

In this excerpt from *Risky Living, Keys to Inner Healing*, Jamie Buckingham shows through personal experience that only as God's Holy Spirit enters the subconscious can one know true inner healing.

By **JAMIE BUCKINGHAM**

Making God Lord of the Subconscious

It was on a Sunday morning, almost four years after a remarkable experience with the Holy Spirit, that I became aware of the healing work which had been going on in my inner man — and the tremendous need I had for more. I awoke at my regular time that morning, then realizing I could enjoy the luxury of a few minutes of extra sleep, deliberately turned over and buried my head in the pillow.

As I slept, I dreamed. It was a typical dream — inane, senseless, and composed, I think, of various people from my childhood parading back and forth engaging in foolish activity. It lasted only seconds and then was gone.

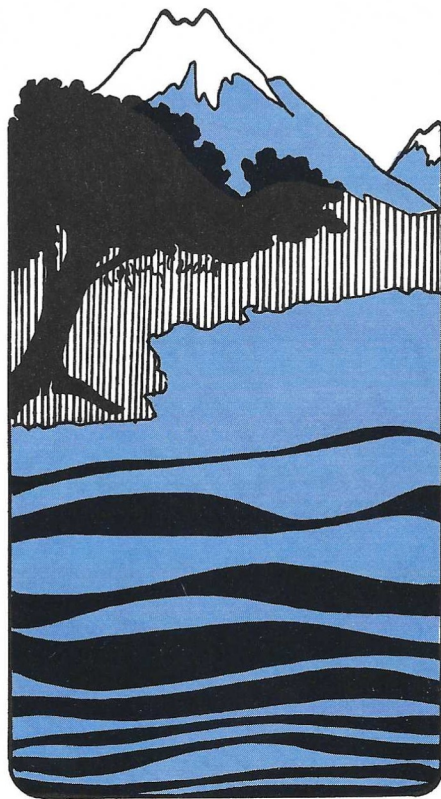
I awoke and realized I had been dreaming another of my nonsensical dreams. Most of my dreams are like this. One recurring dream has me slogging my way through a gooey swamp. I am up to my knees in thick mud. Each step is laborious and I am panting for breath.

I seldom give any thought to my dreams, but this morning, standing in the bathroom shaving, I began to run a quick self-inventory:

"Why is it, Jamie, that you never dream of spiritual things?" This bothered me since some of my more spiritual friends were always talking about the great revelations that came to them while they were asleep.

It bothered me, especially since I was beginning to have a deeper walk with God during my waking hours. Dreams, I knew, are the reflections of our real selves. They are, for the most part, the mirror of our souls — the conscious revelation of the subconscious part of our selves.

If the mind were pictured as a deep mountain lake, the consciousness would be the surface and the subconsciousness all that lies beneath the surface. The surface not only reflects all that is around it, but it acts as a receiving point for everything that enters. Except for the contour



and capacity of the basin (heredity), everything that is in the lake has been put there (environment) through the conscious. Some of it stays on the surface where it can be seen, but the vast majority of all our experiences have sunk — or been pushed — into the depths of the subconscious.

Everything that has happened to us, from the moment we were conceived in our mother's womb, is part of that vast reservoir called the subconscious. Most of the unpleasant experiences have been pushed under so we can maintain a relatively calm and pure surface appearance. Yet deep inside, often forgotten yet still very real, lie the painful, traumatic experiences that make up a big part of our real selves.

Back when I was unsaved, it didn't seem very important that my lake was filled with garbage. But now, having

made an open profession of faith in Jesus Christ, and having put on all the outward trappings of a Christian, I was concerned about my double life. On the surface I certainly looked like a Christian: I spoke the language of Zion, I controlled my tongue and actions. But down inside I knew I was a cesspool.

In the twelfth chapter of Luke, Jesus talks about the "leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." He is actually describing each one of us who spends time cleaning off the surface of our lake, but is not willing to pay the price of dredging the garbage from the bottom.

As I stood looking in the mirror that Sunday morning I realized I had given considerable time and effort to keeping the surface of my lake clean. My conscious mind, to the best of my knowledge, was dedicated to God. Yet at the same time I realized that much of me was simply a reflection of those around me. In fact, rather than have someone ripple the surface of my lake and therefore reveal what may be lurking beneath the surface, I found myself often agreeing with everything other people said. That way my surface remained calm, peaceful. Yet all the while, inside, I was a cesspool of disagreement and impurity.

More and more, on the surface, my lips were speaking praises to God and my life was showing forth the image of Jesus simply because I willed it to be. But my subconscious, that vast reservoir of who I really was, that area revealed primarily through dreams and sudden disturbances of the surface, still seemed to be as un-Christlike as ever.

