I must make sure everybody thinks I am all-together, and am on top of everything.** If I have some kind of pain or sorrow, or need, I will come across as if I am just fine. If I feel symptoms, I will not tell anybody. They might think I am human and needy, and in some sort of trouble. I cannot have that. I must keep it to myself.

In this kind of personal or group system, you can see that Truth and Reality are going to take a real beating. So is intimacy and bonding. They will be non-existent. That is great for the Father of Lies, but it is murder when it comes to expecting the Spirit of Truth to work in the midst of that. He will not. How could He. Energy and Power always seek the path of least resistance! It is one of God's laws of physics.

People that are wired to be that way at home will REALLY be that way with outsiders, even if they profess Christianity! Although the truth about you does not come in the form of a beach ball, you have to conceal your true self down inside of your subconscious 'basement.'

If, for some reason, you cannot share and express your true self with others, it is because you suffer from toxic shame. You do not realize that every human being, descended from

Adam and Eve, is just as much of a wounded, weak, helpless, incomplete, needy basket case as you are. We are all in the same boat! The equality, and the freedom that comes once you realize it, is mind-blowing. And thinking you are better or worse off than anyone else, is insane torture and bondage.

Since you cannot accept yourself, **you do not have a true self to share in an intimate relationship, not even with God!** So, if you cannot give your true self, what are you giving to the people in your life? What are you really doing in your relationships? Where are you with God?

MIRROR DAY

Let's create an imaginary country. Like all countries, this one has its own culture, customs, and traditions. One tradition centers on how they initiate and integrate the children into their society.

It works like this: Every family observes a very special holiday and feast day for each child, male or female. It occurs on the child's third birthday, when they are developed enough to begin to think and learn, and while they are still young enough to be very impressionable, moldable, and teachable.

This special day is called—'MIRROR DAY,' because on that day, the three-year old child receives two awesome legacies from the family, two things that she has never had before. One: she gets to see herself in a mirror for the very first time in her life. Two: based on that very first impression of what is reflected to her in the mirror, she gets a descriptive name to supplement her legal name. This descriptive name will 'brand' a part, or role, or character into the child's brain. The child will believe, identify with, and, in many cases, continue to act it out, for the rest of her life.

That third birthday is 'unveiling' the child's identity and place in society. To prepare for this great event, families diligently keep the child away from ever seeing mirrors, pools of water, reflections in windows etc., in order not to spoil the powerful impact of this occasion.

Mirror Day is designed to give the child her very own paradigm of herself. Prior to that time, the family has given the child a very firm grasp of who and what everybody else is. Thus before Mirror Day, the child has already learned where everyone else fits into the 'pecking order,' she knows who is who,

and what is what. In other words, she has been given a firm grasp of what is 'NORMAL.'

*But on this momentous day, **the child gets to see herself.** Imagine her anticipation as her very own Mirror Day approaches. She sees everybody in the family, and their friends and relatives centering on her and making preparations, just for her, and the great day devoted to letting her know all about who she is.*

But suppose this one child was born into a family that had a couple of inveterate 'practical jokers.' They do not always pull pranks and set up elaborate roasts or schemes, but occasionally, when the specialness of the occasion stimulates this streak in them, they take great pains and spare no expense to play a joke. Now, they have decided to play one on this three-year-old.

The day before the event, the jokers go to an amusement park and rent a crazy distortion mirror from the proprietor of the 'Fun House.' They smuggle it into the house while someone else takes the child on an errand. Then they put a fancy drape over the mirror and set it up in the prominent part of the house, where the Mirror Day ceremony is to take place.

Of course, the child does not know what a 'Fun House' is, or what a crazy, distortion mirror is. She has never even seen a regular mirror, let alone a warped, distorted one. She only has the word of some other people for what a mirror is, and what happens on Mirror Day.

And based on what they have told her, she is convinced that every mirror is perfectly accurate and tells the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. So, she is a perfect set-up for what the conniving jokers are planning to do.

*The day of days comes at last. Relatives and friends stream to the house and soon it is packed with merry makers. There is music, food, drink, and gaiety. Finally the big moment comes. The parents approach the draped mirror. And the child, dressed in extra special finery, is led before the towering monolith. She stares at the imposing draped form in wide-eyed wonder and anticipation. Very soon now, she will finally get to see who **she** is.*

The mother and father ceremoniously remove the drape. Now the child, already knowing what 'normal' is, from her understanding of what everybody else looks like, takes her very first look as what she is sure will be a true, accurate and totally believable mirror-image of herself. Her little, internal, video camera is poised and ready to permanently record this most important of first impressions. And suddenly, there she is....

Oh God! The shocking impact of that first look—that monstrous, misshapen head and face...the ghastly, ugly, twisted body...the grotesque, revolting features...all of the ugliness...all at once. It hits the little girl with the shocking impact of an iron bar right across her face.

Her horror, dismay, and disappointment are etched all over her. This tells the pranksters that their 'harmless, little joke' is really working to perfection. They break into peals of laughter slapping each other's hands in an elated 'high five' salute, while the shocked guests look at each other in gaping disbelief.

Then going all the way, with their elaborate gag, the jokers point to the image in the mirror and then to the child. With absolute,

adult, authority figure believability, they dub her 'LITTLE MONSTER!'

Of course, not being able to reason through or edit what is happening, the child accepts the image mirrored back to her, and the name that goes with it, as her true and everlasting Reality, Legacy and Identity. It is branded, oh so deeply branded, into the very fiber and fabric of her tender, hopelessly gullible, soul.

The jokers have no clue concerning what they had just done to that child's mind, brain, and nervous system. They never suspect how deeply they have just formulated an entire life pattern and how they have cursed the child's mind and future.

