

HERITAGE SERIES

The
Deeper
Life

SUSTAINING OUR
RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
THROUGH CHRIST

A.W. TOZER





About the Author

He was called “a 20th-century prophet” even in his own lifetime.

Born on a Pennsylvania farm in 1897, A.W. Tozer became a pastor at the age of 22 when he was ordained by The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

For 31 years in Chicago, he was pastor of the Southside Alliance Church where his reputation was citywide. Concurrently he became the editor of *Alliance Life*, a responsibility he fulfilled until his death in 1963.

Tozer’s greatest legacy to the Christian world has been his more than 40 books, tracts and booklets, including this one. His best known book is *The Pursuit of God* which has sold over one million copies in 20 languages.

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The Deeper Life

Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God. (Hebrews 6:1)

By the words “deeper life” I do not mean a life deeper than Scripture indicates. I do not want anything that cannot be found within the framework of the Christian revelation. I do not want anything that is added. That is why I never buy books or listen to lectures on how to wake up your solar plexus and tune into the cosmic processes. All that is extrascriptural; any of it that is good is in the Word of God and any that is not in the Word of God is not good. So I let those fellows talk to people who don’t know the Word and I stay by the Word.

I am a Bible Christian and if an archangel with a wingspread as broad as a constellation shining like the sun were to come and offer me some new truth, I’d ask him for a reference. If he could

not show me where it is found in the Bible, I would bow him out and say, "I'm awfully sorry, you don't bring any references with you." So what I'm talking about is not a life deeper than the Scriptures indicate; but merely one that is, in fact, what it professes to be in name.

A Christian is not one who has been baptized, necessarily, though a Christian is likely to be baptized. A Christian is not one who receives Communion, though a Christian may receive Communion, and if he's been properly taught, he will. But that is not a Christian necessarily. A Christian is not one who has been born into a Christian home, though the chances are more likely that he will be a Christian if he has a good Christian background. A Christian is not one who has memorized the New Testament, or is a great lover of Christian music, or who goes to hear the Apollo Club sing the *Messiah* every year. A Christian may do all of those things and I think it might be fine if he did; but that doesn't make one a Christian. A Christian is one who sustains a right relationship to Jesus Christ.

Christians enjoy a kind of union with Jesus Christ. Everybody sustains some relationship to Jesus Christ; just the same as everybody in America sustains some relation to Krushchev [former leader of the Soviet Union]. My personal relation is one of active hostility so far as can be possible within a Christian

framework. We can't hate people, but we can hate everything they stand for, and I want it known that I do. But everybody has a relationship to everybody else, and everybody has a relation to Jesus Christ. The relation he sustains may be one of adoring faith and love; it may be one of admiration; it may be one of hostility; it may be one of complete carelessness; but it is an attitude of some sort. A relationship of some sort exists between every human being and Jesus Christ; that is, every human being that ever heard of Jesus Christ. But a Christian is one who sustains a right and proper relation, a biblical relation, to Jesus Christ.

The Nature of the Relationship

The Christian sustains two kinds of relationship—or rather, the union is of two kinds; it is judicial and vital. I'll explain those two words.

In Romans we have the judicial relationship everybody sustains toward Christ: "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" (5:1-2). Then in the book of Ephesians, the first chapter, that very oft-quoted passage, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in

the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight" (1:3-4), and so on.

I only quote those, not to give exposition, but only to point up the fact that we sustain toward God in Christ a certain judicial relationship, just as you have legal obligations to your children. You can get in trouble with the law if you deny them. The legal system recognizes a relationship between you and your son. It is not only biological, it is judicial—you are accountable before the law not to neglect him, abuse him, starve him or run away and leave him. You've got to look after him; he's your son.

There is a relationship which we sustain toward God in Christ. It is a relationship of children to the Father; we are children of God. Because so many verses deal with that, I don't need to quote any one of them.

Then there is a vital relationship which is another matter altogether. A husband and wife have no children and decide to adopt a boy. Under the law, that boy has exactly the same relationship to that man as if he were his own son. As the legal father before the law, he is responsible to feed and educate and shelter and care for that boy till he comes of a certain age. However, the relationship is judicial, not biological, not

vital; the boy did not come from the long, age-old life stream of that father. He came from another life stream and was adopted into the family. So the father has a judicial but not a vital relationship to that son.

