



EMPOWERED BY HIS GRACE

By

Joel Hayes

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I love you all.

Pastor Joel Hayes
Orlando, FL
June, 2020

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Preface

I got saved when I was a child. I grew up in grace churches most of my life. I fell away. I was gone for about 20 years. Toward the end of that period, I struggled with depression and alcohol. I hit rock bottom. I remember sitting in a jail cell for a DUI, and I knew I needed to give my life back to the Lord. I came crawling back to the Lord by attending Fellowship Bible Church again. I showed up late. Left early. Didn't talk to anyone for weeks, because I was so ashamed of my failures. When I finally opened-up to them, one of the first principles Pastor Dave Siegmann and the people of that church taught me was that I may have left the Lord, but He never left me.

When you learn something like that, how can you not marvel at His grace? I can personally attest to the fact that His grace utterly transformed my life, and His grace can utterly transform your life, as well, and the lives of everyone you know. There is no pit so deep that God's grace is not deeper still. There is no low point in our lives that's ever too low to put us beyond the reach of God's grace. There's no sin too great, no valley too low, no pain too strong, no depression too dark, that can't be set aright by God's Word, by His Spirit, by His peace, His love, and *His abounding grace*.

I still remember when things were bad. I knew a man at the office who committed suicide. Nigel. I knew another girl at the office who went missing. Kristine. She still hasn't been found. I befriended a bartender. Jennifer. She had a young son. We were about to go on a date, but I never got that chance because her ex beat her so badly she had to go through therapy to learn how to walk again. I still wanted to see her. I'll never forget her text telling me she didn't want me to see her like that.

By this point, I was drinking a bottle of Scotch a night. I remember sitting in a bar, the bar where Jennifer used to work. Alone. Depressed. Getting hammered. And I still remember *screaming* in my mind at the Lord, "Why don't you come back now? How evil does this world have to get before you come back? All these people are just beyond the pale. What are you waiting for?" But, now, I don't think that way anymore. The question is no longer, "Lord, why don't you come back?" The question is, "Lord, how deep is your grace?" How can a man put into words how astounding it is that God is still freely offering His overwhelming grace to the lost in this evil world?

The world doesn't depress me anymore. I've grown to realize that the darker the world becomes, *the brighter His grace shines*. Every new day the Lord prolongs His

inevitable return for His church, is a day worth celebrating and praising Him for His rich, generous, unfathomable, and over-abounding grace.

God is the God of all grace (1 Pet. 5:10). We are called *by* His grace *into* His grace (Gal. 1:6,15). We are *saved* by His grace (Eph. 2:5-9). We are *empowered* by His grace (2 Cor. 12:9). His grace is a gift (Eph. 3:7-8; 4:7). His grace *abounds* in us (2 Cor. 9:8). His grace in us is *exceeding* (2 Cor. 9:14). His grace *reigns* today (Rom. 5:21). His grace transcends every sin (Rom. 5:20). We don't live under the law; we live under His grace (Rom. 6:14). His grace is His divine influence upon our hearts (Rom. 16:24). By His grace, we are all that we are in Christ (1 Cor. 15:10). The name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in us according to His grace (2 Thess. 1:12). We have good hope through His grace (2 Thess. 2:16). And we may be strong in His grace (2 Tim. 2:1). His grace is a complete victory program. In Christ, the Son of God, we may find rest, hope, and eternal victory. In Him, we may have full joy, full peace, and full victory, and we may rejoice as Paul rejoiced: *"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ...thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1 Cor. 15:55-57). His grace utterly reigns. His grace is supreme today. Blessed be the Lord forever, for His grace has transcended a world of sin!

This book is about the journey to a healthy, spiritual walk in your life, which begins by understanding, first and foremost, what God has made you in Christ. I can't even begin to express the endless joy all these precious truths brings to one's soul. I pray these truths will be of as much joy to you as it is to me.

Pastor Joel Hayes
June, 2020

CHAPTER 1

A Thorough Look at the Gospel

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”

(Hebrews 9:27)

If God were to ask you, “why should I let you into Heaven?” what would be your answer? Could you respond to God with any certainty? Upon what are you relying as a hope for your eternal destiny? The writer of Hebrews reminds us of the unalterable decree of God concerning all of mankind - we must all die and we must all be judged. We were all made from dust and unto dust shall we all return followed by His judgment (Gen. 3:19). There is no transmigration from body-to-body. There is no second chance. There is no stairway to Heaven out of a non-existent purgatory. There is only death and judgment to come to determine the eternal destiny of our souls.

Did you know that the Bible also tells us that no unrighteous person can enter Heaven or inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10)? Not only that, God tells us in no uncertain terms that upon this Earth “*there is none righteous, no not one*” (Rom. 3:10). There is not one human being that is righteous enough to enter Heaven.

What is righteousness? *Righteousness* is the *rightness of God*, the rightness of all His ways, the moral perfection and correctness in all that He thinks and does. So what’s the difference between righteousness and holiness? Consider Deut. 32:4, which tells us that God “*is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity (holiness), just and right is he (righteousness).*” God’s holiness is the purity of His nature being free from all sin and iniquity whereas His righteousness is the *rightness* with which He acts. Anything *unrighteous* is anything that has gone against His will, gone against the moral rightness of *His* ways, or done anything that falls short of *His* perfect holiness, which is His crowning glory.

What makes a person unrighteous? Sin. We are all unrighteous in the eyes of God because we are all sinners. Sin erects a barrier between us and our holy Creator. Sin alienates us from fellowship with Him. Sin causes us to be separated from His life. Sin is the reason why we need redemption, why we need to be reconciled to God

before we die, why there must be in the eyes of God a sacrificial atonement made for all our sins, because there are eternal consequences for sinning against our Creator.

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

(Revelation 20:11-15)

For me, Revelation 20 contains some of the most terrifying verses in all the Bible. All those souls described in these passages have been declared guilty by God for rejecting Him. They will be judged *“according to their works”* to determine their degrees of punishment for all eternity. All those in the Lake of Fire will *“be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”* Of course, there are many who make a lot of false claims to make these verses somehow go away. “Come on, brother Joel. No one can understand the book of Revelation.” The problem isn’t that people can’t understand it. The problem is that they won’t *believe* it. Make no mistake – if God says He’s going to sit upon a Great White Throne and judge the dead, then He’s going to sit upon a Great White Throne and judge the dead. So the question becomes, “How will you measure up in judgment before a righteous and holy God?” Are you written in the Book of Life or will you be cast into the Lake of Fire to be tormented for all eternity?

The Lake of Fire is different than Hell, which is not where the unsaved wind up for all eternity. In the Bible, Hell is simply an intermediate holding place in *Sheol* or *Hades*, which is a pit deep inside the earth (Luke 16:19-31) where unsaved souls await final judgment at the Great White Throne after a thousand-year reign of Christ on Earth (Rev. 20:5). When they are judged, Rev. 20:14-15 tells us that death, Hell, and all the unsaved souls will be cast into the Lake of Fire. By comparing Scripture with Scripture, we know that the Lake of Fire is a place of eternal anguish (2 Thess. 1:8-9). We know it’s a place where souls shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb, that the smoke of their torment shall ascend up forever and ever, and they’ll have no rest day or night (Rev. 14:9-11). We know it’s a place of outer darkness (Matt. 8:12). We know it’s a place where the fire is not quenched and the worm dieth not (Mark 9:43-48). We know it’s

the place prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). We know that Hell will be cast into it (Rev. 20:14). We know that those who shall be cast into it will lose neither consciousness nor memory (Luke 16:19-31). And we also know that in the Lake of Fire there will be no holiness, no righteousness, no goodness, no love, no light, no peace, no joy, and no hope - only agony and misery and suffering forever and ever.