They do not evaluate themselves by their performance, or its damage, but rather by their intentions. And all they intended was to lighten things up and have a little fun. What is so wrong with that? Their intention was to tell the child later that they were only 'kidding,' thinking that the child would forget about the joke and everything would go on as normal, as if nothing had happened.

(But something did happen. Something very, very permanent happened, something they will never be able to undo—a first impression, a vivid tattoo on the brain, a searing, burning brand embedded permanently into her brain.. And if the child does not get some serious help, that diabolical personal pattern will never be removed and replaced by the Truth.)

The child is suddenly unable to go on with the rest of the ceremony. But nobody really notices. The room has exploded into an uproar. Everybody is ranting and raving over what the jokers did, and fingers are starting to point in every direction. The jokers maintain their

innocence. They protest that they did not mean any harm.

The others berate them. Suddenly the great holiday and feast day has twisted back on itself and became a venomous serpent. It is a total bust, filled with hard feelings, wrangling, and acrimony.

The child runs from the room, sobbing, in utter agony. It was all her fault. If she were not such an ugly, defective monster, this beautiful day would not have been ruined. Why did she have to be so ugly, unacceptable, and unlovable? Why did God have to do this to her? Why was she ever born? How can she ever face the world again? How can the world ever look at her without screaming in terror, or at least, laughing themselves silly?

She makes her way to the dank, cool darkness of the basement, where it is quiet. There is no one here to see how ugly and grotesque she is. She is already seeing herself as a Beast in the basement, hiding, hurting, and isolating. The Beast has already begun to devour and swallow up her life.

In the agonizing solitude of that musty refuge, the corrosive acid of Toxic Shame begins to do its awful work. It bubbles up from deep within, seeping throughout the lagoon of her mind, permeating, contaminating, like murky, black putrescence, taking complete possession of the entire pool of once-clear water.

As the disappointment, shame and self-contempt begin to radiate from her, in all directions, they spill from her spiritual parts, into her physical brain, nervous system and body. Now it has her. It is mental and physical. She is filled with toxic shame in her soul, and the painful corresponding surges of emotional voltage that go with it begin to surge throughout her body. Shame has now taken up permanent residence inside her. The name keeps echoing in her head, burning

deep riverbeds of dark, permanent thought patterns through which her little mind will have to flow into the future:

MONSTER! MONSTER! MONSTER! MONSTER! You ugly, repulsive, stupid, sick, worthless MONSTER! You will never succeed in life. You don't have a chance. You will never be normal. Nobody will ever love you. You are no good. Why don't you just dig a hole and bury yourself in it and never come back out?'

LET'S THINK ABOUT IT:

This is what it is like to be a child victim of significant, active or passive abuse. The younger and more gullible the victim, the more deeply the acid of Toxic Shame etches disfiguring, spiritual, mental and emotional wounds into his or her soul.

For years afterward, repentant abusers who mirrored such things to the child may try to deny they ever did such a thing. They may try to convince the branded, seared mind of the child that it wasn't all that bad, or that 'they did not really mean it.'

And, as long as the victims remain stuck in the thought patterns of childhood naiveté and gullibility, it will never dawn on them that they did not have the problem. The people that were wrong and shameful were the abusers.

The repentant jokers or sympathetic relatives and friends may later try to comfort the child. But no matter what they say, the child will not believe them. She will assume that they are just trying to be 'nice.' She will interpret their attempts to set

things right as well-meaning lies and deceit. **Didn't she see the mirror with her own eyes? Weren't they like totally believable gods to her? Didn't they name her 'Little Monster?' Wasn't it Mirror Day?**

The monster paradigm burned within her, false as it is, will contaminate her every thought process and decision. Her internal computer will believe her, as she accepts the monstrous mirroring as gospel truth.

Then her mind will begin to reason, with devastating logic, from that original first premise. "If that is true, then this follows, and that follows, and this..." It will flood the depths of her subconscious, and determine the direction her deeply embedded mental 'riverbeds' will lead. She will wallow in self-loathing, self-pity, shame, rage, paranoia, and resentment at the God who made her. She will desperately seek all sorts of ways to medicate and numb out the pain, to disconnect the voltage shudders of shame, fear, and rage. These turbulent inner 'hurricanes' will never stop generating within her torn and bleeding soul, as long as this deeply embedded pattern is allowed to prevail.

Every one of your ancestors, going back to Adam and Eve, had their own mirror days. Most of them were damaging in one way or another. But there will never be a substitute for our real Mirror Day,

when we are actually re-born children of the Living God, and He begins to dwell and abide within us, and fill us with Himself, personally. Then we will be glowing, dazzling reservoirs of Him and the perfect Love, Acceptance, Beauty and Value He and only He can share with us.

Each mirror day that comes from this God-less world creates some deep-seated results in each person. And whatever it does to that person, if God does not enter the picture, will have a direct impact on the mirror days that person will give to others, in the future. A Mirror Day, depending on those who bestow it, could be a tremendous blessing -- for generations. But it often turns out to be the curse of generations.

Your grandparents, your parents, and you—all of you had your own mirror days. And did that ever make some deep impressions on you and your lives! Now you are mirroring all the time, like everybody else—SOMETHING OR OTHER. Are you aware of how powerful that is? Are you aware of what it is? Do you know what you are doing?

“Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.” (Lk. 23:34)

THE ADULT ALLY

Dad was determined to get his family out of that hellhole of a neighborhood, and the poverty that forced them to live there. So he worked day and night to earn the money they would need to have a better life. This was no place to raise a family. But because Dad could not be in two places at once, Toby seldom had any time to spend with him.

Mom began to work too. She was gone almost every day, and busy with housework at night. She had so much to do. Toby did not want to bother her with his short-term problems. Because of their daily preoccupations, it seldom occurred to him to bring them up. So, he kept things to himself for the most part.