But a Christian has a vital relationship to God and to Christ. He said, "I am the vine; you are the branches" (John 15:5a). The branch is a branch because it sustains a vital relationship. The life of the vine is in the branch and the life of the branch comes from the vine. The two are united; that is a vital relationship. A Christian is one who has been judicially, legally made a brother of Jesus Christ and a child of God. But he is more than that—he is one who has been united to Jesus Christ by the power and motions of life so that he is vitally related to Him.

That is where we begin and, in most circles, that is where almost everybody ends. Bible schools and Bible conferences and books and printing houses are dedicated to the constant repetition of the fact that we're judicially and vitally related to Christ in salvation. That is as far as we go. There are other relationships which we can also bear toward Christ and that is what the writer meant in Hebrews when he said, "Therefore let us . . . go on to maturity" (6:1a).

That is what was meant in First Corinthians chapter 3, when Paul told

them that they were carnal and they ought to move on out of that carnal state into a spiritual state. There are at least three other relationships that everybody ought to bear toward Jesus Christ: volitional, intellectual and emotional.

The Volitional Relationship

Our union with Christ is judicial and vital. It is that by virtue of our faith in Christ; but there is a volitional relationship too. What do I mean by that? I mean a relationship of our will to God so that every known will of God should be mine. Everything that God wills, I should will. I should not only be judicially, legally related to Him, not only vitally related to Him in life, but in my mind, in my volitional life, I should be united to Him by doing and knowing and willing exactly as He does. That is what I mean by "Let us go on."

Most Christians do not go on to make all the will of God their will. They sing very tenderly that rather lugubrious and pretty little ditty, "Sweet will of God, still fold me closer." I like that hymn; don't get me wrong. But we can sing that and have moist eyes and yet be selfish and self-willed and not make the will of God our own. The will of God must be known and then be adopted as my will. And then I begin to sustain a relationship of will, a volitional relationship toward Jesus Christ.

How do I know the will of God? By listening to stories told by preachers? I know by prayer, by Bible study and by experience. I go to the Scriptures and I read it regularly. I go to prayer and I ask God for grace to help me to understand it.

The fourth stanza of the hymn, "Break Thou the Bread of Life," says:

Oh, send Thy Spirit, Lord,
Now unto me,
That He may touch my eyes
And make me see;
Show me the truth concealed
Within Thy Word,
And in Thy Book revealed,
I see Thee, Lord.

I believe that hymn writer knew what he was writing about. We must pray that the Lord would give the Holy Spirit as a light upon the Scriptures. If we pray and have the Spirit of God give us illumination and we read the Word of God with avidity and relish and watch our spiritual experiences, there will begin to crystallize within us a will that is God's will.

I wonder if that is what Paul meant when He said, "But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16b). There is an infinite number of attitudes and relationships within the mind and heart, and these are all wrong to start with. They don't all get corrected when we get converted either. They don't all get

corrected after we've been to Bible school. They get corrected only by working on them. By prayer, study, spiritual experience and the illumination of the Holy Spirit, those attitudes begin to become spiritual instead of carnal. They begin to get straightened out.

The Intellectual Relationship

There is a second relationship that we should go on to: an intellectual relationship to Jesus Christ. Of course, there is a sense in which the volitional and the intellectual come as soon as we're converted; but there is another sense in which they wait for development and growth. By the intellectual, I mean we should think the way Jesus Christ thinks; that we should think scripturally, that we should see things the way the Lord Jesus sees them, that we should learn to feel the way the Lord Jesus feels about anything or anybody, that we should love what He loves and hate what He hates.

The question then arises, does God actually *hate* anything? Sure He does—He says so. "You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy" (Hebrews 1:9).

It is a psychological impossibility to love anything without hating its opposite. If I love holiness, I hate sin. If I love truth, I hate lies. If I love honesty,

I hate dishonesty. If I love purity, I hate filth. Hate is only bad when it is aimed against people made in the image of God or when it springs out of some unworthy or low motive like jealousy or envy or anger. We should learn to hate what Jesus hates. I'm sure that if we had the mind of Christ intellectually, so that we judged things the way He judges them, there would be less need for preaching separation from the world than there is today among Christians.

In my earlier Christian life I read a great deal of the English authors Keats and Milton. Then I got away from Keats; I still admire him very greatly for the marvelous music of his poetry, but there's nothing of God in it, nothing of Christ. So I don't find it very helpful any more. Milton, of course, is all right. I think we'll read Milton in heaven.