I sat in the back of the room that morning, half-listening to the teaching and half-reflecting on how much my life was out of tune with God's perfect harmony. I remembered how I had reacted the day before in the parking lot of the grocery store. I had come out of the store with my arms loaded with hamburger buns for a cookout. A pretty girl had driven up in a sleek sports car and was wriggling out from under the steering wheel. As she

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did, her skirt slithered up beyond the point of propriety and suddenly I was suffused with lust. It was stupid. I had no intention of being immoral, especially not there in the grocery store parking lot. But the glands of my body were suddenly activated. On the surface I was God's man of faith and power. Underneath I was a dirty old man.

For the most part I had been able to keep my overt reactions under control. (One of the fruits of the Spirit is self-control.) But it bothered me that beneath the seemingly calm and tranquil surface of my life there lay that seething mass of self that was for the most part materialistic, animalistic, carnal, and only slightly flavored with the Christ who had seeped down from the conscious surface into the dark, hidden areas of the subconscious.

In less than twenty-four hours I had seen evidence that even though my consciousness was under control, my subconscious was still quite capable of fleshy acts. It was not a pleasant revelation.

Realizing that we are a composite of all the experiences we've ever had, the Freudian psychoanalyst spends much of his time digging into our past, our subconscious. He may use drugs, hypnotism, or other forms of therapy to help bring the latent problems to the surface. However, once they have been exposed, the most the secular psychoanalyst can do is help us "adjust" to our condition.

There is a vast difference, however, between adjusting to the wounds of the past and having them healed. I still remember the sensitive young man who belonged to a rival fraternity when I was in college. He had strong homosexual tendencies and, on the advice of a counselor, sought psychiatric help. After a number of sessions the doctor finally told him he would be a lot happier if he learned to adjust to his gay life. Three weeks later the boy shot himself.

The average man lives behind a mask. His smiles, his laughter, his piety, his shows of confidence are all part of the role he is playing. Seldom, if ever, does he let anyone know who he really is. Only in times of pain, fear, or perhaps when he has had too much to drink, does his mask come down and we see him as he really is.

For thirty-five years I wore a mask and was largely unaware of it. I didn't like myself, and was continually imitating someone who seemed successful (never dreaming that he, too, was probably wearing a mask.)

Always, though, my mask was up. I dreaded the thought of someone peeking behind it, seeing the real me, and rejecting me. Afraid of growing bald, I considered a hairpiece. Afraid I would not be known as an "effective" speaker, I memorized the sermons of several suc-

cessful men of the cloth. I knew God wanted me to take off my mask. To be open, honest, and transparent. But the fear was too great. It was almost strangling me. What if people discovered I was nothing more than a shell, the lid on a garbage can? Would they still love me? Still respect me? I thought not. The things I had buried were, I knew, unacceptable. I had rejected them. Why wouldn't others, if they discovered the awful truth?

A friend of mine says the best way to disarm your critics is to confess publicly ahead of time. This way no one can ever accuse you of something you have not already confessed. But what do you do when you have so much to confess — so much garbage in your lake?

I began to get some insight into who I really was when I realized that my life was, on the whole, a reaction to stimuli.

It had been several years since I had been to Ft. Worth, Texas, where my wife and I spent the first four years of our married life. Flying to Dallas on a business trip, I decided to rent a car and drive over to Ft. Worth on a nostalgia trip. With the construction of the new turnpikes, the highways between Dallas and Ft. Worth were unfamiliar. Coming into Ft. Worth, I found myself in one of those multi-level interchanges called a "mix-master." Knowing that if I got off on the wrong road I could be swept off towards Oklahoma, I slowed down, carefully studying my map and paying close attention to the big green highway signs that loomed overhead. Suddenly I was jolted by the blast of an air horn from behind. Looking up into my mirror, I saw a lumbering old dump truck almost touching my rear bumper.

I reacted. Out of my lake came roaring all kinds of thoughts. My first thought was to slam on my brakes. I knew that rear-end accidents in Texas were always charged to the following driver. That would teach him a lesson or two, even if it demolished my car. My next thought was even worse. I considered throwing my map out the window, hoping it would spread across his windshield, causing him to swerve off the road and crash onto the next level of highways, far below.

Fortunately, my conscious mind took control and pushed the thoughts of hatred and murder back into my subconscious. I motioned him by and turned off

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Jamie Buckingham is executive editor of Logos Journal and pastor of Tabernacle Church in Melbourne, Florida. He has authored several books.

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at the proper junction toward my destination. But it didn't end there. For the next ten miles I fumed. I enjoyed chewing the cud of what I could have done.

You see, the driver of the dump truck had suddenly taken charge of my life. My stomach was in knots, my lips dry, my breathing shallow. All because I had given in to a reaction, rather than responding positively in love.

