

An Illustrated Guide

To the Spiritual Life

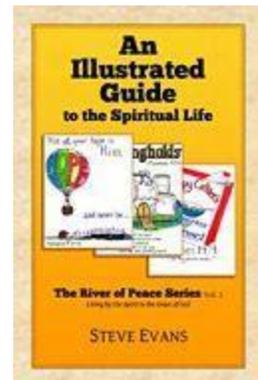
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PREFACE

An illustrated guide to the spiritual life? How can those elusive, invisible realities be captured on paper? Perhaps paper cannot hold them, but the imagination can! Images enhance spiritual sight, giving insight into truths we can't "see" yet. Surely that's why our Lord used so many images in His parables, even putting children in front of his disciples as object lessons, when they couldn't "get it" any other way.

Almost all of the images in this collection grew out of sketches first drawn on dry-erase marker boards during seminar sessions in a playful attempt to convey the truths under discussion. Never intended to provide a comprehensive panorama of the spiritual life, they are simply snapshots of specific ideas that floated through my mental landscape like wandering butterflies. No attempt has been made to "professionalize" them and my complete lack of any artistic training has ensured their amateur quality. However, since Jesus lauded a childlike entrance into His Kingdom on earth, explore these simple images in the same spirit, looking to see if they might lead you "like a little child" beyond your present horizons of thought (Isaiah 11:6).

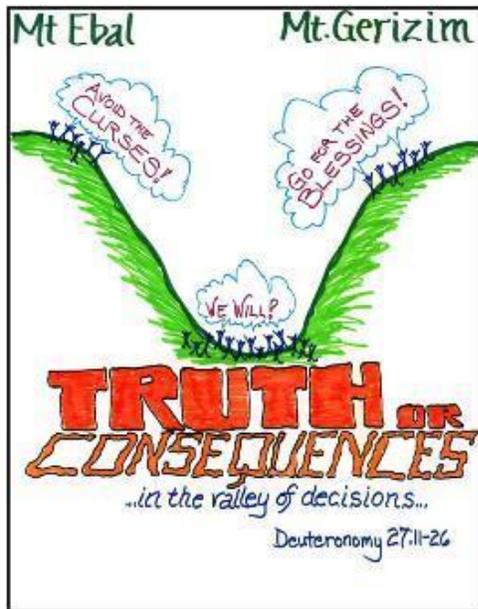
These illustrations are intended for the general reader as well as being a companion booklet to *The Missing Peace: Recovering a Whole Life in a Broken World*. May you enjoy exploring them in your imaginative journey as much as I did in the creative process!



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THE VALLEY OF DECISION



We live in a real world that is also a moral and spiritual universe. Every thought, word and deed whether good or bad, right or wrong, intended or unintended, has consequences in our lives and in the lives that surround us. Blessings—the positive consequences—abound whenever we consciously or unconsciously "do the right thing." The "curse of the law"—the negative consequences—arrive when we depart from God's way or God's truth (Deuteronomy 27-28). The "Valley of Decision" we face is not just a onetime choice to follow God. We are in that valley and faced with that choice every moment of the day whether we realize it or not! Will we live by His truth or will we "choose" to suffer the consequences?

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days." Deuteronomy 30:19-20

Prayer

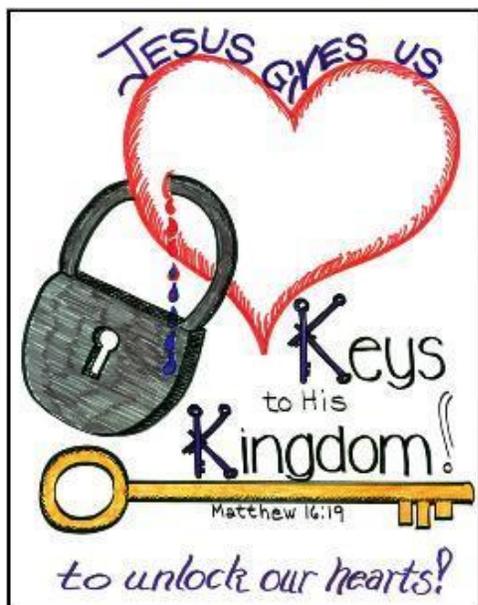
Father, wherever I have believed that I can live without consequences, forgive me. I renounce that false view of Your world and of my life. Whenever I thought that You were punishing me by what You allowed as my consequences, forgive me for shifting the blame for my own choices to You. I take authority and responsibility over my life. Thank You that You have given me sovereignty over my heart and have placed me with freedom of will in a real world. Help me to listen to Your Word, learn from my consequences and turn to Your ways.



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KEYS TO THE KINGDOM



Due to an accumulation of life's hurts that we did not release, we left childlikeness behind by binding the pain and injustice of the past to ourselves. Outwitted by an invisible enemy, we locked ourselves in a dungeon of emotional pain and bondage, trapped behind walls erected within our own hearts.

Unforgiveness is the number one block to healing and to the Kingdom's peace and power. According to Jesus it leads to unanswered prayer, un-received mercy, hardness of heart, spiritual bondage and painful inner torment (Mark 11:25; Matthew 18:34-35). Hidden and unrecognized unbelief can also bar our entry into the Kingdom, because it "hardens" the heart before God just as powerfully as un-forgiveness does (Hebrews 3:12-19).

Jesus gives us grace-forged keys to His Kingdom of peace and joy, keys that will unlock our true potential and restore childlike vitality. Let's get really good at using them!

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matthew 16:19

And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:2-3



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Prayer

Father, thank You for translating me out of darkness and into the glorious Kingdom of Your Beloved Son! I repent of and renounce all false ideas about where the joy and peace are to be found. You have placed it all around me and within me! Thank You for giving me the keys to Your Kingdom. Help me to get really good at using them to unlock my heart from un-forgiveness towards myself and others and from all the ways in which I have not been believing in who You are and what You have promised. Thank You that it is Your desire to lead me into this Kingdom!

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