WHAT IS SIN?

Sin, as defined in my all-time favorite dictionary, *Webster's 1828*, is "The voluntary departure of a moral agent from a known rule of rectitude or duty, prescribed by God; any voluntary transgression of the divine law, or violation of a divine command; a wicked act; iniquity."¹ Simply put, sin is when we disobey God. Sin is not just a wrong we commit against ourselves or against others but a wrong committed against the holy and righteous God who created us. King David, who was guilty of adultery and murder, wrote in Psalms 41:4, "*for I have sinned against thee.*"

When we sin, we miss the mark of His holiness whether by choice or by ignorance. We transgress against God. We do wrong. We go astray from His holy will, which makes us unrighteous in His eyes. Paul said in Romans 14:23 that "*whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*" Anything that is not done in our lives in service to our Creator through faith in His Word and His expressed will for our lives, is sin. As the writer of Hebrews points out, "*without faith, it is impossible to please Him*" (Heb. 11:6).

The world looks at death as a natural part of aging. To them, the body gets old, deteriorates, and eventually gives out and dies. But God gives us insight into death we cannot see with our eyes, which we must accept by faith. Sin is the reason we die. "*The wages of sin is death*" (Rom. 6:23). The wages, the consequence, of sin is the death of the body *and* the soul (Gen. 2:17; Eze. 18:4; Rev. 20:14). How does that work exactly?

James wrote, "*But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death*" (Jam. 1:14-15). He's saying that when temptation has been allowed to spark the lust of our corrupt flesh, that lust soon progresses into consent by the soul, which brings forth sin in our behavior. The end result is death. Paul tells us in Romans 6:19 that because of the *infirmity of our flesh*, we yielded our bodies to be "*servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity.*" When our souls choose to indulge our corrupted flesh, we sin, which brings about the death of our bodies plus the judgment of a spiritual death by God, called the *second death* (Rev. 20:14), which is the ultimate consequence of sin, an eternal separation from God in a Lake of Fire, unless the consequence for all of our sins has been satisfied by an act of atonement, which only the Lord's sacrifice on the cross can resolve for us.

The Lord said twice in Ezekiel 18, "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*" Sin is the act of the soul carried out by the body, which is the instrument of our unrighteousness. Micah 6:7 has an interesting expression: "*the fruit of my body for the*

¹ Webster, Noah, definition of sin, *Webster's 1828*, <http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/sin>.

sin of my soul." The body dies because the soul sins, and the eternal punishment for being alienated from God by our sins and rejecting the remedy of the cross is *"Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil"* (Rom. 2:9). The soul that sins is considered dead in the eyes of God because we're separated from *His life*, and our souls will reap the eternal reality of that separation, an eternal separation from God, unless that soul is made alive in Christ before the body dies.

I know there are some who question the idea of sin or the idea that they have ever sinned. The Apostle John said in Rev. 21:8 that *"all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."* Have you ever lied? We all have. We are all sinners. We have all gone astray. We all need redemption, because our sins separated us from a relationship with our holy Creator.

HOW CAN A LOVING GOD PUNISH A SOUL FOREVER?

For many, it can seem harsh that a soul will suffer forever. If we ever find ourselves thinking that God's eternal punishment somehow seems wrong or extreme, we have to remind ourselves that the problem is not with God. The problem is with us not understanding *His righteousness* and *His holiness*. God does not need to change the way He judges unbelievers to conform to our limited points of view, but rather, we need to come around to *His* perfectly righteous and holy point of view. By telling ourselves that He's being unfair, all we're doing is perverting His holy, righteous standards to meet us in the middle, and God is not going to do that. He is not going to come to us on our terms. We must come to Him on His terms. He is the Creator of Heaven and Earth. Everything is His. *"Behold, all souls are mine,"* as He declared in Ezek. 18:4. God has every right to make the rules, and we know His rules are sprung from His perfect, holy, righteous, divine nature. *"Shall not the judge of this earth do right?"* (Gen. 18:25). Yes, He will – always and without exception.

Here's an interesting story:

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in

his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

(Isaiah 6:1-7)

In a vision, Isaiah found himself catapulted into the presence of the Lord in Heaven. One might think that Isaiah would have immediately expressed exhilarating joy and gladness to be in the presence of the Lord God of Israel. But he didn't. Fear swept over him. He said, *"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."* An angel had to bring a live coal² to purge him from sin so He could survive standing in the presence of the Lord. God's holiness is so pure, so brilliant, so powerful, that no sin, no corruption, nothing unclean or unrighteous, can ever stand in His glorified presence because that unclean person shall surely die (Ex. 33:20). Thus, no unrighteous person can ever enter the Kingdom of God. Paul tells us, *"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."* (1 Cor. 6:9-10)

Did you notice that God's holiness is so magnificent that even the Seraphims, that elite class of angels in Heaven, had to cover their faces in His presence? Also, in verse 3 of Isaiah 6, the Seraphims are crying out, *"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory."* There's a similar passage in Rev. 4:8 in which *"The four beasts rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."* Do you ever read in Scripture about heavenly beings singing three times repeatedly about any other attribute of God? Where do we read of angels crying out "Eternal, eternal, eternal, is the Lord God Almighty;" or, "Merciful, merciful, merciful is the Lord God of Hosts?" Never. They always sing of His holiness, because that is the pre-eminent, crowning attribute of His divine nature.

This is why we are all sinners. *"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23). We've fallen short of *His crowning glory*, which is His *holiness*.

The holiness of God is the core of who He is, being free from all iniquity and sin. His holiness is what makes all His words true and all His actions and judgments perfectly righteous. He has the power to do anything He wants, but His power is subservient to His will, which is holy. His holiness is His glory, as His grace is His riches. His holiness is His crown, as His truth is His treasure. His holiness is the glorious

² Why a live coal? [F.W. Grant](#), in his book, "Atonement in Type, Prophecy, and Accomplishment" had an interesting solution. He wrote, "The answer is most easy and most precious. It is a coal from off the altar which the seraph applies. It is a coal which has been consuming the sacrifice for sin: the type of a holiness which, while it remains of necessity ever the same, has found its complete satisfaction in that which has put away sin for every sinner convicted and confessed. Righteousness, because it is that, can only for such proclaim that 'thine iniquity is taken away, thy sin is purged.'"

capstone of His divine nature. He loves all truth and goodness and hates all sin and evil. *"The righteous Lord loveth righteousness"* (Psa. 11:7) and *"hath no pleasure in wickedness"* (Psa. 5:4). Holiness is God's perfect, pure, undiluted freedom from all uncleanness, iniquity, or evil. Holiness is the glorious integrity of His divine nature, whereby God delights in righteousness and truth and everything that is in perfect alignment to His holy will. It is in, I believe, a study of His holiness where you find the answer to the question, "How can a loving God punish a soul forever?"

