

SPIRITUAL GOLD DOT ORG

...IT'S GOD'S WORD, YOU CAN COUNT ON IT...

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“My desire and hope is that Spiritual Gold will reach our world with the positive message that God is alive and has the answers for the problems facing us today. In his messages on the Spiritual Gold web site, my husband, Richard, takes the Scriptures and breaks them down so that we can understand and receive practical advice as we live one day at a time.” —Mary Strauss



Except It Die January Sermon of the Month

Wouldn't we like prosperous and successful spiritual lives in the new year? Why do we not follow through and experience the victory and power in our Christian lives that we long for and that God wants us to have?

Could it be because we have not yet grasped the basic principle of fruitful life which was established by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself?

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:24).

Of course, He's speaking in the context of His own death, but there's an fantastic application to our own Christian lives as well: The key to fruitful living is death. Only by death comes fruitful life.

Our human natures struggle with this principle and we resist it. We say to ourselves, “I've got my eloquence and my intelligence and my creativity...and I've got a lot to offer.” We don't see any reason why we can't live a successful fruitful life with all the resources that we have. So New Years' after New Years', we grit our teeth and decide to try a little harder.

So why do we keep failing? Because we haven't understood the principle of John 12:24. Only by death comes fruitful life. Our fruitfulness will come only when we die to all that a part of our self-life. Until we understand that nothing we possess, nothing we can generate by our own fleshly energies, can contribute anything to our

spiritual fruitfulness. No knowledge. No wisdom. No gifts. No abilities. No education. No cleverness. Nothing.

I'm convinced that one of the greatest obstacles to victorious Christian living and victorious Christian service is the subtle notion that we can do it ourselves.

We draw upon our vast storehouse of fleshly resources and we fall flat on our faces year after year. We construct our programs and teach our classes and do our thing in the energy of the flesh, rather than in a conscious dependence on the Spirit of God.

In John 15:5, Jesus says that apart from Him we can do nothing. Absolutely nothing. The only way that we can become fruitful Christians is to realize that when Jesus Christ died on that cross, we died with Him. When we admit that all of our abilities mean nothing without Him, it's like falling into the ground and dying.

It isn't that our resources will never be used. Once we consent to their death, once we admit they are useless in and of themselves, then the Lord Jesus Christ is free to take them and energize them with His power and use them mightily for His glory. Only by death comes fruitful life.

Dear Spiritual Gold,

We have recently taken to listening to Richard's sermons on your Spiritual Gold website and have received much spiritual blessing. ...Surely God must be using Richard's ministry in very powerful ways!

—W.R., Mission Hills Church, CA

Romans Series Sermon Text is Now Online

Good news! You can now read the complete sermon text from Romans:

<http://www.spiritualgold.org/romans/ROM-01-Good-News.html>

Good News is the first in that series. “When the New Testament dawns, angels appear to some shepherds near Bethlehem and announce, ‘...behold, I bring you *good news* of great joy which shall be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord’ (Luke 2:10-11). Good news indeed! The Savior has arrived. The one who was anticipated since the day Adam and Eve sinned is now on the scene, soon to provide eternal salvation from sin.

“We know how exciting something can be for us when we anticipate it even for a short time. Can you imagine something that has been anticipated for thousands and thousands of years, which brings great benefit to us personally? And now it's happened! If we ever get a hold of that truth alone—that this is Something that was looked forward to for thousands of years and now it's happened—if it would grip us, sharing the gospel would undoubtedly become our highest calling.”

More Messages Online

Except It Die is message MS-84. You can find this and 1500 other messages at <http://spiritualgold.org/pdf/sermoncatalog.pdf> Dr. Strauss' messages from 1974 to 1993 cover 52 topics—from Aging Gracefully to the Life of David to the Will of God—and 23 books of the Bible.

Around the Globe

Living for Love, by Richard L. Strauss, was a book Abiodun O. read years ago. Now living in Trinidad and Tobago, he was thrilled to recently discover the Spiritual Gold website.

And in Costa Rica:

Pastor is still blessing my life. [We] purchased a condo in Costa Rica in 2004. [Soon after, we noticed we had never] seen any church near the condo or in any town. I thought I was retired, but we found a town of about 300 people where almost half of the adults come through the gated community where our condo is to work. We took them the Jesus film, we visited their homes, and the Lord allowed us to start a church where they now ask me to speak. I use Pastor's messages because I would not be able to speak without any seminary training and he had the ability to clearly speak from the Scriptures.

—J.H., Escondido, CA



Year-End Giving

This ministry operates solely on gifts. In fulfillment of our ministry's mission, our Board of Directors has also sought to strategically support pastoral training ministries here and around the world—including Africa and the Middle East.

If you'd like to make a donation, please send a check payable to Spiritual Gold, Inc., PO Box 2523, Escondido, CA 92033-2523. You may use a credit card online via PayPal (see <http://spiritualgold.org/gifts>). Spiritual Gold is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization. Your donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

Two Strauss Books in Print Again

Win the Battle for Your Mind and *Getting Along with Each Other* are now available for purchase online through ECS Ministries. Each is about 160 pages. A sample chapter for each is on the ECS website.

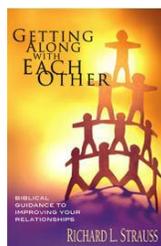
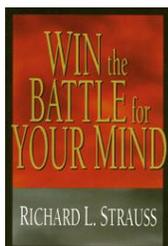
Win the Battle for Your Mind tells you what the Bible says about how you should protect your mind and make the best use of it. While Satan is using every means at his disposal to capture your mind, God can enable you to win the battle.

I was overjoyed recently to come across your reprint of Dr Richard L. Strauss' volume, *Win the Battle for Your Mind!* Thank you for making this excellent resource available to so many. Dr Strauss taught the Word faithfully to many of us over the years. This book is especially helpful to men in prison whom are young in Christ and desiring to mature - with special reference to their thought-life. ...Often one book will be read by 15-20 different men - passed hand-to-hand.

—J., Texas

Dr. Strauss was convinced "that poor communication habits are among the major causes for disharmony and conflict among Christians." *Getting Along with Each Other* is a Biblical guide to effective relationships. It provides a firm foundation of wisdom for those who seek to improve and maximize their relationships.

ECS Ministries exists to teach and disseminate the Word of God through external education in the form of correspondence courses and other materials.



Win the Battle for Your Mind \$9.95
ISBN 978-1-59387-041-6
<http://www.ecsministries.org/157356.html>

Getting Along with Each Other \$12.95
ISBN 978-1-59387-123-9
<http://www.ecsministries.org/603984.html>