THOUGHTS OF DECEMBER, 2017

1. Under the moral Law given to God’s people by the Lord through Moses [and to us, also, if we choose to live under it], all of us sin and die. That type of dying can be defined as getting further and further away from the Lord, plus both eternal and natural consequences.

No one is strong enough morally to not break the Law, and no one is weak enough to be exempt from the Law. The Law stands strong over us as “the Law,” and all of us fall convicted of sin under it. The Law does not offer wavers or become flexible for our sake. All are condemned, which is where the Holy Spirit steps into our lives to convict us of our helplessness under the requirements of a perfect Law and perfect God, and to reveal our need for grace. Under that Law we are in a corner. Then comes the offer!

Our perfect and just God has a perfect plan. Our helpless situation in His process requires a redeemer who can satisfy His requirements under the Law, for the purpose of setting us free. His Redeemer has to pay the entire price for all of everyone’s sins. Moreover, the Redeemer’s work removes us from sinning [a process called sanctification] and from the effect of our sinnings [not another process, but immediate acts of forgiveness by God when we repent of any sinning].

In the ongoing process we are offered grace to be diminished day by day, allowing the Redeemer to increase in us as we give Him that which was “my” space in our souls.

1. All of everything was created, except God [the Trinity]. He existed, meaning “He Was!” More fully stated – “He Was, He Is, and He Will Be.” When He makes that statement about Himself, He says simply, “I AM.”

In Job 38:7 He makes a statement that points back to a certain time in God’s more ancient world history, a time during His “dreaming” of His project, of the time of His architectural pensiveness, of the time when He was gathering together His spiritual material and helpers, of the time of its earliest construction. He mentions in verse seven that at that time all the sons of God [angels] shouted for joy. That includes Lucifer [the bearer of God’s light], who was then the highest of angels, indicated by the fact that God is Light. Notice that at that time he was submitted to and in accord with God. That was before his rebellion, after which he was thrown out of heaven onto an already-created earth [Is. 14:12-14], where the Lord gave him a constantly-monitored and exactly customed earthly authority and power – Job 1:10-12; 2:3-6; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Pet. 2:9.

First it appears that Lucifer, no longer God’s light bearer, and now named Satan [Adversary], ruled the earth, populating it with various forms of serpents [dinosaurs, lizards, pterodactyls, etc.]. Eventually there appears to have been a destruction of that which was and is destined to be God’s architectural wonder of creation, the earth – Gen. 1:1-2. Then the Lord restored the earth, especially its surface, and did those other wonderful works of creation. But notice that in this scenario, Satan [already on earth] took another and different destructive approach. He approached Eve [being himself a serpent, the serpent of all serpents], this time destroying humanity instead of the earth itself – Gen. 3:1-7.

1. The Bible is a portal to the Lord’s heart. That is wonderful. Selah. Paul wrote Timothy that God’s words written by ink on paper give us God’s wisdom, which leads us into God where we become trustworthy children and receive generously of Him – 2 Tim. 3:14-17. And, the Bible is a weapon to protect us from the enemy of our souls [and the enemy of everything else of God concerning us] – Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12.

So why not seek the Lord through His word? Look at the great compliment that Paul and the Lord gave the Bereans in Acts 17:10-12. How would you like to have that written on your heavenly resume for eternity?

To add additional motivation to that, remember that we humans are blind spiritually. We are born ignorant of spiritual things and until we are born again of the Spirit simply cannot see or understand things that are in the spiritual realm. We can read the Bible but it does not ring true and clear into our lives unless we have spiritual eyes and ears. See 2 Kings 6:8-23 and Daniel 10:2-21 for contrasting examples of spiritual eyes and human eyes.

Satan is a liar and a murderer – John 8:44. He is a spirit and is active around us everywhere, so we need to be spiritually empowered in order to deal with him. How is he active? He places lying thoughts in our minds. He murders through us by causing division, anger, fear, and mistrust.

As ambassadors of Christ we are away from our King and need to hear His words from afar. We must be able to recognize contrary voices. How? 1) Ask the Lord to be the Lord of our lives. 2) Ask the Lord to come into us with His Spirit, making us born again spiritual persons. See John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13. The Lord wants to give us His Spirit, and lots more that will follow – Luke 11:10-13.

We may or may not feel something when He comes into us [the “not feel” is part of my testimony; I simply believed], but His word will come alive to us, we will have spiritual ears, and we will have a growing desire for Him and His word [as whispered to us and in print].