Moving from the area of reaction to the area of positive response is one of the most difficult of all spiritual tasks. In order to do so, the reservoir of the subconscious mind must be cleansed, dredged out. The Bible says we were made in the image of God. This is our true heredity. Yet our nature has a penchant to sin. And rather than dealing with our unhappy experiences as they have happened, we continue to push them beneath the surface of our lake. Thus when the surface is broken, instead of revealing the form of God the Father in whose image we are made, we reveal our wounded, angry selves.

We try, so bravely, to cover up. We stoically push the hurts deeper and deeper, or we cover them up with a nervous giggle or a smear of piety. Yet deep inside we're still the same. Unredeemed. Real healing will always include a healing of these memories. This will allow us to begin to become transparent so that any rift in the surface will reveal, not ourselves — which is an accumulation of the old wounds, disappointments, and fears — but the heavenly Father.

Jesus was able to do this. Jesus was transparent. That is the reason He was able to say to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Jesus never called men to look at Him. He said He had come to reveal the Father. The way He did this was through perfect transparency. There was no muddy water in the subconscious mind of Jesus. He never blurred the image of the Father by reacting.

Unfortunately, we are not like this. When the surface of our lake is peeled back, we "show ourselves" rather than revealing the Father.

Perhaps, though, we can at least understand what Jesus meant in the Sermon on the Mount when He said, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

Paul was talking of this when he wrote:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.) (2 Corinthians 10:3,4).

Most of our warring, or battles with self and Satan, are on the conscious (or fleshly) level. The Bible commands us to be holy people. Therefore, to achieve holiness, we try to clean up the surface of our lake. We cut out smoking, try to lead chaste lives, stop gambling, cut our hair (if we're men) or don't cut our hair (if we're women), wipe off the facial makeup, lower our hemlines, raise our necklines, and go through a hundred different mechanical procedures to achieve holiness.

But Jesus didn't call this holiness. He called it hypocrisy, because the inner man was still polluted. Such battles, Paul says, are not to be fought on the surface level. Holiness is not attained by cleaning the surface of the lake. This battle must be waged on a spiritual level, which is the reason that any sincere study of inner healing needs to include a study of spiritual warfare.

In this same Corinthian passage Paul goes ahead to say that the way to come into complete inner healing is by

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalleth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Our reactions lurk beneath the surface of our lives, waiting for a chance to pop through. Our job is not to run busily over the surface of our lake making sure none appear, but to let them come, see ourselves as we really are, confess the sin, thank God for the cleansing and ask Him to change our heart.

Impossible, you say. Yes, if we try to fight the battle on the surface of the lake. But if we let the Holy Spirit go to work with a sieve, not just pulling down the imaginations but dredging them up, then we can see that transparency is possible.

I determined that was what I wanted for myself. Not only to reflect Christ on the surface of my life, but deep down in the subconscious areas as well.

But how?

We were getting ready to build some upstairs rooms on our Florida house. Before we could actually start construction, however, the builder wanted to test the soil around the base of the foundation to make sure it could take the additional weight.

One Monday afternoon a team of geological engineers came by the house. They had a clever kind of drill that punched a small hole in the earth, going down about twenty feet and coming back up with samples of the various layers of soil.

After they left I stood in the yard and looked at the soil samples they had dumped out on the grass, wondering what would happen if someone should take a similar boring of me. Despair-

ingly, I concluded that although they would find Jesus Christ in great abundance on the surface, in the deep areas of my life they would find only me.

Yet my desire was that such a drilling would reveal Jesus Christ all the way down to the bottom. I wanted to be so pure that when I was cut, I would bleed Jesus. I thought of that story in the seventh chapter of Acts where Stephen was stoned. The Bible says the surface of two lakes were broken that afternoon. Stephen's words to the religious leaders cut them to their hearts. What was revealed? Hatred, bitterness, and murder. They reacted so violently they dragged Stephen through the city streets and stoned him to death. Yet as he was cut with the stones, Stephen, instead of reacting, responded with such positive love that eventually one of those involved in the stoning, a Pharisee named Saul, was converted.

I wanted to be like that. But how could it be? My lake, it seemed, could never be free from pollution. I was learning to handle the junk that was falling into it on a daily basis — but what could I do about the dregs which had long since settled below the surface and rose only in times of stress, anger, or temptation?

In other words, was it possible (as Paul commanded in Romans 12:2) for my mind to be actually transformed to prove what was that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God? The Scriptures said that I was “predestined to be conformed

to the image of His Son” (Romans 8:29), but by what method was this to be accomplished? “Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh,” Paul said to the Galatians (Galatians 5:16). A similar promise was made to the Ephesians “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (Ephesians 3:16,17). Again he said, “Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Ephesians 4:22,23).