He was almost five. Somebody had to take care of him. And in that, he was lucky. Mom's parents lived next door, so Toby spent his weekdays with his Grandma. She really loved him, and wanted him around. Sometimes he would help her cook, or sweep, or wipe dishes. Sometimes he would listen to the radio, or swing by himself out on the porch.

But Toby could not really talk to Grandma either. In the midst of her hustle and bustle, it seldom occurred to him to bring his problems up. Grandma did not understand little boys and things that concern them very well. As soon as he would bring something up, Grandma was intent on fixing it, right away. So she would utter a maxim or cliché, and consider the matter closed, even if it really was not.

Toby played in the two, tiny, adjoining yards. He had strict orders not to venture beyond the front gate, or into the alley in back. Not in that neighborhood! So, throughout the mornings and afternoons,

Toby played alone. He had toys and the two yards became like movie sets in which he made up games, and orchestrated imaginary scenarios with which to entertain himself.

His was a safe world, wholly under his control. It was nothing like what existed beyond the fences that hemmed him in for his own protection. Out there, people were always creating awful, scary scenes.

Three doors down from grandma's, on the corner, was a blue collar, neighborhood tavern. Day and night, grownups would congregate, dance to raucous polka music, and drink. When Mom took him to the store, they'd walk past the open door and the stale, smokey, beery, tavern smell would waft out at them. He heard the blare of the jukebox, clinking glass, raucous laughter and big people bragging, arguing, flirting and showing off.

Sometimes the people inside would get angry and start cursing, punching, smashing, cutting, gouging, trying to kill each other, and becoming monstrously ugly. Today, it happened, again.

A crowd spilled out of the bar, and clustered on the sidewalk—another fight. But this time, because of the animated noise of the spectators, Toby got so curious, that before he knew what he was doing, he left the yard and went to the corner to see what all the excitement was.

The crowd huddled tightly, like a giant turtle. He could not see, so he stooped, trying to look between legs, into the impromptu ring. He still could not see, so he got on his hands and knees and

crawled in closer. That was better. Now he could see.

A few feet from his face, two men were laying on the pavement, squeezing each other in a desperate death lock grip. They seemed tired, because they were still for long intervals, sweating, twitching occasionally, neither letting the other do much, neither able to gain an advantage.

There was blood on their shirts and faces. The whole side of one man's face was bruised purple. Toby noticed his anxious eyes, glancing at the crowd, assessing its mood, asking what he should do next, and how long he was obligated to endure this ordeal.

Toby recorded it all. These men and the crowd panting down their necks. It was like a huge, coiling, vicious, poisonous snake, whipping crazily, dangerously, out of control. The two men were at the mercy of this unstoppable force they themselves had unleashed. Neither one could quit or put a stop to what was happening. Not yet. The snake ritual would have to play itself out, before the snake would be able to crawl back into its hole, satisfied.

The crowd pierced the two men with frenzied, ugly eyes, screaming, taking sides, as if each spectator could defeat his own personal demons, through the proxy of those anonymous bodies entangled on the sidewalk. They shouted advice and curses, urging each combatant to kill or mutilate the other.

Toby could not understand how those who lived beyond his protective fences could be like this! They were like this out on the street and back in the alley all the time. But he could not get used to how awful, lonely, confusing, unsafe and terrifying it was beyond the fences of his safe, little world.

He crawled back out from that blood lusting, gawking mass, and ran home. He felt like being sick, and crying, all at once. The violent men, the cursing crowd the grotesque,

ritual, the passionate malice and horror—all of it, burned itself, like acid, into the fibers of his tender soul.

Then he began to remember that other incident, on another hot afternoon, two weeks before. He had been at his observation post, leaning against Grandma's wrought iron gate by the front sidewalk. His feet were perched atop the corner of the two-by-twelve wooden border of Grandma's flowerbed.

A gang of three young Latinos loitered against the tavern's front wall, on the very same spot where the crazy wrestling match was now taking place. They lurked, murmuring, and glaring menacingly down the street, at the house right across from where Toby lived.

Suddenly, Joe, a young Marine, home on leave, came out on his porch. For a few eternal moments, he glared back at the three on the corner, stirring up the bad blood that obviously existed between them.

Then Joe left the porch and walked, deliberately, across the street, right up to where the menacing loiterers waited. Without hesitating, or saying one word, he came up to the one in the middle, and as quick as a striking cobra, landed two, vicious punches, smashing the man's nose and knocking out his teeth.

The stricken man bent over, clutching his bloody face, sobbing. The two friends gaped in total shock. Still, not a word was said. Joe waited for them to respond. When they did not, he turned, gray-faced, and strode back to the porch, and straight into the house. The friends of the victim dragged the poor man away, around the corner of the tavern and, out of Toby's sight.

Today the violent neighborhood beast was back at it again. This time it was

consuming more people than he had ever seen. They were, all around him. The yelling was terrifying. Toby had no way of knowing what was happening to them or to him. He just took in the obscene, bloody, malevolent maelstrom and felt it intensely. Horror, shock, fear and disgust caused jolts of powerful voltage to surge through his little stomach and chest.

He went to his back porch and sat on the top step. He leaned against the house, hoping that the increased distance would muffle the noise coming from the corner. He closed his eyes because his head was pounding. He kept seeing that purple, bloody face, the searching, bewildered eyes of the men on the sidewalk, and the vicious snarling, maniacal adults.

What kind of a world was this anyway? Why was it so vicious and mean? What was going to happen to him if he ever grew up and left the postage stamp yards that made up his sheltered world? Would they beat him up like that when he was older and left the yard? What would school be like? What could he do to be safe? Could he be safe? Would he have to fight too?

The afternoon dragged on and on. Grandma had her soap operas on. He could hear them faintly, coming from an open window. He did not know what to do with himself. No toy appealed, he could think of no games to invent and play. He sat for the longest time, staring at the wooden siding on the house, remembering, trying to understand and absorb what he had seen and heard.