His printed word comes alive. We will see the Old Testament revealed in the New Testament, and see the New Testament concealed in the Old Testament. The Bible is heart medicine -- it is a doorway to His heart and a weapon in our hands to protect/guard our hearts.

1. Have you ever eaten partly ripe fruit? If you have, you know it was not a good experience. Some fruit that is mostly ripe can be set aside until it comes to at least a near likeness to ripeness, but most fruit that is picked green or unripe do not ripen to the quality of full ripeness as on the vine/tree/bush. Grocery shoppers know that much of the beautiful fruit in the fruit section were picked in an unripe stage, then artificially ripened to the appearance of ripeness by exposure to chemicals like calcium carbide or ethylene, but they still lack vine-ripened flavor. If you know that, you are in good company because the Lord wants nothing but vine-ripened fruit to be presented to Him – Num. 18:13.

Because everything in the Old Testament that happened to God’s people, the Israelites, and was recorded, was for our [the Church’s] benefit [Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6, 11], what is the significance of the Lord wanting us to pick and present to Him only ripe fruit? What does it mean when we offer the Lord green fruit, and what are the consequences of that disobedience? Why did He tell us to make disciples, instead of telling us to make converts – Matt. 28:18-20? Don’t we have to start with converts before we can start making disciples? There are many more questions along that line, but that’s enough for now. How about some answers.

Ripe fruit is the condition of the soul that is ready to hear and accept the gospel that Jesus is Lord and Savior, to the extent that he is attracted to the offer of Jesus’ Lordship. That ripe soul starts with denying himself and presenting himself as a disciple. He responded to the offer because he wanted the Lord’s life and dominion, not his own. That’s ripe fruit. On the other hand, green fruit starts by accepting salvation from hell on earth and in the hereafter [initiating a self-centered relationship with the Lord]. Green fruit is in the Family for what he can get out of the family relationship, not ready to lay down his life for the Lord and his brother.

The church is loaded with green fruit – nice people, often helpful people, who are true members of God’s Family but are limited in their commitment to the Lord. The times on their crosses is occasional and brief, not a life-style. [Cross experiences are not simply tough times that we bear through, perhaps even trusting the Lord in, but are times and things that we have the option of experiencing but accept because it is the Lord’s choice for us.]

The church is also loaded with green fruit leadership. Compare the church now to the pattern of the church in Acts 2:37-47 and 4:23-37. The church’s solution? Programs to try to ripen green fruit – religious calcium carbide and ethylene. God’s solutions? Repentance or Persecution. Green fruit run away from being identified with the church during persecution and I don’t blame them. They should; it is not their time. Ripe fruit stay on their crosses, then get picked perfectly ripe because it is God’s time for His glorification.

Suggestion: Disciples should be about our charge of teaching everything that Jesus taught His disciples. Fish make fish, birds make birds, disciples make disciples, and non-disciples make non-disciples. As we make disciples, ripe fruit comes dropping off the trees and into our lives. That church is powerful. It is unencumbered with babies who will not grow up. Green fruit can stay in the nursery where they belong, until God’s time for them -- Acts 5:13. No doubt that this teaching goes against common evangelical theology, but this was the practice of Jesus and it was His instructions to the church.

1. Those who know about those things have been pointing out that this is a Jubilee year for Israel. In these modern times there seems to be a Jubilee cycle in effect. Every 50 years something remarkable has been happening to release Jerusalem into its biblical destiny. This includes the discovery of the original City of David by Charles Warren in 1867, the liberation of Jerusalem by Gen. Edmund Allenby in 1917, and the reuniting of Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty in 1967. This means that we can expect another Jubilee event for Jerusalem sometimes during this biblical calendar year, which runs through mid-March of 2018. In fact, it may have happened today [12-6-17] when President Trump recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and ordered that the U. S. embassy be moved there.
2. For life in or out of this world we like guarantees, don’t we. Guarantees persuade us that whatever was promised when we paid for something, is going to be as promised. That was important because we parted with something valuable in order to own the item as promised. That which we wanted was worth more to us than that which we paid.

Jesus gave us guarantees, including that we will have tribulation as long as we are in this earth-life. They would be common parts of our lives. That’s a guarantee itself. He did not tell us He would keep us out of tribulation, but that we would have tribulation – trials and troubles of all sorts – John 16:33 and elsewhere. I don’t recall actually having enjoyed my tribulations, but in the best of my times I recall that I lived above them while living with and dealing with them.