Psa. 145:17 says, *"The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works."* Deut. 32:4 calls Him *"A God of truth, and without iniquity."* Twice in Revelation He is called *"holy and true."* James 1:13 tells us *"God cannot be tempted with evil."* Job 34:10,12 says, *"Far be it from God that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity... Yea surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment."* Paul asks the question in Rom. 9:14, *"Is there unrighteousness with God?"* What's his answer? *"God forbid."* Tit. 1:2 tells us about the *"hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."*

In 2 Chron. 20:21, the Israelites *"appointed singers unto the LORD that should praise the beauty of holiness."* His beauty is a holy beauty. His justice is a holy justice. His wisdom is a holy wisdom. His love is a holy love. His power is a holy power (Psa. 98:1). His promises are holy promises (Psa. 105:42). *"Holy and true"* go hand-in-hand (Rev. 6:10). His name, which signifies all His attributes, is a holy name (Psa. 103:1). His holiness is the guide to all His actions and the source of all His punishments. Since God cannot but *know* what is always right, so He cannot but *do* what is always right.

The infinite anger and hatred of God the Father against sin is as infinite as His love and grace toward all of us sinners, especially those who place their faith in His Son. God, indeed, may be reconciled to the sinner but never to the sin. How can He love sin that is contrary to His nature without hating His own nature that is contrary to sin? How can He be as holy as He proclaims and yet allow people to get away with doing wrong? God cannot excuse sin without denying Himself. The anger of God is irreconcilable against sin, and the holiness of God will right all the wrongs done in this world. In the end, He will put the greatest distance between Himself and the unregenerate, unrighteous souls who rejected His Son and His free gift of salvation.

God hated sin so much and He loved us so much, that when the sins of the world were imputed³ to His Son on the cross, He literally brought a hell upon His own being (Psa. 22). If God refused to spare His Son when He made the ultimate sacrifice for all our sins on the cross, why should He spare us the eternal consequence of rejecting Him? If God could have hated sin without punishing sin, then His Son would have never had to suffer and die on a cross. God cannot but be holy, and He cannot but be just, because to be unjust in His judgments with respect to sin is to be unholy.

³ What is imputation? It's the charging or crediting of something to one's account. Just as the sins of the world were imputed to Christ when He died on the cross on our behalf, so too, His righteousness is imputed to us when we place our faith in Him (Romans 4:11-24).

Rom. 1:18-32 teaches that every man knows God exists, but they *hold the truth* in their state of *unrighteousness*. They possess the truth within themselves. They know, intimately within themselves, that God exists. Not only do they know that God exists, but they also know about His eternal power and Godhead (Rom. 1:20) and they suppress that truth within themselves so they may keep on living in their state of unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18). These truths about God's existence and His power and Godhead is *manifest* within every human being (Rom. 1:19). How is that possible? How is it that unregenerate man could know about God's existence as well as His eternal power and Godhead? Because God has *shown it unto them* (Rom. 1:19), which is why everyone is without excuse before the eyes of God and subject to His wrath for their state of unrighteousness (Rom. 1:32). They are each one accountable to God for the things God Himself has revealed to them. Paul said that *"the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse"* (Rom. 1:20). Fascinating to me that the witness of creation appeals to man's spirituality and reason. We know instinctively that all motion has a beginning, that there is no effect without a cause, and that order does not spring from chaos or chance. Every life is born. Every life dies. So from whence came our beginning? We all instinctively know: *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"* (Gen 1:1).

The witness of creation moves us to not only acknowledge the existence of God and His power and His deity but we know that we must also worship our brilliant, all-powerful Creator (Rom. 1:21). But most won't. Men know within themselves more truth than they're willing to accept and to properly respond to that truth. They hold down that truth within themselves. They suppress that truth. They imprison that truth within their hearts to rationalize their decision to carry on in their state of unrighteousness without properly worshipping their one, true Creator. They willfully ignore the truth so they can continue fulfilling the lusts of their flesh. As a result, God gave them up (vs. 24,26) and gave them over (vs. 28) to their degeneracy.

Who could blame a doctor for letting a patient go who rejected his counsel, who refused to accept his diagnosis and prescription to cure his illness and who by his own free will chose to go his way to his own self-destruction? No one would blame that doctor. No one would say he's responsible for his death. How can a doctor force a patient to accept the cure? The true cause of the patient's death was his rejection of the cure by his own self-willed obstinacy. Thus, who could blame God, who allowed mankind in his free will to go his way to his own self-destruction, who made a cure available through the sacrifice of His Son, who now offers that cure as a free gift, and never denies His grace and salvation to anyone who accepts His gift by faith?⁴

⁴ Although I wanted to write these thoughts out in my own words, many thanks to the thought itself, which I believe I first heard from [William R. Newell](#) in his fantastic [Romans Verse-by-Verse](#) commentary, in which he wrote on page 59, "It is no kindness, but a terrible wrong, to hide from a criminal the sentence that must surely overtake him unless pardoned; for a physician to conceal from a patient a cancer that will destroy him unless quickly removed; for one acquainted with the hidden pitfalls of a path he beholds someone taking, not to warn him of his danger!"

It was God who created everything. It was God who created you in His image and in His likeness. It was God who gave you a free will and gave you the freedom to love Him or reject Him. It was God's breath that gave you an eternal soul. It was God who also gave you a spirit so that you may have God consciousness. It was by God's grace and love that He gave us this magnificent, abundant Earth and universe. It was God who sought man out after he sinned against Him in the garden. It was God who gave us His Word, which is the truth. It was God who revealed Himself to us through His Word. It was God in the prophets, in the person of Jesus Christ, and in the apostles who warned us about our sin condition and judgment to come. It was God who revealed to us His standard of righteousness for us to enter Heaven. It was God who loved us enough to send His Son into the world to make the ultimate sacrifice for all of our sins on the cross of Calvary. It is God who still reaches out to all of us even now to be reconciled to Him by His grace through our faith in His Son's shed blood.

When we consider all that He has done, that we all owe everything to God, and we consider the idea of rejecting Him *knowingly* and rejecting His free gift, then we reject His Son. We reject the magnitude of what He did to save us from ourselves, and we, therefore, reject almighty God Himself. It is absolutely a righteous judgment for that eternal soul to receive an eternal consequence for rejecting our eternal Creator.

How can God in all His holiness absolve us of our eternal consequence for sin and allow us into Heaven if we reject Him and the atonement He made for our sins, which He now offers as a free gift? Our eternal souls have to go somewhere and there is a consequence for every sin. Why should God give us a happy place to go if we reject Him? We all too often minimize the sheer gravity of rejecting our eternal Creator. By the magnitude of that decision to reject our Creator and the salvation He offers us through the death of His Son, how can the punishment of eternal separation from God be anything but just? Our entrance into Heaven does not come by our doing *imperfect* works but by our acceptance of His Son's *perfect* work on the cross on our behalf. To be in the presence of God Himself for all eternity, we must have perfect righteousness, as perfect as the righteousness of His Son, Jesus Christ, which we can never attain on our own through good works. We must turn to Christ at Calvary in faith. We must place our faith in the Son of God and in His death, burial, and resurrection as a sacrifice for all our sins. Then God freely gives us that righteousness by His amazing grace.