But here's what the critics said about these two men. Keats was an Englishman born of English stock, reared in England, and, I think, never left England, and died when he was in his twenties—an Englishman of Englishmen. But Keats had read Greek literature so much that his mind was not an English mind; it had nothing of the restrictions and strengths and weaknesses of the British mind at all. It was a Greek mind. He thought like the Greeks.

Milton was an Englishman as well, born English of the English. He lived in

England all his life—perhaps a few trips abroad, but not many. He lived and died in England and is the second of all the great English poets. Milton read the Bible and memorized it so much and lived in it so much that he was a Hebrew in his heart. Milton had a Bible mind which got into everything he wrote. He could not knock off a common sonnet of fourteen lines but somewhere in it, would be the lilt and rhythm of the Hebrew melodies, Old or New Testament. Of course, I understand the New Testament was written in Greek, but it is Hebrew in its thought pattern.

Here we have two minds, both of them English, living in the same country and eating the same kind of foods and seeing the same scenery and having the same kind of basic education. And yet one of them became a Greek in everything but nationality because he loved Greece so much. The other became Hebrew, or biblical rather than Hebrew, because he loved the Bible so much.

Now that is what I mean. You can have a Christian mind, a biblical mind. You can be Bible-minded in the sense that even though you are an American, you have a New Testament mind. I believe that is what the Holy Spirit wants to do for us. I believe that He wants our intellectual relationship to Jesus Christ to become so close, so intimate, so all-

embracing that we'll think as Jesus thought, and love as He loved and hate what He hated and value what He valued and have the mind of Christ in us.

This does not come by believing on Jesus and buying a Scofield Bible and singing choruses. You have to go beyond that, "on to maturity." Those things are all basically sound and right and good; and I have no objection. Stick by your Scofield Bible. It is good. It did, since the early part of this century, wonderful yeoman service in helping us stand against liberalism and modernism; but it has its limitations. Its limitations consist of an excess of emphasis upon the judicial relationship to Jesus Christ and very little about going on to maturity. But that is the same criticism that I bring against most of evangelicalism today. So I say there's a volitional and an intellectual relationship to Jesus Christ which a Christian should go on to cultivate.

The Emotional Relationship

Then thirdly, there's an emotional relationship—a love attachment to Christ. Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ—*really*? Now I know we sing that we do. We sing things that aren't very true sometimes. Do you really love Christ?

A half-comical answer was given to Moody one time when he inquired of a man on the street, "Do you love Jesus?" He answered, "I have nothing against

Him." I think that is about as far as a lot of people go. We have nothing against Jesus, but can we say we love Him?

Find a young mother with a three-month-old baby—it may be howling with its first little tooth or grinning as it looks up at its parents—and ask her, "Do you love your baby?" You know what will happen—every inch of her face will wrinkle up into a smile. Ask the sick, weary boy sitting in a foxhole somewhere, cold and hungry and tired and weary of life, "Do you love your country?" He won't give you any cynical answer like some of our present politicians. I think he'll break down and say, "O, my God, if I only could go back home."

A missionary was in China for many years. While he was there, children were born to him and his wife. They were sent home and came by way of the West Coast to San Francisco. At every port of call the children would say, "Is this America, Daddy? Is this America?"

"No," he would say, "this is not America."

After three or four such disappointing incidents, the ship came into the harbor of San Francisco, and they saw the Golden Gate Bridge, the shoreline and two peaks with the sun shining down brightly on them. They stood on the deck and looked and the little children said, "Daddy, is this America?"

Suddenly he went all to pieces in a welter of homesickness and patriotism and love and memories and said through his sobs, "Yes, yes, children, this is America."

He didn't know how much he loved his country. He didn't know how dear her rocks and rills, her woods and templed hills had been to his American heart until he'd been shut away from there so long. The first sight of his homeland broke him up and he cried like the child that he was for a moment. Ask that man, "Do you love America?" He'll grin at you sheepishly and tell you that story. Yes, he loves America.

Do you love Jesus—*really*? It is possible to be a Christian, that is, to have faith in His power, in His work, in His atonement. It is even possible to have a vital relation to Him in the new birth and yet not have cultivated His fellowship to a point where we love Him very much. We're not finished until the love attachment to Christ has become so strong that it burns and glows and consumes.

