Laminated to God

by Gloria Copeland

Have you ever wished you had a strong, caring friend to help you, one who would join his strength with yours, making up the difference where you are weak? Well, I have good news. God is that friend. He has the strength you need, and He is looking for an opportunity to be a vital part of your daily life.

The Bible says, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (II Chronicles 16:9). The word translated perfect there doesn't mean without a flaw. It simply means "faithful, loyal, dedicated and devoted."

So eager is God to find that person to whom He can show Himself strong that He will pass over a million people to find that one who is loyal to Him. He scans the earth looking for a person who will put Him first and let Him be God in their life.

For 4,000 years mankind was locked out of the presence of God by sin. But when Jesus went to the cross, all that changed. Jesus' sacrifice restored man's lost fellowship with God. Now as born-again believers, we "have full freedom and confidence to enter into the [Holy of] Holies [by the power and virtue] in the blood of Jesus" (Hebrews 10:19, The Amplified Bible). In effect, God has thrown open to us the door of fellowship.

Think of what that means. The Creator and Ruler of the entire universe has made Himself available to meet personally with you every day. You can commune with Him any time of the day or night.

"I'm here for you," He is saying. "Just draw near to Me and I'll draw near to you. I'll give you the wisdom you need. I'll strengthen and equip you and help you in every area of your life."

Although He has the solution for every problem, He won't chase you down to get your attention so He can give you those solutions. No, He will wait for you to do your part. What is your part? To draw near to Him. If you'll do that, He'll draw near to you in return. He gave us His Word on it (James 4:8).

The moment you turn to Him, He'll be there for you. But don't wait until hard times come to turn to Him. Develop a lifestyle of living contact.

Making living contact with God is simply fellowshiping with Him. It's talking to Him and listening to Him. It's setting aside the distractions and demands of life and taking time to commune with Him in His Word and in prayer. It's having fellowship with the Lord daily when things are going well so that when trouble comes, you'll be spiritually strong enough to overcome.

Jesus said in the world we will have tribulation (John 16:33). It doesn't matter who we are or how rich or well-educated, or even how much faith we have. In this life we will face some tests and trials. The difference is that when a Bible-believing, Spirit-filled child of God faces trouble, he doesn't face it alone.

God says, "I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him" (Psalms 91:15). That's important. In time of trouble, Who is with you makes a big difference. If your only help is your own natural strength and resources, you might come out of that trouble all right...and you might not. But if God is with you, you can be sure you'll come through just fine.

Jesus, our Champion and Savior, said, "I have overcome the world." When we stay in vital union with Him, we can have victory in the time of trouble.

Abide in the Vine

So, what does it mean to have a living connection with God? Jesus brought the reality and importance of our relationship with Him into clear focus when He said, "Abide in me..I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:4-5).

When Jesus said, "Abide in me," He wasn't saying, "Live in fellowship with Me one day and the world the next." He wasn't talking about a sporadic or temporary arrangement. The word abide refers to the place where you "remain and dwell continually." Jesus was instructing us to make that place of dependency and communion with Him our permanent home because that's where we bear fruit.

Maintaining a living connection with God supplies the power that enables us to lay hold of all the wonderful things He has provided for us through Jesus Christ. We may know all the right scriptures, but if we fail to stay in union with God, we won't be spiritually strong enough to do what we know to do!

It's amazing how many Christians don't realize that. They rush around trying to do things in their own strength. But because they don't maintain a living connection with God, they end up tired, frustrated and defeated.

The Bible plainly shows that we are not to rely on our own abilities. Ephesians 6:10 encourages us to ".be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." And Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

One of the best pictures of what this will do for us is what we see when wood strips are laminated together for strength. Just as the beams in a house are made stronger by laminating several layers of wood together, your ultimate strength comes from living in vital contact with God-abiding in the Vine. No longer are you dependent on your strength alone. You are laminated to Almighty God!

Keep the Union

I Corinthians 6:17 says, "The person who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him" (The Amplified Bible). The word united used there (or joined in the King James Version) means "laminated." It refers to something glued so tightly together that it becomes like one substance.

As we begin to spend time with the Lord, we begin to think like He thinks. We begin to act like He acts. We begin to hear from heaven moment by moment so that we can walk out the perfect will of God for our lives every day.

Once we understand the divine power that comes to us as we abide in Jesus, it is easy to see that if we want to live a victorious life, we must first and foremost maintain our union and communion with Him. That is without question our most important responsibility.

If we'll maintain that union, He'll take care of everything else.

Unfortunately, however, many Christians do just the opposite. They become so busy maintaining the other things in their lives that they don't have time to spend with God. They spend their lives maintaining their houses and their lawns, their cars and their jobs. They even find time to maintain their hair and their fingernails. Yet they neglect the one thing that is vital to their life and well-being. They neglect their union with God.

Often they don't even realize it. They think that because they love the Lord and believe His Word, their union with Him is intact. But that's not necessarily so.

To be in union means to be joined together with something or someone. It's the act or instance of joining two or more things into one. Romans 7:4 likens our union with God to marriage. It says we've been married to Him.

Our goal is to become so in tune with Him that when He tells us to do something, we hear Him and obey. We should aim to be so closely joined to Him that the desires of our heart, the thoughts of our mind, the words of our mouth and our every action become a reflection of the One with Whom we are united.

That is God's desire too. If He is to carry out His will in the earth, He must have people who will join themselves with Him in that way. As Rufus Moseley wrote, "God has to have branches of the same texture as Himself, the same sap, the same mind, the same spirit, before He can bring forth in fullness what He wants to bring forth....(So) keep the union. Put Him first and keep your mind stayed on Him in union and in love."

