

## Trust and Yield to the Living Lord

By Betty Harstad

*“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”*

(Romans 12:1 NASB)

Thankfully, God does not want us to present or yield ourselves to Him blindly. The Bible was not read in my childhood home, nor did we attend church, and I knew of God only in a rudimentary way. However, it did seem to make sense that He created the world and that there was a heaven and even a hell, which I feared. When I was a teenager, a few girls read to me the standard gospel message and then kindly waited for me to submit, but I remained silent. I was leery of trusting this God of whom I knew so little. I did not and could not put these thoughts into words.

While attending a church in Missouri, I learned of the *"traditions of men according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ"* (Colossians 2:8b NASB). My husband and I joined the church after I completed the necessary classes. We agreed to have our very young children baptized and were faithfully in attendance each Sunday for the year and a half that we lived there.

Although we did all that was required, my longing to know God was not satisfied, and my husband did not want to attend a similar church when we moved back to Minnesota. *How was it even possible to know this holy God?* I wondered. How was it possible for me to be accepted for this salvation that I had briefly heard about from those young girls? My cry was faint, but He heard me! *"A battered reed He will not break off and a smoldering wick He will not put out, until He leads justice to victory. And in His name the Gentiles will hope"* (Matthew 12:20, 21 NASB).

After several years of attending a friendly family-oriented, yet slightly unbiblical, neighborhood church, I went to a Bible study for women, taught verse-by-verse by the Pastor's wife. My heart and mind were slowly but surely opened to the glorious gospel of salvation through the Word in the book of Romans. Learning that I was a helpless and hopeless sinner astounded and dismayed me at first, but it soon brought me to joyful submission to this Savior, God's only Son. It was He who prepared the way for the eternal, holy life for all who will believe in His finished work on the Cross.

We did not have another verse-by-verse study of the Word at this little church because they came to be at the forefront of an “experienced-based,” extra-biblical movement just beginning in Elk River. Despite this, after I became a “new creation,” the Bible became more understandable to me. Access to books by way of a small Christian bookstore in which I worked also helped direct me to examine many of the treasures in the Bible that had previously been hidden from me.

Even so, it didn't take me long to realize that often my flesh still liked to have its way, and I learned that dependence upon Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit was imperative each and every day. *"Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lust. And do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God"* (Romans 6:11-13 NASB).

When the Holy Spirit shows us how helpless we may be against sin in the flesh, we realize that it is a wondrous privilege to present (surrender, yield) ourselves to Him knowing we can trust Him to change us from the inside out so that we are willing to please Him. *“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit”* (II Corinthians 3:18 NASB).