It was too scary, too awful, to handle all by himself. But there was no one to help him, only the incessant buzzing of some huge, metallic-green horse flies, and chirping birds, and tree leaves rustling in the summer breeze. No one to talk to, at least, not yet.

Finally, the magic hour arrived, his favorite time of day. Grandpa would soon come home from his work on the railroad! The sun and

the lengthening shadows foretold his impending arrival. **Grandpa would listen. He would know what it was all about. He would explain. Grandpa knew everything. He was good, strong and safe. Grandpa understood. Grandpa cared.**

Toby stationed himself at his observation perch by the front gate. The corner outside the tavern was now quiet, as if nothing at all had happened. But it was still happening inside of Toby. He looked at the house across the street. There was no sign of anything stirring. Joe had gone back to the Marines.

Toby focused his attention the other way. Grandpa would come from that direction. In a little while he would spot a distant figure, trudging toward him from the railroad yards. It would be Grandpa, with his grimy blue bib coveralls, black lunch pail, strong, callused hands, and wonderful, tender heart. Today, Toby needed Grandpa more than he had ever needed him before.

The moment Toby saw him he jumped off the wooden flower bed border, opened the gate and ran down the sidewalk, as fast as he could go. Toby saw Grandpa's face brighten when he looked up and saw his grandson. And he heard that unmistakable, hearty laugh. The weary man reached down and caught the little boy into his arms. It was their weekday ritual. Then, like always, Grandpa carried Toby, until they reached the gate.

Today, Toby had lots and lots to tell Grandpa about. He described all that he saw and heard. He expressed his feelings and his little boy perspectives on the events of the day.

And, as the torrent of his experiences came out, Grandpa listened and interjected little comments at just the

right times. He let Toby get it all off his chest. Toby's questions would come later. But right now, it was time for Toby to blow off the steam buildup that had been accumulating inside all afternoon. So Grandpa listened.

Toby told him about the fight, and told him again about what Joe had done. He told him about all the cursing people on the sidewalk, and what it was like when he saw the blood and the man's purple face and how scared he felt. Of course, he had to admit that he had left the yard against orders. But Grandpa just grunted and listened. He was much more interested in what his grandson wanted to tell him.

Toby described what the men were doing to each other and he told Grandpa what the people had said, bad words and all! Saying everything to Grandpa seemed to make these awesome, overpowering, adult mysteries, less immense and intimidating, and more bearable and manageable.

By the time Grandpa had finished listening and puttering in the storage shed behind his house, Toby felt like his old self again, safe, secure, confident, and powerful. Life was not nearly as horrible and lonely, as it had seemed an hour before.

Grandpa's reassurance and total interest in Toby's world, balanced off his child's view and understanding of adults. Some adults were like those outside the tavern. But some were like Grandpa, Dad and Mom, Aunt Teresa and Grandma. He learned more about knowing the differences between people and more about his own personal preferences for the future. He reveled in the glory of belonging to a family he could trust and belong to. In the future, he knew he would choose to be with his own kind of people and not get all involved with the other kind.

After supper, Toby looked out the window and saw Grandpa watering the plants in the back yard. Mom gave him permission to go

out. And when the watering was finished, Grandpa and Toby walked the few blocks to Charlie's candy and ice cream store.

It was another ritual—an ice cream night. Grandpa would buy a pint of chocolate ice cream for each of them. Toby could never finish his, but Grandpa always bought him his own pint anyway.

On the way to and from the store, the questions would arise:

“Grandpa why do big people fight like that? Why are they so mean? Did you ever fight? Will I have to? Why were those men waiting for Joe? Why were they mad at each other? How come they didn't fight back when Joe hit that man? Why do big people go to the bar and swear so much?”

While they walked home, Grandpa answered the questions he could, and admit to Toby when he did not have answers to the others. Later, they sat in Grandpa's kitchen, making their mounds of Chocolate Delight diminish. The weatherworn man and the little boy shared the wonder and awe of manhood and masculinity, and the joy of being alive together, to experience and explore the complex, rich, and difficult mysteries of life.

That night, when it was time for Toby to go to sleep, he did. He felt peace, and reassurance, instead of the heavy, anxious heart of a child abandoned to his own devices. He was not alone, wrestling with the lonely uncertainty of imponderable puzzles. He belonged to his own people.

And, as with all little children, fortunate enough to have such a one as Grandpa in their life, the intense business and emotional thunderstorms of this traumatic day, were also, somehow, resolved, finished, and permanently laid to rest.

Instead of having his stomach all tied up in knots of apprehension and unprocessed voltage, he slept soundly, relaxed, satisfied and unburdened. Tomorrow would not be a continuing segment of unfinished nightmares. Yesterday would be finished. And tomorrow would be a fresh, new, uncluttered adventure. And even when it was time for him to leave the yard, go to school and explore new territory, Toby knew that somehow, he'd be okay.

LET'S THINK ABOUT IT:

Regardless of our age, **we all need adult allies**, a support system that will help us process the incoming data of our experiences and the emotional buildup that inevitably follows the experiences. And those who depend on us need us to learn to do the same for them.

The ability to process mentally and express emotionally, when it is done properly, works pretty much like our

intestinal food processing equipment—in one end and out the other. The experience processing equipment must be allowed to work the same, as God intended it, or else blockage and serious illnesses will result.

Of course our ultimate Ally and Confidante, is our indwelling God. He abides within each and every born again child of God for that very purpose, and many others. But we also need to learn to bear one another's burdens and help each other as we struggle and sometimes stagger through life.

Learning that kind of intimacy with God and our brethren will ensure that we will all be able to process our experiences in a healthy way, even when they are traumatic, very painful, and long overdue.

THE 'BEAST IN THE BASEMENT'

We first ran into her when she was only a child. It was on her third birthday, her personal 'Mirror Day, that we met her.' That was a long time ago. It has been thirty-five years since that horrid day, but to her, it still seemed like yesterday. The trauma of that day had become the dominating force of her life.