Perfect Union = Perfect Peace

How do you keep your mind stayed on God? By giving Him your attention. By putting His Word first place every day and focusing on it until it is the biggest thing in your life. The Living Bible says it this way: "Since you became alive again, so to speak, when Christ arose from the dead, now set your sights on the rich treasures and joys of heaven where he sits beside God in the place of honor and power. Let heaven fill your thoughts..."(Colossians 3:1-2).

Spiritually speaking, when you received Jesus as your Lord, you died to this world and became alive to God. So you should have as little desire for this world as a dead person does!

You don't have to spend your time worrying about worldly concerns. Instead, spend your time listening to what God has to say and keep your mind focused on Him. Isaiah 26:3 says, "Thou [God] wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee...." Jesus confirmed that when He said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

If you keep your mind on the world and stay in union with it, you won't have any peace. That's because the world doesn't have any peace. If you give the majority of your time and attention to worldly matters and secular entertainment, you will be carnally minded, and the Bible says, "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6).

In other words, if you think like the world thinks, you'll receive the same results the world does. And instead of enjoying the healing power of God, you'll suffer with the sicknesses of the world. Instead of laying hold of heavenly prosperity, the depression, recession and poverty of the world will lay hold of you! You won't be full of good news, you'll be full of bad news.

Contact with the wrong thing gives you the wrong results, and there are plenty of opportunities to be in contact with the world's way of thinking. In the United States, it's possible to watch the news 24 hours a day. (It can be a terrible curse, but you can do it.) You can turn on the television any time of the day or night and hear about all the things the devil is doing.

"Well, Gloria," you say, "we can't stick our heads in the sand. We have to face the facts."

I'm not suggesting we stick our heads in the sand. I'm suggesting we keep them in the Word!

I am also suggesting that sometimes the news doesn't give us the facts. I watch the news, but I am aware of what I believe from the world's voice. And I keep God's voice as my authority.

Several years ago, for example, the media announced that the United States' economy was in recession. For about a year and a half, they talked about the recession. News of the recession influenced the elections that year. It influenced everything that happened because the media constantly broadcast it.

Sometime later a statistical report came out that revealed the recession had actually lasted only a few months. Why, then, had the news media kept on reporting about it? Because they didn't know it had ended. They were in the dark so they kept screaming, "Recession! Recession!" even though the recession had been over for more than a year.

Thank heaven that recession never got off the ground with us. When news of it first came out, the Lord spoke to Ken and said, Write your Partners and tell them not to join the recession. So we obeyed God and didn't get in on that recession. We just let it pass us by.

That may sound strange to you, but as citizens of heaven, you and I can do that kind of thing. If we stay in union with God, we don't have to be dependent on this world's economy. We can be connected to heaven's economy, and there's no recession, depression or inflation there. In God's economy there's no shortage or lack of any kind. He is our shepherd, we shall not want (Psalms 23:1)!

If you unite with the world's voice, you'll always be in trouble because the world is always in trouble. But if you'll spend your time listening to what God says and maintain your union with Him-if you'll keep your mind stayed on the Word of God no matter what the news media says, and no matter what the circumstances say-God will deliver you from any trouble.

The Lord told my friend Lynne Hammond, If you'll give Me enough time (meaning spend enough time with Me), I can turn anything around for you. He'll meet your needs, not according to the government, not according to what happens in this natural economy, but according to His riches in glory!

The circumstances on this earth don't bother God. He's not bound by them or limited to them. He can prosper you any time, anywhere and in any way He wants.

God knows how to prosper people even when they're in slavery! Read the book of Exodus and you can see that for yourself. When He brought the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, He brought them out with silver and gold. The Bible says they plundered the Egyptians because the Egyptians loaded them with treasure and sent them out of the country as rich people!

You're Connected!

It doesn't matter how bad things become out there in the world. You aren't in the world without a Savior! You are "connected to Christ, the Head to which all of us who are his body are joined" (Colossians 2:19, The Living Bible).

When someone has friends in high places, we sometimes say, "He's connected." Well if you're maintaining living contact with God, you're connected! You're connected with the highest ruler and authority in existence. You have a connection with the power above every other power, and you need to maintain an awareness of that connection. You ought to think about it all through the day.

If you'll do that, then the faith and power of God will rise up within you to deal with whatever comes your way. Even if it's danger of the worst kind, you'll be ready.

One of our Partners proved that fact in her own life a few years ago. She was traveling on a bus in a major city she was visiting, and some men aboard that bus began to rob people. They were going from one person to the next taking money, jewelry and other valuables.

But this lady had been maintaining her union with the Lord. She was strong on the inside and had His power flowing through her. So when the thieves came to her, something happened. Instead of cowering in fear and handing over her possessions, she looked those men straight in the eye and said, "In the Name of Jesus, you take your hands off me!"

Suddenly it didn't matter that those men were armed. It didn't matter that they were much bigger than she was. Whatever happened in the spirit realm when she spoke those faith words scared those men so badly, they not only left her alone-they ran off that bus!

You may be a 100-pound woman or a 250-pound man. Your physical stature is irrelevant. When you're connected to Jesus, you're unbeatable. If you'll maintain a living connection with Him, whatever you do, wherever you go, the power of God will be just one breath away.

Let's face it, we're living in the last of the last days. It's a day when you may need that power at any moment. Because there is danger all around us. When that danger strikes, we may not have time to go find our Bible and look up a scripture about protection. We need to have the Word in our heart. We need to have it dwelling in us so richly that it comes up from within us before we even have time to think.

In times of crisis, your mind usually goes blank, and whatever is in your heart comes out. If you've been fellowshiping with the world, fear will come out. But if you've been fellowshiping with God, faith will be your first response.

You need the ability to stay strong and steady both in your everyday life and when challenges arise. The good news is: When you are joined or laminated to God, that living connection will make all the difference. Instead of depending on yourself, you can truly say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me!"