The Lord is full of grace. That is what He meant by “but take courage; I have overcome the world.” See also Romans 8:37; 2 Cor. 2:14; Rev. 3:21; and your own life. Those are comfortable and genuine guarantees, in which we hear the Master say, “Your response to what happens is more important than what happens.”

1. Jesus went to the cross in obedience to His Father. He did not go happily. It was a painful process from beginning to end – the beginning being when He began to get the revelation of His calling, until the end when He died in His calling. It was absolutely vital that He saw His cross as part of a process of His becoming the Resurrection and the Life. We, too, don’t appreciate our crosses properly if we see them as only places to die to ourselves.

Our daily experiences of being nailed to our crosses is part of our process of becoming resurrection life while yet here in this earthen vessel. It has been well-said that we cannot be resurrected if we have not died, so be assured that in this earth-life we will not show forth resurrection life unless we have died to ourselves on our own crosses. Having died the death on our crosses, our death shows that sin has no grip on us. Sin may cause us to stumble, but we are soon up and going again.

1. It seems that everything has rhythm, recurrence, sound, and light. Some is not obvious until we see it microscopically or sub-microscopically. If so, it not only pleases the Lord who created it to be so, but He has a reason for making it so. Much of that is beyond me, except for the basic Thought. Basics, especially when reduced to the creational and spiritual levels, I can grasp, usually. So, I have need of your added insight. I will lay down a premise and ask you to give me some answers if you accept my premise.

The Lord moves rhythmically in individuals, groups, congregations, denominations, nations, and [I suspect] in all of His creation. Examples: Stirrings of His Spirit come and go from time to time individually, from year to year corporately, and from generation to generation nationally. I’m saying that the Lord’s more obvious workings do not show a smooth, straight line. He appears to do something obvious and great, then back-off and enjoy our response, enabling us according to His measure for us. Then He steps into our lives again in those obvious ways. History books support this observation, as do biographies and autobiographies.

Point: We believers tend to do well during the stirrings, but during the downturns not so well. We start longing for the next stir. If you see some truth to this premise, I would like some input into the downturn; the time between the stirrings. It seems that the downturn should be a special time for living by previously-stirred faith, not just hanging onto one’s good, established, time-tested theology, but living by a lively faith that is effective and obvious without needing any or much of the “whoopees” that we had experienced and continue to long for full-time. Perhaps it can be compared to eating frozen left-overs between times of feasts – the same ole same ole without the excitement and comradery. What say you?

1. In baseball, if the catcher doesn’t know which pitch the pitcher is about to throw, there is disorder, confusion, and error. Good communication is necessary in baseball, as in the kingdom of God. If the Lord is about to do something, and His catchers [that’s us, especially the prophets] do not know what He is about to do, the world and believers will have disorder, confusion, and error. The Lord will do nothing unless first He tells His prophets [Amos 3:7], who will spread the word abroad in the kingdom. Watch and listen. A pitch is on the way.
2. One area of change that is coming our way, but one that many will not accept, is the change from traditional to biblical. Here in Corpus Christi we have been hearing about workplace minsters. That is doing away with the artificial line between clergy and laity, part-time and full-time, secular and religious. All believers are called to full-time ministry, which means 24/7, no matter when or where we are. The five-fold ministry is equipping the saints for the “work of the ministry” in the marketplace, school, etc., not only in the meeting place on Sunday morning.
3. Jesus’ prayer for us on the night He was arrested centered around asking His Father to grant unity to those who follow Him – that we may be one, be made into a functional unit. Forty days later, after his crucifixion, death, and resurrection, He told His disciples to not leave Jerusalem until they had received the baptism with/in the Holy Spirit which would give them power to become God’s type and quality of witnesses to Him. They obeyed, and were “of one mind” together in prayer a few days later when the Father’s promise to the church began to be fulfilled. The giving of that promise, of God’s mighty converting power, has not been completed. Our Father is still at work baptizing/immersing with/in His Holy Spirit those who are united with Him and one another. It has been said that the qualifications for receiving that power from above are that we first need to yield specifically to the Lord, forsake every doubtful aspect in our lives, be willing to obey fully God’s will, and believe through payer that He will flood us with His power. That is a slightly edited quotation from Watchman Nee.