THE GIFT OF GOD

How will you measure up in judgment before a perfectly righteous and holy God? Upon what are you relying to find acceptance with God? Is it your own merit? Paul wrote that salvation is "*not of works, lest any man should boast*" (Eph. 2:9). As C.R. Stam would often say on his Bible Time radio programs, "Thank God there won't be any boasters in Heaven."⁵ And sometimes he'd add humorously, "There are enough

⁵ Stam, C.R., as heard in "Bible Time Radio Broadcast," *Berean Bible Society*, <https://www.bereanbiblesociety.org/category/audio-sermons/bible-time/>

of them on earth and nobody likes them.”⁶ We can praise the Lord that there will not be one soul in Heaven saying, “I got here because I lived a really good life.”

The good news is that God loves you beyond all comprehension. God is “*rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us*” (Eph. 2:4). Salvation is “*a gift of God*” (Eph. 2:8). God “*will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all*” (1 Tim. 2:4-6).

A mediator is one who stands between two parties at odds and represents both sides. The Lord Jesus Christ took the step to make reconciliation with God possible by making the ultimate atonement for all our sins on the cross at Calvary through His death, burial, and resurrection. He is not just God the Father’s representative to us, but He is our representative to God the Father. Because of His great love wherewith He loved us, the Lord Jesus took upon Himself our consequence of sin that brought about our separation from God and our inability to enter into a relationship with Him, because no amount of good works can help us achieve that necessary perfect righteousness we need to have an eternal life with God.

If man cannot himself rise on his own to God to achieve that level of righteousness necessary for eternal life, then God has proven by His love and His grace that He was more than willing to come down to man, to the very level of his guilt and judgment for sin and take on that punishment for us. The Lord Jesus Christ made the ultimate sacrifice for all our sins on the cross at Calvary through His death, burial, and resurrection. He died your death and He died my death on that glorious cross. To be saved, you must accept the gift of His sacrifice for your sins by placing your faith in Him and trusting in what He accomplished for you at Calvary.

***“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption
that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a
propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his
righteousness for the remission of sins that are past,
through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this
time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the
justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”***

(Romans 3:23-26)

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.” First, what is faith, exactly? Faith is the most precious treasure a person can possess. “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*” (Heb. 11:1). This verse isn’t simply a definition of faith. This verse is also a declaration of the power of faith that not only saves souls but also completely transforms lives, which is why

⁶ Stam, C.R., “Are You Sure?”, Berean Bible Society, <https://www.bereanbiblesociety.org/are-you-sure/>

Hebrews 11:1 is followed by a marvelous list of great accomplishments of faith by God's saints of old, and also why this chapter is often called the "Faith Hall of Fame."

We learn in Hebrews 11 that by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death. By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his household. By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place he should receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith Sara received strength to conceive and was delivered a child when she was past age. By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. By faith the Jews passed through the Red Sea as by dry land and the Egyptians drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. By faith, we have Samson, David, Samuel, the prophets, and so many more, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, and waxed valiant in fight.

This is a living faith in a living God. This is taking God at His word. This is believing what God says because God Himself said it. This is committing our souls to the Word of the One who cannot lie. This is doing what Abel did when he offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. This is doing what Abraham did when he believed God and was counted righteous. This is doing what Moses did when he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. This is doing what the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the saints in all ages have done, when they rested their souls for time and eternity upon the Word of God, which *is settled forever in heaven* (Psa. 119:89), and they all lived in peace and died in hope of a glorious eternity with God. A living faith in a living God is resting calmly on His holy Word and proving to all the divine and sustaining peace by abiding in His promises, which has never failed anyone who trusted in them and never will. This is the secret victory at all times under all circumstances. This is what fills the heart with praise and thanksgiving. This is the resting-place of faith in all ages in God's eternal Word, *settled forever in Heaven*, which He has magnified above all His name, and which stands tall in its own divine dignity and sufficiency before the eyes of faith.

Faith is our assent to the hope God provides us in His Word, resting on His authority without any visual evidence, because "*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (Rom. 10:17). We do not simply hope for something we cannot see, but we're so firmly settled in our acceptance of hope in God's promises that we possess in our souls a conviction called faith. In the presence and power of His promises, we now live and die according to our hope through the conviction of faith, which makes real to our souls all those spiritual promises we have from God in His preserved Word. Faith settles in our minds and hearts forever the reality of a future

glory with God we cannot see and we can only learn in His Word. Faith is taking God at His Word knowing the integrity of the One in whom we've trusted (2 Tim. 1:12). We stagger not in unbelief being fully persuaded that God will deliver the eternal life He has promised us (Rom. 4:20-21). Then we rest in His truth (2 Thess. 2:16).

As a result of our faith today in Christ's shed blood, we receive the righteousness of God by the "*faith of Christ*" (Rom. 3:22, Gal. 2:16, 2:20, 3:22, Eph. 3:12), which speaks to the integrity proven in His own faithfulness and His trustworthiness to carry out every promise He's made to us. As Christ faithfully obeyed the will of the Father all the way to His death on the cross, so too, He will faithfully carry out every promise made to all those who place their faith in Him.

As Paul said of Israel in Rom. 3:3, *shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect*, so too, we can look at 2 Tim. 2:13, and ask the same question, *shall our unbelief make the faith of Christ without effect*? And the answer to both of those questions is *God forbid*. God Himself would forbid such a thought. As Jesus trusted by faith in God the Father throughout not only His earthly ministry but also throughout the entire existence of creation, so too, we trust in Him by faith throughout our earthly ministries. As David sang praises of His faithfulness to Israel (Psa. 89), so too, we may sing praises of His faithfulness to us. Not only that, but Eph. 3:12 tells us that "*we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.*" As Paul found boldness and access to the Father with confidence by the faith of Christ, so too, we may find equal boldness and confidence in His faithfulness to us. We need not feel assurance in our salvation by the consistency of our own faithfulness over the course of our lives but we can feel boldness in our eternal life by *the sureness of His faithfulness*, being fully persuaded that everything the Lord promised us, He is more than able to perform it. "*Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it*" (1 Thess. 5:24).

BELIEF IN JESUS

Second, notice how Paul says in Rom. 3:26 that through Christ's atonement on our behalf on the cross puts God the Father in a position to "*be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*" Paul also wrote in 1 Tim. 1:16, "*Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*" In Eph. 1:13, Paul wrote, "*In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise...*" Salvation isn't simply accepting the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as a payment for all of our sins. We are also accepting by faith who Christ is as the Son of God. We are believing on Him. We are trusting in Him personally.

Consider that Rom. 4:5 tells us, "*But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*" Who justifies the ungodly? God the Father. We are not merely trusting in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as a payment for our sins, but we are also believing in who He is

as the Son of God, and we are also believing in God the Father and trusting in the fact that He alone justifies us according to our faith in who His Son is and what He's accomplished for us at Calvary. This is our acceptance of the entire gospel.

The only door through which we may pass out of our poor sinful condition worthy of judgment into a state of perfect peace with God is by believing the testimony He has given us about His Son, by placing our faith in God's assurance that all of our sins are blotted out by the blood, and that our sins have been perfectly judged at the cross of Christ. *"The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ [is given] unto all and upon all them that believe"* (Rom. 3:22). *"Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed"* (Rom. 9:33; 10:11). The value is not so much in our faith, although faith is essential to get saved, but the value is placed upon the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Believing is simply the answer to, what is in the sight of God, the immeasurable worth of His Son and His sacrifice on our behalf. By accepting those truths, by believing in His Son, and trusting in His payment for all our sins, God the Father saves our souls and gives us eternal life by declaring us righteous.