So what I desired was not an impossibility. In fact, it was to be the goal of every follower of Jesus Christ. Being made conformable to His image would not begin with an outward expression, however, but with the healing of the inner man (the subconscious). In other words, the best way to clean up the surface of the lake was not by skimming the top, but by purifying the source of the flow from the wellsprings at the bottom.

Still the question remained: How is this brought to pass? I saw several scriptural principles that applied.

First, the Christian must be committed to a walk of absolute obedience to Christ in his *conscious* life. He must stand guard at the doorpost of his mind to repel each evil thought by which Satan would gain entry. Also, he must hurl out those he

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finds already inside, in the name of Jesus. The Bible says the Lord will honor such obedience with a cleansing of the heart. But if the Holy Spirit is to have completely free access to minister to all corners of the subconscious, He must be invited in.

It was there I discovered the full meaning of Paul's phrase, "pray in the Spirit."

For years I had heard people talk of the benefit of "praying in tongues." In fact, I myself had a "prayer language" which came as a result of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. But I had always used the prayer tongue simply because the Bible said I should. "I would that ye all spake with tongues" (1 Corinthians 14:5). Now I began to understand there was a purpose for the prayer language other than simply obeying God.

In 1 Corinthians 14:4, Paul said, "He that speaketh (prays) in an unknown tongue edifieth himself." Now that's what I needed, to be edified — to be strengthened — in my spirit, in the deep areas of my subconscious. In that same chapter he said, "If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth even though my understanding is unfruitful" (1 Corinthians 14:14). It was beginning to make sense.

Paul was talking about praying in the Spirit, whether it was in tongues or by letting the Spirit make intercession with groanings which could not be uttered. In so doing I would invite the Spirit to abide in my subconscious. Even though the prayer would be meaningless to my understanding, I knew His presence would eventually bring my every thought into captivity to obedience to Jesus Christ. No wonder Paul said we should pray without ceasing. To cease would quench the Spirit and block our inner healing.

Now I can see where the sick areas of my mind, including the bad memories of the past, can actually be healed as the timeless Christ walks back through my past and touches with healing; or as He descends far beneath the conscious surface of my mind into the hell of my own creation and preaches the good news of deliverance to those thoughts so long held in captivity. As I pray in the Spirit (and for me that means using my prayer language), those areas of my subconscious where self has always sat on the throne are brought under subjection to the King of the mind, Jesus Christ, revealing even my subconscious to the One who "searcheth the heart and knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit" (Romans 8:27)

I recalled an incident that began two days after I experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I had returned from Washington, D. C. with a new honesty. It was an honesty that compelled me to confess — to my wife — events which I had for years pushed beneath the sur-

face of my lake in a vain attempt to keep them hidden. Now came a desire to be transparent, and a knowledge that this could only transpire as I got things out in the open.

The following night, after this long confessional period, I began to dream. In my dreams I relived many of the carnal activities of prior years. People I had not thought of for years appeared in my dreams — people I had manipulated, spitefully used, lied to and hurt. Night after night they paraded through my dreams, helping me relive in vivid detail all the immorality and evil manipulations of the past.

I was mystified. Why, after I had just gone through this deep purification process, was I now having to suffer through this. The only other Spirit-baptized person I knew of in our community was a former minister with the Church of God, Anderson, Indiana. Elbert Jones had been dismissed from his church and was now ministering to a small interdenominational group meeting on Tuesday nights at the Women's Club building. Later he was to become one of my closest friends and would serve by my side as a fellow minister in the local body. However, at this time he was a virtual stranger.

Desperately needing help, though, I sought him out and asked if he could give me some kind of explanation for my bizarre dreams.

He smiled and said, "The Holy Spirit is busy dredging up the junk in your subconscious, letting it float to the surface."

"But what can I do with it?" I asked.

"Rebuke it," he said matter-of-factly. "It is floating to the surface because the Holy Spirit is now moving actively in the deep areas of your mind, stirring the waters, so to speak. When you rebuke these memories of the past you not only cast them out, but you close the door on the areas where they first came in."

I followed his advice, and have continued to do so ever since. In about two weeks the dreams ceased, and even though I am aware that my lake is still polluted, I realize it is being purified by the fresh water that wells up from that free flowing fountain in my inner being. As a result, even my dreams are beginning to take on spiritual overtones — and, on occasion, I even hear from God while I am sleeping.

Thus the baptism of the Holy Spirit, rather than being a climax to the Christian experience, is simply the door through which the Holy Spirit entered my subconscious. Eventually He would "fill" me. And when that happened, well, even before it happened, I would find the mirror of my soul, my dreams, beginning to reflect the condition of my subconscious. Eventually I would dream, not about monsters and swamps, but about Jesus.