When I read the writings of the old mystics and the devotional writings and hymn writers of the Middle Ages and later, I get sick in my heart and I tell God, "God, I'm sorry; I apologize and I'm ashamed. I don't love You the way these loved You." Read the letters of Samuel Rutherford. If you haven't, you should. Read those letters and then see

how sick it'll make you. You'll fold that book shut and get down on your knees very likely and say, "Lord Jesus, do I love You at all considering that this was love? Then what have I, what have I got?"

There should be an emotional relationship to Jesus Christ, a relationship of love. "You have forsaken your first love" (Revelation 2:4b) said the Lord Jesus, and maybe that is what it means. You have allowed things to cool you off like the young husband who really loves his bride but he's so busy making a living for her that he neglects her. I wonder if Jesus might not have had something like that in mind—"You are busy for Me, you are dashing here and there in My service, but you've left your first love."

What is this Christian then who has gone on until he sustains toward our Lord a right, a scriptural, a Spirit-inspired volitional and intellectual and emotional attitude toward the Savior? He is one who has been freed from earthly loves and fears.

Freedom from Earthly Loves

What do I mean by earthly love? I mean any love out of the will of God, any love that we would not allow God to take away. If you have anything in this world or anybody in this world that you would not let God take away from you, then you don't love Him as you should and you

don't know anything about the deeper life in experience. For the Spirit-filled Christian life means that I am delivered from earthly loves to a point where there is no love that I would not allow Jesus Christ to take away. Be it money, reputation, my home, my friends, my family or whatever it may be. The love of Jesus Christ has come in and swallowed up all other loves and sanctified them, purified them, made them holy and put them in their right relationship to that all-consuming love of God so that they're secondary and never primary.

I want to ask you this question: Is there anything or anyone on earth that you love so much that you'd fight God if He wanted to take them? Then you are not where you should be and you might as well face up to it and not pretend to be something you're not. Complete freedom means that I want the will of God only. And if it is the will of God for me to have these things, then I love them for His sake, but I love them with a tentative and relative love and not an all-poured-out love that makes me a slave. It means that I love nothing outside the will of God and that I love only what and who He wills that I should love. Then you can love everybody.

I think Paul loved Timothy and Silas and Titus and the rest of them with a love that glowed like a furnace. But he didn't love them to a point where he

could not separate from them or where he would fight God for them. He only loved them in the margin of his heart; he loved God at the center. He loved them for God's dear sake. This is Christianity.

Does that mean that you are not to love your baby? No, it means that you are to love God so much that you love your baby in its right context. Does it mean you are not to love your spouse? No, you are to love him. But you are to love him in the right context, in right relationship.

There was a lady, a very intelligent, brilliant woman, and writer of note. She lay beside her baby who was very sick. She was trying to get a little sleep and trying to care for and nurse the baby, too. The little thing had a high fever and was really suffering and she knew it. She watched that little suffering face and after having done everything she could do to assuage its pains and sufferings, she turned away to think it over.

"When I turned away," she said, "I saw the strain and the pain in the flesh on the baby's face and the two bright eyes and I knew that baby was suffering. I turned and said, 'God, I'm through with You. You let my baby suffer like that; I'm through! I can't love a God who'll let my baby suffer!'"

She went on to become a rationalist, an unbeliever. Well, she was a poor fool and she didn't understand. And unless

she changed her mind, and I don't think she did, she knows more now than she did then; for that has been a century ago. What happened there? Just this. She loved her baby more than she loved the God who created her. If the God who created her would let her baby run a fever, she would have nothing to do with Him. That kind of love is not love. That is supreme selfishness. It is the extension of her personality, the projection of her personality into that baby and it is sheer pure selfishness.

My own mother-in-law had a baby that died and she went through fire and water and blood and tears and toil, but through it she came to a wonderful spiritual experience. She had to sit up in bed, weak and weary as she was, and make the baby's coffin. Her husband made it out of wood and she made a cloth lining of whatever she could get hold of. When the funeral was held, she stood by the grave with the rest and when everybody was expecting her to break down, she said, "Shall we sing together?" And she led off in the Doxology. Some people went away and said, "Mrs. Pfautz is insane." Others went away with moist eyes and said, "There's a faith and love that can give her newborn to the grave and sing 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow' beside that grave."

If you love anything enough that there's any question about whether

... God can have it or not, you know nothing about the deeper life; you are a slave to that love whatever it is. If we've been freed from every earthly love, then we have no unsatisfied longings and we have no wishes and no dreams. I never use the word, "wish," never! Years ago, I quit it; and if it ever breaks out in my speech or preaching, it is only a colloquialism, I never mean it. If God wants me to have something, I'll pray for it. And if He doesn't want me to have it, I don't want it.