There is a remarkable verse, Revelation 17:17, that shows the Lord giving one-minded unity to evil world leaders, which reverses their commitment to the at-that-time one world religion so that instead of supporting it they make a 180\* turn and destroy it. He did lots of that in Scripture, and still does that sort of thing daily. He is the Lord!

1. Why was [is] Jesus Christ’s sacrifice adequate for the redemption of all, meaning all humans, animals, plants, rocks, dirt, water, space matter, etc.? He redeemed all. Humanly speaking, He was [is] only one man. Spiritually speaking, He was [is] God the Son. He was adequate because He was [is] the creator of all that was [is] created. It all came forth from Him. It was once “in” Him and will again be “in” Him. All of it is His. He owns it. That one person, Jesus, was responsible for all that is of creation. Anything that is imperfect, or is acting imperfectly, is being misused but is still His. We will see it all become fully and functionally “in” Him again.
2. Why does the word “judgment,” and the thought of each one’s coming judgment, cause ill feelings in us? If you were on an athletic team and had just finished and won a race, and the judges were reviewing the contest before giving the prize to be sure all had been done right, and you knew you had not broken any rules – anticipating the judges’ report would give you super feelings. If you knew that you had violated a rule, you would have a dreadful feeling. If you had violated a rule but had been forgiven, you would have that same super feeling as if you had run the race perfectly. Saints, that’s the way the Lord has arranged our race and our coming judgement. When we violate a rule, we have a Judge who will forgive us if we repent and confess. Then we are ready to stand before Him without any infraction on our record. Facing our Judge at the judgment is meant to be a time of confidence, all the way from during the race until our day in court.
3. Let’s speculate a bit. Abraham’s maid, Hagar, had a son by Abraham because Abraham’s wife, Sarah, had no children. Soon, that caused conflict between Sarah and Hagar. God’s solution [as much as we find it hard to think of the Lord resolving anything this way] was for Abraham to send Hagar and the child away, into the wilderness! Abraham also could not imagine his God wanting him to do such a thing. It may have been that the Lord had already been telling Abraham to send them away but, if so, Abraham resisted the thought, thinking it was evil. So, who did the Lord find in Abraham’s life, someone who would be able to hear Him and pass the word on to Abraham? Why, his wife Sarah, of course. She could hear that sort of word very easily, and had already been having some of those same thoughts on her own. She told Abraham what the Lord had told her, and then Abraham was able to hear the Lord directly and confidently. See Genesis 21:9-14. How do you handle the situation when the Lord tells you to do something that you cannot imagine being righteous?
4. Do you see the steady work of the Lord in bringing in His kingdom? Here is a list of His biggest footprints in history: 1) The first several centuries of the church – clarifying the doctrines of Christ. 2) 400s-1400s – Monasticism during the Dark Ages, preserving the Scriptures. 3) 1500s-1600s – The Reformation, rediscovery of and return to biblical Christianity. 4) 1600s-1700s -- The Bible into common language and hands. 5) 1700s-1800s -- Surge in missionary activities as instructed in the Great Commission. 6) 1900s – The church realizing that it has not replaced Israel in God’s plan for redemption of the world. See John 4:22; Acts 1:6; Romans 3:3-4; 11:15. 7) Late 1900s-2000s – The return of Israel the nation to Israel the land, and the renewal of Israel’s role in the world. See Zechariah 8:14-15. God both scatters and gathers. Notice that He does that in our personal lives, also.
5. Here is a very important statistic, per a national survey in Switzerland. When father and mother take their children to church, 90% of their adult children will go to church regularly. When Mom alone takes the kids to church, 10% of her adult children will go to church regularly. When Dad alone takes the kids to church, 90% of his adult children will go to church regularly. WOW!

That is a strong indicator. Dad’s influence is much greater than Mom’s in regards to kids being raised in the church and continuing in church when they become adults! Why? I think it has to do with the kids seeing Jesus and church-going as a masculine vs. feminine experience and life. God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are presented to us as masculine – and not by accident. The leaders of the church are men, until the church turns feminine. Culture and family leadership is masculine, until the men slip backwards and the women step forward. You know much about the church and culture when men lead, or don’t.