*The well-meaning jokers tried to convince her that it had merely been a joke that they had just been kidding. But it was obvious to her that they were just being nice. She knew better. **She had seen herself in the mirror with her own eyes.** And she knew that she was the ugliest, most disfigured wretch on the face of the earth, a feminine version of 'The Hunchback of Notre Dame.'*

She had learned to do many things to make up for what she was. One was, spending a lot of time in front of something she could hardly stand—a mirror. She did it not because she liked to admire herself. On the contrary, she did it because she could hardly stand to look at herself, and worked like crazy to try to make herself somewhat presentable, by making herself disappear behind a mask of make-up.

Every time she looked in the mirror, her inner computer would play a trick on her. Instead of letting her see her truly beautiful face—that everybody around her could see, with its classic, captivating features—her computer would retrieve the grotesque, thirty-five year old image that she had seen on 'Mirror Day.' That image was burned into her brain and tattooed into her nervous system. She could not see today's real image with her eyes. She was seeing yesterday's Mirror Day image—with her

brain. She was a captive of a naive little girl's videotape from the past!

Every time she looked into a mirror, the old videotape inside her head was activated. And she saw 'HER,' the misshapen, ugly, freakish monster from that mirroring trauma of long ago. She was bigger now, educated, experienced, but that did not matter. Being bigger just made her uglier. Her brain could not access all of that knowledge and experience. It could not work from that information. It was caught up in that old videotape of that awful experience of her third birthday. It was that picture that was frozen in her brain, and its awful ugliness. And the more her mind fixed itself on that image of her, the more the chronic inner voltage of her pain and shame welled up inside.

She had a phobia of allowing The Ugly Monster she believed she was, to be seen in public. She strove to hide the monster in the dark basement of her mind, enclosing it behind layers of expensive make-up, eyebrow pencil, tints, powders, lipsticks and closets full of expensive clothes.

Others of course could see her actual, obvious beauty. But her obvious meticulous attention to every detail of her personal appearance made many believe she was vain, selfish, and self-centered. Other women envied and despised her picture-perfect attractiveness. They could see men look at her and do double takes. They were sure she was flaunting, gloating, doing it to be the center of attention and push every other woman out into the cold.

From her perspective, the jealousy and contempt of other women hurt her deeply. She would think to herself: 'Oh no, I must not have hidden my ugliness well enough. It must be showing. They can see how ugly and hideous I really am. Now they hate me, and who can blame them? I hate myself.'

Her attempts at self-concealment had created a shame-based, mannequin-perfect, every-hair-in-place, counterfeit self. By hiding behind the mascara, tinted hair, and the layers of expensive pastes, creams, powders and clothes, she thought she was managing to kick the Beast down into an inaccessible basement.

She was trying to do two contradictory things at the same time. Part of her was trying to make everyone else think The Beast didn't really exist. Another part of her was frenziedly trying to stuff the monster down deep into her subconscious basement—walling up the doorway with fashionable 'bricks' of denial.

That of course only caused The Beast to grow bigger and seem more real to her. It increasingly dominated her every subconscious motive and action. The more she tried to deny, yet escape The Beast the more it became her taskmaster.

This shame-based pattern killed all hope of intimacy. It was a pattern for control, and manipulation of others, a pattern for total isolation. It was a command performance she could never stop doing. She had to constantly maintain the mannequin façade she had laboriously created, in order to feel 'under control' and 'safe.' It was the only way she knew of numbing out her overpowering panic and dread of suddenly being 'discovered,' stripped 'naked,' and exposed as the monstrous thing she was convinced she really was.

She had learned to expertly manipulate and control, in order to keep everybody at arm's

length. She did not dare let anybody get too close for fear that they might hear the Beast in the Basement scratching and growling around in the depths. If they got wind of the fact that something was down there. They would get curious. If they got curious, they would nose around trying to see it. If they saw it, they would be totally horrified and disgusted, and then she would absolutely die another of her thousand and one deaths.

*She truly was physically beautiful, and men were naturally attracted to her. **But only a certain few attracted her.** Her computer instinctively selected and drew her attention only to men who also had a Beast in their basement, men who were afraid of true connecting and bonding, men. Like her, they were shame-based and men that were emotionally out to lunch, who would not be at all interested in getting very close to anybody.*

Unconsciously she picked them because she sensed that keeping them at arm's length would be easy, and that made her feel safer. Such men were easier to manage and control. To her, they were stupid and desperate, if they were willing to pay any kind of attention to her. Obviously, they did not have the brains to see her for what she really was. She liked the attention, but held them in contempt.

And when they could not connect, she would think it was because they had seen her Beast. It was never about them, it was always about her Beast. Then her invisible abuse-victim 'rubber band' would snap her right back to that terrified, desolate little girl section of her brain, and The ever-growing Beast would leer, and smirk, and devastate her once more.

Lust and loneliness prompted her to entangle time after time—but only with men who were interested in lust and

loneliness. And, because she was really made for love, connecting, nurturing and true intimacy, the clumsy attempts at going through the motions left her emptier still and feeling like a disgusting pile, of dirty, soiled, sinful, damaged goods.'

But any man who did not have a Beast, and really wanted **her**, for who and what she really was, appeared to her to be an unendurable threat, and totally unattractive. She thought such people, 'too pushy—nosy, controlling, dull and uninteresting.' She would find a way to say the wrong thing at the wrong time. She would hurt them, forsake them, betray them, and push them away, as if they were at fault.

But she was Truth-twisting. The Truth was she could not stand the thought of them getting close enough to catch a glimpse or a whiff of The Beast. If they did, they would be repulsed and would abandon her. So to head it off, she did it to them first.