Freedom from Earthly Fears

The Christian who goes on gets freed from earthly fears. These two chains bind the whole human race: loves and fears. We love something and can't get it or we love something and we're afraid we're going to lose it. So we're bound with that chain. Or we're afraid we'll get something we don't want; we're afraid we'll lose something we have, we're bound with that chain. Fear and love bind humanity in two golden chains.

And the gospel of Jesus Christ never is finished until it goes on to set us free from loves and fears. We'll love our family more than we ever loved them before. We'll love our country with cheerful devotion. We'll love every good thing there is in the world; but we'll love it in its right context and we'll love it for Jesus' sake. And we'll hold it

lightly, so we can let go of it any second for the Lord's sake. That is to be free from earthly loves.

Freedom from earthly fears means that I choose the will of God now and forever; it is my treasure, my whole attitude. The only fear I have is to fear to get out of the will of God. Outside of the will of God, there's nothing I want, and in the will of God there's nothing I fear, for God has sworn to keep me in His will. If I'm out of His will, that is another matter. But if I'm in His will, He's sworn to keep me.

And He's able to do it, He's wise enough to know how to do it and He's kind enough to want to do it. So really there's nothing to fear.

I get kidded by my family and friends about this, but I don't really think I'm afraid of anything. Someone may ask, "What about cancer? Do you ever fear that you'll die of cancer?" Maybe so, but it will have to hurry up, or I'll die of old age first. But I'm not too badly worried because a man who dies of cancer in the will of God, is not injured; he's just dead. You can't harm a man in the will of God.

Socrates, the heathen stoic, could die saying, "No harm can come to a good man in this world or the next." If he could say it, a pagan, why should I tremble and walk softly through this world looking over my shoulder furtively? Rather should I, by the grace of God,

say, "Lord, I believe at least as much as a pagan. I believe no harm can come to a good man in this world or the next."

"But I'll lose my job."

Well, you'll lose your job then; you won't lose your head.

"What if I lose my head?"

Well, if you lose your head, you won't lose your Savior. Can't harm a good man. So a good man is free from fear.

I pity the preacher that is afraid of his congregation or afraid of his superiors in his denomination. Maybe I'm a little abnormal on that, but I've never known one single twinge of fear of my superiors; and only rarely do I ever get self-conscious before a congregation. If there's somebody who really is a great preacher present and I know that my poor little sermon will sound rather amateurish by comparison, I feel a little inadequate. But nothing can harm you if you are in the will of God.

If you let the love of God burn within you until it consumes everything, then you will never be a slave to any earthly yearnings—even though you still have them. You'll have earthly yearnings and earthly loves and people you love and care for and would weep to part with; Jesus wept beside the grave of His loved friend, Lazarus. There's no harm in weeping when we must say goodbye.

Our son Wendell said goodbye last evening to fly throughout South America. He was flying out in a blizzard; I didn't like it too well, but he was breezy. He tried to pretend he didn't care. You can have your own personal loving feelings; but you are not a slave to them. You are boss of them. And you can have your dislikes; I'd run a mile to keep from having a needle put in my arm.

Once when I was ill, a heart specialist came to my house—somebody sent for him, I don't know who. He came upstairs to my room and sat down beside my bed. And when he came in, he had this huge rocket in his hand with a long sucker affair; and I saw it. And, brother, did I argue him down.

He said, "Now, I'll give you this and you'll sleep and you'll be all right. It's just a sedative."

I said, "You won't give me that."

And he said, "Well, if you are going to make so much of it, probably you'd be worse off if you took it." So he said goodbye and left. And I got better.

So I don't say that the deeper life—the Spirit-filled life—means that you won't be normal. If lightning strikes near you, you'll jump. And if somebody comes at you with a needle, you'll shrink—you are human. But that is one thing; it is quite another thing to walk around chained by human fears—chained by the fear of death or the fear

of sickness or the fear of poverty or the fear of friends or the fear of enemies. God never means that His children should thus be afraid.

All that I've preached to you now is not a dream. It is not a misty ideal that nobody can reach. It is the normal Christian life. Anything short of it is abnormal or subnormal. Shall we not obey God and go on to maturity? May God grant that together we may press on out into the deep waters, "deep enough to swim in" (Ezekiel 47:5).