1. In Hebrew the word “Mitzvot” embraces a philosophy of salvation by good works. The nation Israel had been scattered from the Promised Land and then returned, but their animal sacrifice system has never been re-established. To replace that system, influential rabbis developed Mitzvot. The problem is that good works are in no way sanctioned by God as an atonement [or reparation] for sin. He never rescinded His absolute requirement of shed blood as the only atonement for sin. Therefore, whether Christian, Jew, or of any other religion or personal hope/belief systgem, good works are no help for getting us into God, into a right relationship with Him, or into heaven when we die. But, once we are born again through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ for the cleansing of our sins, doing the good works that He has prepared for us does please Him and brings forth rewards beyond His gift of salvation. Whether Judaism or any other atonement-less religious system, working for atonement provides no atonement.
2. Are you having any trouble trying to impose your will over someone? It may be a personal effort or a group effort, such as state or national laws and regulations. Yes, we know that this problem began with God and Adam and Eve in the garden, from whence our spiritual DNA was degraded, leaving us in our present self-willed condition.

So, righteous and unrighteous moms and dads, villages and nations have dealt with the necessity of having a code of behavior and the imposition of force. The Code of Ur-Nammu in Mesopotamia was written about 4,300 years ago. It was followed 300 years later by 282 laws, known as the Babylonian Hammurabi. Centuries of Jewish and Christian teachings gave us the Ten Commandments and much more. There were powerful governing codes such as the Magna Carta in 1215, the British Bill of Rights in 1689, and the United States Bill of Rights a century later. Each of these efforts described a covenant between top-down government and the governed. They dealt with freedom, free will and personal responsibility, and the problem of enlarged governments.

You have noticed that many of those in leadership positions are proud that “we are a nation of laws.” Our “fall into lawfulness” is unfortunate for the nation, family, and church. What would have been, and may yet be, the alternative? How about personal righteousness and social faithfulness?

1. Today we are celebrating Jesus Christ’s birth. It’s that He was born, not when or where or how. Those matters are important, but that He was born is the reason for the season. God the Creator, coming into His creation as one of His creatids, is so mind-blowing that only faith can reach to the heart of it and grasp it for His offered results.
2. Saints, let’s think about our self-identity. Have we accepted the now-and-forever identity that the Lord has given us, or are we still “only human?” On the other hand, some may think of themselves as only spiritual, with no natural components or tendencies. There are many answers, but think about how you think of yourself. Not what you would like to think of yourself. Not what others think of you. But through recent days and weeks, what have you been thinking of yourself? Your answer is probably based on how you see yourself performing in life, what others show of their opinion of you, what your theology says about you and, hopefully, what you perceive that the Lord thinks about you.

I will offer one of His opinions. See Philippians 3:3. My best updated personal opinion about myself is that I am a son of God who has done a bit of doctoring, and has heard the Lord say that He is going to pour out His Spirit on Corpus Christi. Take some time to study yourself. The Lord will help you. It’s important to know what we think of ourselves, because we function from that perspective. For believers who are growing in the knowledge of God, we are drawing life [including our opinions] from His word and Spirit by faith. But my question is about where we are along the way. Today, how do you think of yourself? Who are you to yourself?

1. Let’s get in step with the Christmas season of giving and receiving:

1) What do you desire for yourself in 2018 – spiritually [like a better cross-walk, less of yourself, more faithfulness], temporally [like health, money, stuff, friends], and behaviorally [how would you like to change]? Other than the Lord, who is the key to the fulfillment of those desires for yourself? If the Lord gave them to you, you are the key and He is the workman.

2) What do you desire for the Lord in 2018? Give it to Him, or perhaps some of it. Psalm 21 is a Psalm of David. Mostly, it speaks of David and the Lord. Let me adjust the pronouns to “me,” that being any and all believers. I’ll do a few verses. “O Lord, in Your strength I will be glad, and in Your salvation how greatly I will rejoice. You have given me my heart’s desire, and You have not withheld the request of my lips. Selah. For You meet me with the blessings of good things. You set a crown of fine gold on my head. I asked life of You, You gave it to me, length of days forever and ever.” You can continue editing it for yourself.

3) Psalm 27:4 requires no change of the pronoun, except that we accept it for ourselves. Verse 4 reads: “One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek [meaning, ‘And I’m going after it full-force.’]: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life [be intimate with Him], To behold the beauty of the Lord [seeing Him face to face, resting on His bosom], and to meditate/inquire in His temple [know what is on His mind, how He thinks and feels].”