PAYMENT FOR SIN

Third, Paul tells us in Rom. 3:25 that we are declared righteous by God through the redemption that's in Christ Jesus because God sent His Son into the world to be a *propitiation* for all our sins, which is a full and satisfying payment. What does Paul mean by *payment*? I know some are tempted to think of a payment in secular accounting terms, in the sense that we had a debt to God paid by another, which must mean that salvation is just a matter of imputed righteousness because our sins are already paid for and already forgiven, because a debt paid is a debt forgiven, which must mean that sinners are going to hell with their sins forgiven.

Let me ask a question. What does it mean to forgive a debt? To forgive a debt means that that debt has *not* been paid. To forgive a debt means that you've written off the money you've loaned out and you've released the debtor from paying back that loan. How can you forgive something that's been paid off? There's nothing to forgive. The debt has been paid and you've been fully remunerated for what was loaned out. When it comes to our salvation, we need to put aside this notion of accounting, because paying off a debt has nothing to do with forgiveness of sins and has no application whatsoever to the cross. If you want irrefutable proof that sins are not forgiven before one gets saved, look no further than Acts 26:15-18. Paul recounts the words of the Lord spoken to him on the road to Damascus. *"And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and*

inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

The simplicity of Christ is on display here. God made His salvation simple. He made forgiveness simple. Our sins are not forgiven until we come to Christ by faith. The whole point of this verse is that God sent Paul unto the Gentiles so *that they may receive forgiveness of sins*. Why does the Lord say *may receive*? Because forgiveness of sins was conditional. Forgiveness of sins is only given to us after we place our faith upon the Lord Jesus Christ and His all-sufficient work on the cross. "No-no, brother Joel, forgiveness of sins is not a completed act until you've accepted the fact that your sins have been forgiven." That's not what the verse says. This verse does not say that the Gentiles may acknowledge that their sins have already been forgiven in order to receive righteousness. This verse says *that they may receive the forgiveness of sins* itself. We have to build our theology on what the Scriptures say and not what we feel the verses imply. This verse is made simple for all of us that God sent Paul to the Gentiles so they may receive forgiveness of sins. It means that before they were saved, their sins were not forgiven, and after they were saved, their sins were forgiven.

When it comes to Calvary, I'd suggest that we shouldn't even be talking about accounting principles. The question we should all be asking is, "How does the Bible define payment for sin?" Let's first define "payment." There are two ways of viewing the word "payment." One way is the exchange of money. You're paying for something. Or you're paying off something. But there's another way of viewing payment and that is to take on the *consequence* for something. To take on the *penalty* of something. Such as, "I worked out for 2 hours yesterday, and today, I'm really paying for it." When I say "Christ paid for our sins," I'm not saying that we had a debt to God that was paid by Christ. I'm saying that Christ paid the *penalty* for all our sins. I'm saying that Christ took on the *punishment* for our sins. Christ took on the *consequence* of our sins.

Before we got saved and we were sinning, we were not racking up a mighty debt to God for all our sins that needs to be paid off. We were only racking up an *eternal consequence* to ourselves for each and every sin, by which we are treasuring up unto ourselves *wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God* (Rom. 2:5). Sin has nothing to do with a debt to God that has to be paid off. Sin has everything to do with an eternal consequence for disobeying an eternal God, which is an eternal penalty that can never be paid off in the Lake of Fire.

Christ suffered for roughly 6 hours on the cross, and in those 6 hours, He paid for all the sins of all mankind for all time. Surely, if Christ could pay for the sins of the world in 6 hours, then an unbeliever need only spend a few minutes in the Lake of Fire to pay back to God every debt of sin He owed Him, wouldn't he? This is not about accounting. This is not about a debt. This is about an eternal consequence for those sins. When Paul says that Christ was a propitiation for our sins, which is a fully and satisfying payment, he's not saying that we had a debt to God for our sins paid for by Christ. He's saying that Christ took on the *penalty* for our sins on that cross. He took on the *punishment* for our sins. He took on the *consequence* of our sins. In those 6 hours, God the Father deemed the unbearable travailing of His Son's soul on that cross (Isa.

53:11) as a sufficient atonement for the consequence of all our sins such that we need only come to Him by faith to have His atonement imputed to us (Rom. 5:11).

The sin of the soul carried out by the body brings death and separation from God, even an eternal separation from God, called the *second death*, unless an atonement (or recompense) has been made to cover each consequence of death-by-sin. This may only be accomplished through the shedding of innocent blood. Heb. 9:22 tells us this: “*without shedding of blood is no remission.*” Why the shedding of blood? Because “*the life of the flesh is in the blood... for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul*” (Lev. 17:11). At the heart of the sacrificial system was a life for a sin to atone for the consequence of death-by-sin. Each sin brings the consequence of death and so a life had to be offered to atone for every single sin. Sinners need a substitutionary atonement by the shedding of innocent blood because *the life of the flesh* is found *in the blood*. One cannot atone for death with something that has no life. Only the life of the blood within the innocent flesh of another can atone for each consequence of death-by-sin. So God appointed the sprinkling (or the pouring-out) of the blood-life of a spotless lamb upon an altar to signify that that innocent life, as a sacrifice, was offered to God in place of that person's sin, as a ransom (or a counter-payment) for that sin, all of which was a type and a shadow of the future *ransom*, the future *propitiation*, for all sin by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:6). The sacrificial system of the Old Testament illustrates so vividly the gravity of sinning against a righteous and holy God, because sin truly is a matter of life and death.

I'd suggest there are three key words for the Biblical definition of payment for sin. *Sacrifice. Offering. And faith.* For example, in Heb. 11:4, we find “*By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous...*” That sacrifice was the payment for sin. This wasn't about a debt to God. This was about an atonement for that consequence of sin, which was always death, which is why an innocent life had to die, because the consequence for each and every sin is death. Just because a sacrifice was carried out perfectly, that didn't mean that the payment was automatically accepted. How was that payment given to God? Always as an *offering*, which God would only accept by *faith*. Remember what the writer of Hebrews told us. “*By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain...*” If you carried out that sacrifice perfectly but that sacrifice was not offered to God in faith, God would not accept that payment for sin, which meant that that sacrifice did not cover your sin, which meant that that act of atonement would not be imputed to you, which meant that that sin was not forgiven, and that soul would *bear the iniquity* of God's judgment for that sin (Lev. 7:18).

If you were offering sacrifices without faith, you were wasting everyone's time. You were just needlessly slaughtering animals, because God would never accept that atonement for that sin without faith. Although sacrifices were voluminously *made* on Israel's behalf, their sins were often *not forgiven* because they had *no faith*, as exemplified in Amos 5. In fact, consider Amos 5:21-27 in which the Lord told Israel, “*I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though*

ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the LORD, whose name is The God of hosts." The Lord wasn't having anything to do with any of their sacrifices at all because they had no faith. He said in vs. 22, *"Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts."* Remember the three key words for payment of sin. Sacrifice, offering, and faith. Israel was only fulfilling 2 of those 3 requirements. They were doing the sacrifices and offerings, but they had no faith, and because of their lack of faith, in God's eyes, it's as if they never made a sacrifice at all. If God rejects your sacrifices, then that soul shall *bear his iniquity* (Lev. 7:18).