It always turned out the same. Either she, or her current partner in shame, would instinctively hit the 'self-destruct button' of their relationship. As soon as somebody ventured too close to either Beast's walled-up door, a red alarm light would begin flashing in their inner control panels. A destruct sequence would begin and end in a total explosion, rupturing, and pain. One would cut the other off, and both would go their separate ways, hurting and bleeding internally.

Then a time of rest and respite would allow some of the surface wounds to heal. And her lust and loneliness would become overpowering once more, and another cycle of crazy, groping entangling would begin with another, total stranger. Better a life of pretense and going through the motions. Better a life of frantic Truth-twisting, than having to face, own and accept the angry, wounded, Beast down in the Basement.

We can only hope that this poor woman gets **serious, effective** help in learning how to expose and outgrow her false, life-killing, childhood paradigms. If she does get help, she will finally see what she has really been doing to herself and to others. She will see that it was all a horrible mistake, a lie, with no Truth to it.

And when she can digest the real Truth about that Mirror Day, and sort things out correctly, admit what was done to her, count her losses, grieve, finish it and heal, the Truth will set her free. But if not, the lie will be her life, if you want to call that 'life.'

Shame-based people are set up for total self-destruction. Look at it this way. Imagine a sheet of paper from a note pad. Let it symbolize a human mind. Over on one corner, put a few marks with a marker. Let that symbolize the data stored in this woman's mind from 'Mirror Day.' That represents the experience she cannot stand to face.

Now tear that affected part of the sheet away from the rest of the sheet. That's what the thinking part of her mind is doing to the feeling part of her mind, in an attempt to get away from the pain, shame and fear that is stored there. Her soul is literally tearing itself into two separate pieces. The soul wound that results is unbelievably painful. It is self-disgust and contempt, self-rejection and abandonment. And she has to feel that in her brain and nervous system, all the time!

The part with the markings is, 'The Beast.' That is what she is compelled to hide and cover up. That is what she will not allow anyone to get close to. And the part of her mind that will not accept the other part goes to work, night and day, to reject it, and hide it behind the make-up and the clothes. Thus the abandoned,

wounded part of her never gets the acceptance, love and attention she so desperately needs to receive from herself!

Imagine one part of her mind viciously attacking and abusing another part! That is monumental self-abuse, and that is what serves as the whole agenda and motivation of her life. Without realizing it, she is continually following the little girl's pattern, developed on Mirror Day. Oh what tremendous damage that causes.

She is totally shame-based, and everything she thinks, says, and does is shame-based. Shame has become her life; a false, substitute self. While her real self represents the horror, repulsion and aversion of a large, voracious, hungry, wounded, needy Beast that is imprisoned deep within her. As long as she believes that of her wounded self, the Beast will get bigger, hungrier, angrier, more needy, more insatiable and more destructive.

Obviously true recovery from the trauma of the past is for her to get a brand new paradigm with which to replace the paradigm of The Beast. A **beginning** pattern to start with, would be that of a 'Rescue Mission,' or a 'Reunion' between the adult woman she has become, and the wounded little girl that she used to be. She has got to start learning to be who and what she really is, instead of always regressing back to be that wounded little girl, who was totally deceived, misled, and lied to, many years ago.

That false distorted paradigm burned into her by the 'Fun House' distortion mirror of abuse, must be exposed and discredited, so her mind stops believing and identifying with it.

As long as she keeps believing and identifying with it, she can never grow emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. She will always live out the paradigm of the wounded, traumatized little three-year-old.

If she can finally begin to develop a new paradigm—God's pattern of who and what she really is—she can begin to operate as an adult woman filled and fueled by the Presence of God Himself. Then she can gradually get in touch with the Truth, and have a new, real, God-given 'Mirror Day.' The new Mirror Day will mirror her true self, a self loved, accepted, respected, cleansed, forgiven, honored and eternally indwelt by God. That will be nothing of which to be ashamed.

LET'S THINK ABOUT IT:

We used a woman, like millions of real women to exemplify this paradigm. We could just as well have used a man. We are all, bitten by the toxic shame of the serpent. We all feel compelled to hide behind our 'fig leaves' as we conceal ourselves in the darkness of the trees in our shame-based forest. We have not yet learned to see ourselves the way God sees us. Abusers have caused us to develop 'Critic Eyes,' against ourselves.

The tragedy in the paradigm is that **The Beast is not a beast at all. The Beast is really a wounded, traumatized child.** But as long as she sees herself as a beast, she is stuck. That data, the wounds, and the voltage will continue to recycle in the brain. That is unfinished business from childhood. As long as it is unfinished, the wounds remain raw, open, and unhealed. The mind will be at odds with itself, and constantly tearing itself apart. That will force the woman to remain an adult child, perhaps even until death.

When we get in touch with that Reality, and begin to implement

God's healing, nurturing gardening process, the severed parts of our mind can begin to re-connect and re-integrate. Then healing and wholeness can begin

to take place. But healing will never take place as long as we continue to 'Do The Twist' with The Truth.

KISSING THE BEAST ON THE NOSE

Edgar Allen Poe could not have written a more horrifying tale. The trouble was, this was not fiction. It was a real life, day and night nightmare. It went on and on and on, for thirty-seven years, ever since that infamous 'Mirror Day' on her third birthday.

She lived in a haunted house, no matter where she went, no matter where she chose to live. That was because her soul was haunted. Thirty-seven years ago, the ugliest, most monstrous Beast imaginable had slipped into the basement of her childhood mind and home. All through her growing up years, the Beast lurked down below. The presence of The Beast and her efforts to keep it hidden and at bay had virtually swallowed up any chance she had for a real life.

The Beast was big when she first encountered it. But over the years, it had really grown to immense proportions. With its increased size, it became harder and harder to control and keep penned up. There were times when the monstrosity almost escaped and got loose. But she managed, just in time, to slam the door in its face and force it to slither back down to the depths of its enforced concealment.