4) This Thought is especially for B. W. [the one who is here in Corpus Christi] but it also applies to all of us. Psalm 38:9-12 acknowledges that I am well-known to the Lord. Part of that which He knows about “me” is that my body is failing. I am weak physically, have a significant problem walking due to general weakness and my life-long balance problem, my heart and cardiovascular system is in trouble, my vision is so bad that I can hardly see to get about, although we have made some progress some family and friend relationships are still weak, strangers and business associates are attacking me, but the Lord has everything in hand. All is well.

5) What is your favorite contact sport? In America it is football. The Lord has His own contact sport. His sport league has two teams. One team is the Wickeds and the other team is the Wisdoms – Prov. 10:23-24. “Doing wickedness is like sport to a fool, and so is wisdom to a man of understanding.” Their games always end with victory for the Wisdoms because, “What the wicked fears will come upon him, but the desire of the righteous will be granted. When the whirlwind passes, the wicked is no more, but the righteous has an everlasting foundation.” That game is going on today at your house. Go, team!

1. When the Lord owns that which we love most, He owns all that we have. That was shown when Abraham “gave” his son, Isaac, to the Lord. Isaac was Abraham’s prize possession. When Abraham gave Isaac to the Lord, everything Abraham had was also available to the Lord. God the Father knew that. His plan for father Abraham was already His plan for Himself. Nothing of Abraham’s possessions or of self was withheld, although only Isaac was offered that day, and nothing of the Father’s possessions or of self was to be withheld on that Golgotha day.

Likewise, when we possess Him whom the Father loves most [that being Jesus], we possess all that our Father has. He has given us all things that pertain to life, godliness, and righteousness – 2 Peter 1:3.

1. Are you beset with a recurring sin by thought, word, or deed? Of course not! Neither am I. Never have been. Well, that’s obviously not the truth. We sin regularly, and seem to have at least one active besetting or recurring sin – one that continues repeating despite our resistance. Paul wrote that he did not understand himself. He did not understand himself because he did the things that he hated – Rom. 7:15. One cause of our ongoing grief is that we have a desire to do that sin – James 1:14. That leaves a weak lock on the door and the tempter breaks in. Our flesh is weak.

Our cross is the Lord’s answer to our problem. While we are mis-focusing on not sinning, especially on not sinning that besetting sin, He is working to lead us to our crosses in order that He may gain our whole life, not just that one area. He wants us to die to ourselves, “across the board.” Hating that sin, or hating all of our sins, is not good enough. His project is to get us to hate the self. That’s where the strength of sin is, in our self, meaning our soul. Jesus taught us to deny our self – Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23. As we do that, another battle in our war is won. Evil is defeated again and is headed for the pit.

1. In the parable of the seed in Mark 4:26-29 you have noticed that the man scattered the seed, then had nothing to do with its coming up. It came up the way the Lord planned for it to come up, differently in one place than another – Matt. 13. The man may have wondered if it was going to come up, but he had no control over its sprouting, coming up, and producing a full head of grain. Things went the way the Creator planned.

The invisible kingdom is irresistible. Yes, do your part and do it well, but don’t think that you must control, or even understand, all of it in order for your contribution to be vital and effective. As the ole time Pentecostals said, “Leave room for God.” The truth is that He has brought us and things this far, is with us today, and has prepared a time and place for us to be together with Him tomorrow – Rom. 11:36. We are hidden in God’s secret place, and that secret place is Jesus. Take heart, especially in the worst of times.

1. How does the enemy get to you? Does he come at you directly, or obliquely through situations and others? He will likely come at you directly as long as you crumble when he roars. When you no longer crumble from his direct attack, he still doesn’t give up; he uses others and important circumstances. He came at Jesus directly [His temptation in the wilderness early in His ministry], but failed. Then He went at Jesus through others. Indeed, his new approach worked! Those others mistreated and then killed Him. But Romans 8:28 was already in effect [all of God’s word being of God’s eternal nature and power, from eternity past into eternity future], and had been in effect since the beginning of creation – all things work for good for those who love God and who yield their lives to Him. The best and most enjoyable failures in our lives are the times when temptation fails.
2. Do you have authority in areas where you have no responsibility? Of course not. Authority is given only in areas where we have responsibility. Do you have responsibility in areas where you do not have authority? If you do, you know the feeling of helplessness. Wherever we have responsibility, we must have authority. Otherwise we have no “punch” to get our job done. Authority is given so we can carry out our responsibilities. It all works by love.
3. Sin separates man from God, but sin does not separate God from man. That should handle most of our anxiety. It leaves only the little stuff.