Remember what Jehoshaphat told the judges of Judah. They were to obey the law *in the fear of the Lord faithfully and with a perfect heart* (2 Chron. 19:9). Remember what David said in Psa. 31, that the Lord God of Israel only *preserveth the faithful* (Psa. 31:23), and remember how Moses said that God will hide His face from His children *in whom there is no faith* (Deut. 32:20).

Israel's sin coverings were not coverings at all without faith, and without sin coverings, their sins exposed them to God's righteous judgment here on the Earth, which meant that He was imputing their trespasses unto them. The three key words in the Biblical definition of payment for sin is *sacrifice, offering, and faith*. The sacrifice was the payment for sin. It was payment in the sense of an atonement for the consequence of sin, which was death. And how was that sacrificial payment for sin *given* to God? Always as an *offering*. Just because a sacrifice had been accomplished, that didn't mean the payment had been accepted and their sins were forgiven. That atonement for the consequence of sin was always *given* to God as an *offering* and their offering was only accepted individually according to their *faith*. If they didn't have faith, in God's eyes, it was as if a sacrifice had never been made at all and they were still guilty and deserving of judgment, the imputation of their sins, here on the Earth. *Sacrifice, offering, and faith* have always gone together as an atonement for the consequence of sin, and the entire sacrificial system was a type of the future sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, which was reinforced by the Apostle Paul himself.

In Eph. 5:2, I believe we get the Pauline definition of payment for sin. He writes, *"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."* Notice here that the Lord Jesus Christ wasn't just a sacrifice. He was a sacrifice *and* an offering. Not only that, He wasn't just a sacrifice *and* an offering, but He was a sacrifice *and* an offering *for us*. He is the sacrifice for us. He is the offering for us. God the Father deemed the Lord's sacrifice as an acceptable covering for all the sins of the world, but that payment for

the consequence of all your sins will not be imputed to your soul until you come to Christ by faith. If you don't come to Christ by faith, you don't have His atonement to cover all your sins and you will pay the eternal consequence for each and every sin.

Payment for sin does not mean that our debt to God has already been paid by Christ. A payment for sin only means that a *sacrifice* for sin has been *offered*, which is *accepted* only on an individual basis according to one's *faith*. A sacrifice is an offering that *will* cover your sins *only if* you come to God *by faith*. The payment for all of your sins through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ will not be imputed to you until God the Father accepts Christ's *offering* on *your* behalf *after* you come to Him *by faith*. People do not go to the Lake of Fire for all eternity with their sins fully paid for and fully forgiven by God, because, like the sacrificial system in the Old Testament, the Lord's sacrifice will not cover our sins unless we have *faith*, but His covering for all your sins can be yours. The acceptable sacrifice, or propitiation, for all your sins has been made and is available to you as a free gift by grace through faith.

The gospel of the grace of God asks us to place our faith in the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection as the complete once-for-all sacrifice for all our sins. Our salvation is truly "not a sin question but a Son question," not because all sins have already been paid for, but because there's nothing we can do on our own to atone for our sins but to accept by faith Christ's all-sufficient sacrifice for all of us on the cross.

When Paul says in 2 Cor. 5:19 that "*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,*" he means that He is reconciling the world unto Himself through the ministry of reconciliation, through His ambassadors with beautiful feet (Rom. 10:15) who are out in the world begging the lost and dying in Christ's stead to *be ye reconciled to God!*

What does it mean when Paul says that God is *not imputing their trespasses unto them*? *Imputing their trespasses* meant that God was charging people for their sins, which meant the He was punishing people on Earth for those sins (Lev. 7:18; Isa. 53:11). But God isn't doing that today. He's not reigning fire down upon cities as He did with Sodom and Gomorrah. Why? Because His grace reigns today (Rom. 5:21). Because He is longsuffering with us about our sins (Rom. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:16). Heaven has been thrown open offering eternal life to all mankind, including the worst of us, as a free gift on the basis of our faith in Him and His grace to us. God is not punishing people today but preaching peace. God is not judging sin on the Earth but mediating reconciliation. God is not angry with us but full of love and grace. The Lord's presence on His throne exalted above all things has changed His throne of judgment in time past into a throne of grace today. God is now longsuffering with us about our sins hoping that more and more souls will embrace His gospel of grace by faith. The phrase, "*not imputing their trespasses unto them*" is not the equivalent of forgiveness of sins. It simply means that God is now longsuffering with the world about sin.

Paul wrote in 1 Tim. 1:16, "*Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*" In Paul's conversion, we find first the

mercy of Christ, the compassion of Christ, which is why Paul didn't receive the imputation of his sins he deserved. In Paul's conversion, we find Christ's willingness to suffer long so that He may extend His grace to the *chief of sinners* instead of rendering judgment upon him, which He had every right to do. Christ would suffer for so long bearing the great sins of Saul who had been such a staunch enemy of Christ, and His long-suffering with Paul was designed to be a pattern to all others today so that we may likewise be saved by that same exceeding abundant grace that saved Saul who became the Apostle Paul. The Lord Jesus Christ is willing to show great longsuffering for the conversion of great sinners, which is surpassingly abounding grace that is beyond all my comprehension. The greatest of sinners need not ever despair that they are beyond the riches of God's exceedingly abundant grace.

When I reflect upon Paul's conversion, the height of God's grace that surpassingly over-abounded the depths of Paul's sins as a pattern for us all, brethren, we may surely proclaim "Behold the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ who loves us!" We may share with everyone that there is hope for the hopeless who come to Christ in faith, and that they can let God wash them of all their sins by the precious blood of His Son. Nothing but grace, nothing but *exceeding abundant* grace, surpassingly over-abounding grace, could have moved God to plan for our means of salvation today before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). Nothing but *exceeding abundant* grace could have compelled God to give His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for all mankind so we may all receive the forgiveness of sins. Nothing less than grace, *exceeding abundant* grace, could have converted and saved the worst blasphemer, persecutor, and injurious zealot like Saul of Tarsus, and nothing but *exceeding abundant* grace could have turned Paul's consuming hatred of Christ into a consuming love for Christ.

SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

In that horrific scene of Christ hanging on that cross, we find the ultimate expression of both hatred and love, of sin and grace. Christ hanging on that cross was the most vile display of evil, the worst conceivable expression, of man's hatred against God. However, from God's perspective, Christ hanging on that cross was the most gloriously righteous display, the highest conceivable expression, of His love for all mankind. We behold at the cross this breathtaking meeting place of hatred and love. Man displaying at Calvary, the height of his hatred against God, and God displaying at Calvary the height of His love for us all. Hatred and love met at the cross on Calvary, and His love proved victorious. God and sin met. God triumphed. The penalty and the consequence of sin was paid, and now, at the resurrection side of the cross, the eternal Spirit proclaims to us in Rom. 5:21 the good news that now His "*grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord*"!⁷

Once you accept by faith that the Son of God died on the cross for your sins,

⁷ Although I wanted to share these thoughts in my own words, the thought itself came from [Charles Henry Mackintosh](#) and his marvelous book, *The Mackintosh Treasury*, page 848.

that He was buried, and rose again, as a sacrifice for all your sins, by grace God the Father imputes the righteousness of Jesus Christ to your soul and God declares you righteous for all time. There's nothing but grace and peace between you and God now and forevermore. As Paul writes, there is no *"condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus"* (Rom. 8:1). God has forgiven you *"all trespasses"* (Col. 2:13), which is a forgiveness of *all* your sins – past, present, and future. He's written your name into the Book of Life (Phil. 4:3). He's made you as righteous as His Son (Phil. 3:9). He's made you *"accepted in the beloved"* (Eph. 1:6). You are *"sealed with that holy Spirit of promise... until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory"* (Eph. 1:13-14), which means that you have eternal security. You can never lose your salvation. You are *sealed with the Spirit* until the day you die and find yourself *absent from the body and present with the Lord* (2 Cor. 5:5-9).