Most nights she could feel it rumbling and stirring down below. She had never been able to face it since that first day when she got her one and only horrifying look at it in 'the mirror.' Ever since then, the thought of ever seeing it again, especially now that it had grown in size, was inconceivable to her.

She had moved to various other places of her own over the years. But she was really cursed. The Beast would somehow get wind of it. Then it would find a way to escape from the previous prison to which it had been condemned. Then very shortly, she would hear it roaring and growling, and feel it

rumbling down in the basement of whatever new house she had chosen. By this time, she could tell by the sounds and tremors coming from below that it was enormous, huge, and very, dangerous and powerful.

Most of the time, the Beast was angry. She could feel its rage and frustration as the snarls and roars filtered up from where it was confined. The rage in this monster convinced her that she could never work up the courage to have anything to do with it. No matter how noisy and frenzied it became and no matter how it made the house tremble and shake beneath her, she'd never be able to deal with it. That was her conviction for all those years.

Then one day, something very new and strange happened. The Beast changed its mood. For quite some time, it remained silent down there. Several days went by and she heard nothing, absolutely nothing! Was it dead? Was she finally free of it?

But no, it was too good to be true. About a week after the Great Silence had begun, she heard it stirring down there once more. It was obviously alive and functioning. She felt it moving about below. But it was very different. She still did not sense any signs of the ancient rage. What had happened to her old Beast? Why was it so subdued? Was this a trick to get her curious enough to open the door? Was the Beast laying a trap for her and trying to set her up so it could pounce on her and kill her?

She wracked her brain trying to assess the sudden change. Then something

unbelievable began to happen. It was very subdued at first, hardly noticeable. It sounded like a whine, or a whimper. She strained her ears. What was that thing up to down there?

The whimpering gradually began to increase in volume and intensity. Then it changed again. It became louder still and more frequent. The whimpering became wailing—long, deep, and gut wrenching wailing. The Beast sounded younger somehow, and smaller. And she could swear that it almost sounded threatened and vulnerable. This was very, very strange, coming from such a huge, threatening monster.

The Beast's sadness was now unmistakable. The sounds coming from the depths were now profoundly mournful, lost, forsaken and hopeless. It was as if The Beast no longer had it in it to be angry. It seemed to realize that it was no use. Nothing was going to change. Its fate was sealed. And the hopeless despair that it must have felt, was what it was expressing—to nobody in particular—only to itself. Who else would ever be there to listen as it finally accepted its fate?

By the third day, she could stand it no longer. Curiosity, mixed with a reluctant compassion, began to melt her heart and her ancient resolve never to have anything to do with The Beast again.

She got a crowbar and began prying away the stout boards she had nailed over the basement door. Then she managed to find the keys to the various locks she had long ago put on the door. She listened for a while, to see how The Beast would respond to the noise of her activity.

The Beast did not even seem to notice. It was too busy venting its sadness. The strange part was that tears were pouring out of her eyes and streaming down her perfectly groomed face. Her tears were making a shambles out of her mascara and makeup. She would have

been mortified had anyone caught a glimpse of her.

But it was if The Beast were crying its tears and expressing its grief through her eyes! She could also feel its convulsive sobs welling up and wracking her own chest. What was this strange bond? What was happening to The Beast? What was happening to her? This was very, very strange.

Her curiosity and compassion for The Beast was overpowering now. She was beyond dread and fear by this time. She had to make contact. She had to see it, no matter what it had once represented to her. The pain of the Beast was stabbing her own heart. She could not take much more of this. She had to try to help The Beast, because it's pain was now, almost killing her!

She wondered if the basement light would still work after not being used all of these years. It did. Now was the moment. It was time to go down there and take a look. She grabbed the handrail and cautiously took one step down. Then another, and another.

When she reached the bottom step, she stopped. The howling and wailing were coming from the farthest point from the stairs, in a dark corner. It was hard to make out the dark form huddled in the shadows. Resolutely now, she inched closer and closer to The Beast.

When she was only two feet away, she knelt down by the prone, suffering heap on the floor before her. In the dim light, she could make out the features of its beastly face. It no longer seemed alien and horrible. Their common grief was bonding their souls and virtually made them as one. She could not help herself. Because she felt the grief and sadness of The Beast, she was overwhelmed with

compassion. She began to speak soothingly, and reached out and touched The Beast, gently stroking its coarse hairy scales.

For the very first time, The Beast noticed her. But it did not seem to mind at all. It did not resist her voice or her hand as she stroked and petted its head. Then slowly in a very non-threatening manner, The Beast crawled over and pressed into her, nuzzling her cheek with its moist snout, as if begging her to keep it up and never, never stop.

She was overwhelmed with tenderness toward such a tortured, rejected, abandoned heap of grief. Without thinking, she placed her hands around its face, and gently, tenderly, ... kissed The Beast on the nose.

Then a miracle happened. That is the only word to describe it. As soon as she kissed The Beast's nose, a gradual transformation began to take place, right before her startled eyes.

The Beast began to change shape and transform. Before, it had been thick, stout, and very powerfully built. It had been quite a bit larger than she was. Now it began to shrink and change shape and color. Skin, just like hers, appeared where before there was coarse hair and scales. And it began to look more human, and feminine.

A few moments later, The Beast had disappeared altogether. And in its place, nestled in her arms sobbing, was a precious, perfect little girl, about three years old. She was wearing a beautiful, special white dress and little white shoes with little straps across the instep. It was a Mirror Day outfit—her thirty seven-year-old, Mirror Day outfit!

The tiny girl poured out her wounded little heart to her newfound adult ally. She told her about her catastrophic Mirror Day. She told about the name she had received, and about how they laughed, and how upset everybody had been and her big day had been ruined. Then she told about how she went to the basement to hide and found later, that

somebody had locked and barricaded the door behind her, and left her marooned down here in the dark, for years and years and years. Her frozen emotions, like a melting iceberg, began to flood out of her, faster and faster.

