

Elijah House Ministries is a non-profit ministry founded in 1975 by John & Paula Sandford with the mandate to restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers Malachi 4:5-6 and Matthew 17:11. We offer Prayer Ministry as well as schools and Internships to help the body to be equipped for the challenges of ministry today. For more information see our website at [www.elijahhouse.org](http://www.elijahhouse.org).

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## The Need for Ministry



By John and Paula Sandford  
(revised by Mark Sandford)

### The Need for Ministry to the Depths of Born-Again Christians

Why the need to minister to the depths of already born-again Christians? The answer is found in questions frequently asked by so many Christians: "Why do I do the things I do?" "Why do I yell at my kids?" "Why do I ignore my wife?" "Why do I undermine my husband?" "Why do I overreact to my boss?" "Why do I withdraw from friends at the slightest hint of 'rejection?'" "Why do I see God as a punishing or distant God, when I know in my head that He is merciful and intimate?"

In the face of these and other questions, many Christians despair when reading a passage like Ephesians 5:8-10: ...for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

Many are trying their best to walk as children of light. But they are often blind-sided by the hidden impulses of their own hearts. Thus, they fail to produce the fruit of that light, and they too often fall into striving, disillusionment, and condemnation. They have rightly celebrated salvation as a free gift (Ephesians 2:4-5; Romans 6:23), and that Christ has already purchased that gift for them on the cross. But they have not understood that they are to grow up in their salvation (1 Peter 2:2) and that they are to work it out in fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12). Many have celebrated with Paul, by one offering He has perfected for all time..., while ignoring the second half of that same verse, ...those who are [in the Greek, being] sanctified (Hebrews 10:14, emphasis added).

Many understand sanctification as an event but not also as a process. They do not understand the words of Paul, "Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12). They tend to press on in terms of managing behavior rather than a sanctification process which would naturally result in changed behavior. They have not in reality done away with childish things (1 Corinthians 3:1), but have attempted to control and manage them. By ignoring hidden strongholds, they inadvertently allow them to become part of the treasure in the storehouse of their hearts (Luke 6:43-45). When what has been accumulating for years erupts, they have striven

all the more to control the expression of it, or they have rebuked the devil (whose only power is in the raw material they have given him).

We need to deal with the causes, not just the effects, of our sinful patterns. For instance, if I cannot stop yelling at my kids, I need to ask, "What is driving me?" Do I have hidden bitterness toward others who have yelled at me? Am I now taking out that bitterness on my children? If I overreact to any hint of "rejection," do I have unhealed wounds due to bitterness in my heart toward others who have rejected me? If I see God as being distant or punitive, is it because I still have bitterness toward persons who long ago were distant or punitive toward me?

Many Christians interpret forgetting "what lies behind" (Philippians 3:13) as ignoring the past rather than letting the Holy Spirit bring to death on the cross what has so long been ingrained in us. What others did to us long ago truly is in the past. But when we ask questions like the ones just listed, our questions reveal that our bitter reactions toward them are not in the past. The wounding may have occurred long ago, but our reactions are still with us. Literal forgetting is not what Paul was speaking of; that does not put such reactions behind us; it only reinforces our denial. Only forgiveness and repentance can enable the kind of "forgetting" Paul would find effective. Our attempts to literally forget are the striving of our own flesh. We can attempt to put aside the old self with its practices of anger, wrath, malice, and slander (Colossians 3:8-10; Ephesians 4:22 ff.) as if these were external practices only, but Jesus called the Pharisees (and us) to "clean the INSIDE of the cup" (Matthew 23:26).

For more than forty years we have been growing in our ability to address such issues as the Lord has given us insight to meet the depths of people's needs. We have increasingly discovered that the Lord's desire and power to set people free far surpasses our ability to deal with problems and our sensitivity to apply insights! Whenever we have tuned into His purposes, we have invariably experienced the healing power of the Lord flowing through the door of prayer more powerfully than we could think of asking.

Our books have been the result of that long-term experience and study with the Lord. Recognizable and predictable patterns of cause and consequence have appeared consistently. And the cure we have found has worked so consistently, that thousands of lives have been transformed and enabled to reflect the light of Christ more brightly than before.

In summary, we believe that positionally, we are already transformed: Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ... (2 Cor. 5:17-18). But progressively, there is a dimension of our transformation that requires our ongoing response to Christ's accomplished work: ...We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (vs. 21, emphasis added). We must choose to yield our hearts to the work Christ has accomplished on His cross. Elijah House's mission is to enable Christians to reconcile with God, and by so doing, to lay hold of that for which [they were] laid hold of by Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:12).