When Paul says that we're *"accepted in the beloved"* (Eph. 1:6), he means we are *graced* into the beloved. Acceptance isn't just, "we accept you." This is us receiving the fulness of His divine love. God makes us the objects of His grace according to all the love that's in Him, all *"to the praise of the glory of his grace"* (Eph. 1:6). God the Father is the author of all our blessings. The blessings are made possible *in Christ*. And we read what kind of blessings we receive in Christ, *"all spiritual blessings"* (Eph. 1:3), that is, blessings given by the third person of the trinity, the Holy Spirit. God the Father has the entire Godhead involved in our redemption and He shows us as much love as He shows His only begotten Son. He has risen up to the fullest character of His love by blessing us in all this grace where He regards us as dear to Him as His only Son. This victory program we're in by God's grace was willed by God the Father, made possible through the sacrifice of Christ, and made complete through the baptism of the spirit.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

(Romans 5:6-10)

Just consider the redemptive power in the Lord's shed blood. We are *"justified by his blood"* (Rom. 5:9). We are declared righteous *"through faith in his blood"* (Rom. 3:25). We have *"redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace"* (Eph. 1:7). We are *"made nigh by the blood of Christ"* (Eph. 2:13). We have peace with God *"through the blood of his cross"* (Col. 1:20).

In 2 Corinthians 5:21, we read:

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

In Ephesians 2:8-9, we read:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

In Romans 4:5, we read:

“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

Does Paul say in any of these verses that to be saved you must be sorry for all the sins you’ve ever committed? No. Does he say you must confess your sins to a priest and do penance? No. Does he say you must raise your hand in church or walk down an aisle? No. Does he say you must ask Jesus to come into your heart or make Him Lord of your life? No. Does he say you only have to obey the ten commandments and you can enter Heaven? No. Does he say that your desires toward God might be an indication that you’re one of the elect? No. Does he say you must be water baptized? No. Does he say you have to do all these ordinances and rituals so that maybe you might go to Heaven? No. He says that *“faith is counted for righteousness.”* It is faith and faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ and what He accomplished for you at Calvary through which God the Father saves your soul from the eternal consequence of sin.

The issue is not what works you can do for God to earn His acceptance, but rather, your acceptance of the work He has done for you at Calvary. You have no righteousness of your own before God. To have eternal life, you must by faith be found *in Christ* having *His righteousness* (Phil. 3:9). Though our sins prevented us from coming to God, our sins never prevented God from coming to us with the gift of His Son to save us from the consequence of all our sins. God's abundant grace flows out freely to all who believe. No man will be condemned merely because he is bad but because he refused to accept the gift of eternal life by His grace shown to us in Christ Jesus (2 Thess. 1:7-9). God is now in Christ begging us all to be reconciled to Him on the ground of our acceptance of His Son who was made to be sin for us.

God is ready to save you right here and now. *“The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Rom. 6:23). Reconciliation is a two-sided agreement. God did something for us on His part that He didn’t have to do to bring about our

reconciliation with Him by having His Son make the ultimate sacrifice for your sins and then offered a free gift of salvation. Will you do your part by accepting that gift?

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). Yesterday's past. Tomorrow may be too late. You only have today. Who you are tomorrow depends upon what you do today. I beg you to believe. I beg you to place all your trust and faith in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection as a complete sacrifice for your sins. I beg you to be reconciled to God by believing in His Son. I beg you to trust in Jesus Christ for the sacrifice of your sins and be saved this moment. Please believe. Will you do that? Know your eternal destiny. Know for certain now and forever that you are saved and sealed always by God as one of His beloved children. Paul wrote, *"whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"* (Rom. 10:13). Go ahead and pray. The "sinner's prayer" does not save you. Faith saves you. But God would love nothing more than for you to pray to Him acknowledging your new faith in His son, that you believe Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins, was buried, and rose again the third day so that you are declared righteous in Him. Thank Him for giving you His free gift of eternal life through our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And now that that channel of communication has been opened to God the Father, you keep on praying and thanking Him for the rest of your life.

CHAPTER 2

Our Glorious Identification with Christ

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.”

(Romans 6:1-7)

Now that we’ve taken our first steps of faith in the previous chapter accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, we may now take our next steps of faith accepting what God has made us in Christ, which is to accept what God Himself tells us in His Word about our spiritual transformation that took place the moment we believed. We may now begin to marvel in our comprehension of what God has made us in Christ, so that we may now and forevermore see ourselves as God the Father sees us in His Son, and so that we can live our lives according to these phenomenally precious truths. These verses in Romans 6 are essential building blocks to spiritual growth.

Romans 6 follows on the heels of a mighty section of Romans, chapters 3-5, which covers justification by faith in Christ’s sacrifice for our sins on the cross. Paul mentions in Rom. 3:8 that he was being slanderously reported, *“let us do evil that good may come”* and then he takes the occasion to thoroughly define justification by

grace through faith. In chapter 3, Christ was set forth as a *propitiation* for our sins. In chapter 4, Christ was *raised again* for our justification, and in chapter 5, he opens with the statement, *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”* We have *peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ* with a sure standing in His grace and the sure promise of a coming glory. By this assurance, we know that we have eternal security, *peace with God* forevermore standing firm in His grace and rejoicing in our coming glory with Him.

At the end of chapter 5 in verse 21, Paul proclaims, *“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”* The fact that His grace reigns today is the great culminating point of every verse that came before it. Everything about our fallen state, about Christ’s sacrifice, about our justification by faith, and about this total victory program⁸ we have in Him may be summed up in this one phrase – *His grace reigns*.

Then we arrive at these mighty verses in Romans 6. Now that Paul has gone through the doctrines of justification by faith in chapters 3-5, the first thing he teaches us in chapter 6, which is the first thing God wants us to understand following our salvation, is our glorious identification with His Son’s perfect work. Paul begins the chapter by coming full circle with what he wrote in Rom. 3:8 in which he shared that he was being slanderously reported that he’s teaching, *“Let us do evil, that good may come.”* He goes through the entire process of our justification by faith in chapters 3-5. Then, in chapter 6, Paul returns to the idea of that slanderous report in Rom 3:8. He says, essentially, *Now that we’ve gone through the entire process of justification by faith, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.”* Knowing now how we have been saved by His blood, how shall we live? Have we been given a license to sin? *God forbid!* God Himself would protest such an evil thought. Why should God, who hates all unrighteousness, who sacrificed His Son on a cross for all our sins, suddenly betray His nature and give us a license to sin?