She told her repentant friend how she had been imprisoned down in basements ever since, because she was so horribly ugly and detestable and unlovable. She confided how angry, outraged, and confused she had been. Everything, thirty seven years worth of trauma, rejection, abandonment, loss and grief came pouring out, and the woman just held her and listened and comforted her, and apologized, and helped her shed her tears. For in truth, they were also her own.

When it was finally over, the woman picked the little girl up and gradually took her out into the light, so her eyes would have time to get used to it. When they reached the upstairs, the woman closed the basement door behind her and said:

'I thought all this time that you were an ugly, horrible, angry Beast. That is why I was so afraid of you and kept you down there all this time. I am so sorry. I was so wrong. You are not ugly and beastly at all. You are beautiful, absolutely beautiful, and if you will let me, I am going to make it up to you as well as I possibly can.

'I will never be ashamed of you again. We will do everything together. We have so much lost time to make up for. I have so much to tell you and teach and show you. And you can teach me too. We will learn together. Is that okay? Would you like that?'

But the little girl did not hear that last part. Her exhausted, satisfied head was resting on the woman's shoulder. She

was sound asleep. The peaceful little smile on her tear-stained face gave clear evidence, however, that the woman's proposal for the future, was going to be perfectly, wonderfully agreeable to her.

Then something miraculous happened. As the woman lovingly regarded the sleeping, contented, satisfied child, the hard outline edges of the little child and the woman began to blur and soften and melt into each other. It was as if the woman's body was accepting the little girl's body into itself. It was the physical counterpart to the activity of the woman's mind, as it accepted the little girl's mind.

These two, who had been torn apart and alienated so long ago, were finding each other anew. It was the most wonderful homecoming reunion imaginable. When it was finally completed, the little girl no longer lived alone and apart, in a dungeon. She now lived within the woman. And from then on, they were able to learn together and experience everything that life had to offer in the future, as one, whole, healthy person.

LET'S THINK ABOUT IT:

This paradigm is a pattern or parable for personality reintegration. That is recovery path to heal the horrid, shame-based disintegration that took place, when the little three-year-old girl could not accept her Reality, the way it was.

Jesus gives a good example of personality re-integration in the parable commonly known as the homecoming of 'The Prodigal Son' in Luke 15: 11-32. Christ reveals, most effectively, that you cannot really come to grips with yourself and what ails you, until you 'get real' and grapple with the fact that you are weak, helpless, dependent and incomplete in yourself. You must realize that you were meant to be filled, fueled,

and completed by the Presence and Love of God, your heavenly Father.

When you can see how bankrupt you are without Him, and come to your senses as a human being, you'll hurry home where you belong, and gratefully reconnect with your true self, your true humanity, and your heavenly Father. That is the phase of the Exodus journey we cover in Phase I, of The Christ-Life Solution.

The 'Kissing The Beast On The Nose' paradigm focuses on being ready to face and own up to who and what you **really were and are**. Then you can disentangle from what **you thought you were**, the false paradigm you developed as a result of abusive, damaging treatment given to you by others, before you had a chance to know what was happening. Who and what you **were**, back then, is a vital part of what you need -- to accept, heal, nurture, and garden. Then you will be able to grow into who and what you really **are according to God's Truth**. This helps you connect with the WHOLE TRUTH, and not just with twisted fragments.

If we can't come to grips with who we were, we'll most likely get stuck right there, in a shame-based, co-dependent pattern, and have a terrible time also coming to grips with what we are. Here are a couple of examples:

The child in the paradigm (because she got false mirroring) was unable to get in touch with the precious, beautiful little person she really was. At three years of age, she was deceived. And she ended with a terribly wrong map of Reality. She

did not do it on purpose and it wasn't her fault. But she had to pick up the emotional tab.

Regardless of blame or intent, she actually began to follow a false paradigm of herself. Because it was so painful, she naturally tried to escape it. One part of her mind could not accept the other, wounded part. So, the two parts of her soul split apart. It was like the most painful and wrenching divorce imaginable. After it took place, she spent her life creating the picture-perfect cover-up substitute—a false self. See the pattern? **Because she could not be in touch with who she really was, as a child, and was stuck there, she found it impossible to get in touch with who she really is, as a woman.**

Here is another example. Many shame-based people like to think of themselves as 'a good person.' They have always seen themselves, as decent, generous, giving, not prone to hurt others etc. Because of this misconception they cannot get in touch with who and what they really are in God's sight—desperately fallen, corrupt, Godless, wicked and unbelievably in need of God's mercy and salvation.

Thus, although they respond to the Gospel, it never seems like much to them, because they cannot get in touch with how much God loved and did for them. It is only when they get in touch with the fall of Adam, and with who and what they really are in themselves

as a result of what Sin has done to them, that they can be overwhelmed. The enormity of God's Love, Mercy, Compassion, and Self Sacrifice on their behalf will finally register. Then they will absolutely fall in love with this incredibly Good and Gracious God and overflow with gratitude and relief over what He saved them from. Those who have been forgiven of a lot will love a lot.

In order to recover fully, the woman in the paradigm had to stop the old Beast in the basement from running her life. She had to stop allowing it to intimidate and terrorize her. She had to face it the way courageous, effective adults face things and work through whatever was between them.

I hope you can see that the perfectly groomed woman and the little girl were two different sections of the same human mind. For thirty-seven years, that mind was virtually torn in half. In order to find a substitute for the Beast section she kept trying to separate from, she made up the picture perfect mannequin to take its place. But as she fought for her freedom and personal integrity, she reversed the process. By kissing The Beast on the nose, she worked through the lies and the shame, and rescued and reconnected with the wounded part of her true self. Now it is your turn.