Paul’s answer to this question is three-fold.

a. Verses 3-4. *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”*

- We have been gloriously identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection by the Holy Spirit.

b. Verse 6. *“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him...”*

- Our old man, our old self, is crucified with Christ.

c. Verse 2. *“How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”*

⁸ “The victory program of His grace” is an expression I loved and heard often by Pastor Fred Bekemeyer.

- Why should we live *in* sin when we have died *to* sin?

These three grace doctrines are immeasurably crucial to spiritual growth, and we're going to carefully consider each one, beginning in this chapter with our glorious identification with Christ, which shines a light onto the very core of everything we are in Christ. Paul tells us in Rom. 6:3-4 that we have been *baptized into Jesus Christ, baptized into His death, buried with Him by baptism into death, raised up like Christ from the dead by the glory of the Father*, and given a *newness of life*.

Let's first consider what's *not* in these verses.

NOT ONE DROP OF WATER

I know that many in Christendom today, when they see "baptized" in Rom. 6:3-4, they immediately assume "water." They assume the baptism of John. Despite the insistence of some that *baptizo* means "to immerse" or "to dip" that was never the case. Even Strong's doesn't mention "immerse" or "dip" in its definition. *Baptizo* simply means "to wash" just as *baptizo* was twice translated as "wash" in Mark 7:4 when he wrote, "*And when they come from the market, except they wash [baptizo], they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing [baptismos] of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.*" When they *baptized* the tables, did they fully immerse their tables under water?

Paul says in Rom. 6:3 that "*we are buried with him by baptism into death.*" When was Christ buried in water? Never. Never in Bible times nor in our times are the dead buried in water, although there are burials at sea for sailors, but those are exceptions. People were usually buried in the ground or in tombs. No one would correlate *buried with Christ* with "immersion in water." Rom. 6:3-4 doesn't tell us that we are buried *like* Christ but that we are buried *with* Christ. There is a mighty distinction between a weak watery witness and us spiritually participating *in His death* being buried *with Christ*. How can water illustrate a burial *with* Christ? And why assume this is talking about water when there is more than one baptism in the Bible?

Consider, for example, John the Baptist's words in Matt. 3:11, which have in this one verse three different types of baptism:

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire..."

(Matthew 3:11)

The baptism of John was a natural progression for the nation of Israel. God promised Moses that Israel would be "*a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation*" (Exo. 19:6). They would be priests in a thousand-year kingdom (Rev. 20:4-7) in which they've

inherited the uttermost parts of the earth (Psa. 2:8), in which the Lord would sit upon David's throne (Jer. 23:5-8), and Israel would bless the entire world about Christ (Zech. 8:23). For Israel to become a *kingdom of priests*, their induction into the priesthood would be similar to the induction of the Levites into the priesthood. Just as the Levites had to be sprinkled with water (Exo. 29:4), anointed with oil (Exo. 29:6-7), and sprinkled with a blood sacrifice (Exo. 29:21), so too, the Little Flock would be sprinkled with water (Mark 1:4), anointed with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; cf., Acts 10:38), and sprinkled by the blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:2). Just as the Levites had to provide a sin offering (Exo. 29:10-14), a burnt offering (Exo. 29:15-18), and a peace offering (Exo. 29:20-21) to complete their ordination, so too, the Little Flock would have those three sacrificial requirements fulfilled by the one sacrifice of the Lord (Heb. 9:12-14).

The baptism with water, with the Holy Ghost, and with fire was fully anticipated by the Jews at the time because it was prophesied by Isaiah (Isa. 4:4; cf., Eze. 36:25, Zech. 13:9; Jer. 31:31-35). When the Lord and the apostles proclaimed the "*kingdom is at hand*" (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7), they were proclaiming not only the prophesied earthly kingdom with Christ on David's throne, but also the coming fulfillment of *all* prophecy, which included the time of Jacob's Trouble. Thus, the ceremonial water would preserve them through the symbolic fire, the time of Jacob's Trouble, descriptively detailed by John in his next statement in Matt. 3:12. Their induction into the priesthood as a nation would be fully accomplished following their baptism with water, with the Holy Ghost, and with fire after the Tribulation at the Lord's Second Coming when the Lord would establish His New Covenant with Israel in which He would put His law in their inward parts, write it in their hearts, and He will be their God and they shall be His people (Jer. 31:31-35). *Then God's kingdom of priests* would bless the entire world about their Messiah reigning here on Earth.

Let me ask another question.

HOW MANY BAPTISMS ARE IN THE BIBLE?

I'd suggest at least 12:

1. **Israel's Ceremonial Baptisms.** (Numbers 19)
2. **Levitical Priesthood Baptisms.** (Exo 29:4; Lev 8:6, Num 8:6-7)
3. **John's Baptism.** (Matt 3:5-6; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3 and 7:29; John 1:31)
4. **The Lord's Baptism by John.** (Matt 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-10)
5. **Baptism of Fire.** (Isa 4:4; Mal 3:2-3; Matt 3:11; Luke 3:16).
6. **Jesus' Cup of Baptism unto Death.** (Matt 20:22-23; Mark 10:38-39; Luke 12:50).
7. **Baptism unto Moses.** (1 Cor. 10:1-6)
8. **Noah's Type Baptism.** (1 Peter 3:20-21)
9. **Pentecostal Water Baptism.** (Acts 2:38)

10. **Pentecostal Spirit Baptism.** (Isa 44:3; Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 24:49; Acts 2:17-18,38; 8:15-17; and 11:16)
11. **Baptism for the Dead.** (1 Cor. 15:29)
12. **The Baptism of the Spirit.** (1 Cor 12:13; Col 2:12; Gal 3:27; Titus 3:5)

Consider, also, that the Apostle James, the brother of John, one of the sons of Zebedee, personally experienced three baptisms. He underwent the Baptism of John. He experienced the baptism with the Spirit at Pentecost, as well as the Lord's baptism of martyrdom at the hands of Herod (Matthew 20:20-24, c.f. Acts 12:1-2).

So we have in one verse three different types of baptism. We have a suggested list of at least 12 different types of baptism in the Bible, and we have a disciple of Christ who was baptized three different ways on three separate occasions. Tell me. What did the Apostle Paul mean when he wrote in Ephesians 4:4-5 that "*there is*":

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism"

(Ephesians 4:5)

Does not one mean one? One cannot mean twelve or however many baptisms you may think exist in the Bible. Paul doesn't say "one *primary* baptism." Paul doesn't give us an umbrella theory in which there is one big baptism and many little baptisms. Paul said by inspiration of the Spirit that "*there is... one baptism.*"

In the so-called "Great Commission," Peter and the 12 were told, "*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost...*" (Matt. 28:19). Paul said in 1 Cor. 1:17 that "*Christ sent me not to baptize.*" Do you think Peter and the 12 could say that? They were *specifically* told to baptize. How can this be possible if they were all operating under the same commission? They weren't. A change took place with the arrival of Paul revealing a "*mystery hid from ages and generations*" (Col. 1:26), and water baptism, which was part of the Israeli program with their messianic kingdom in view, was set aside in this age of grace (Rom. 11:11-15). Paul was told to not baptize "*lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.*" What has now taken center stage is the all-sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, and anything that is added to our salvation is nothing less than an affront to the cross and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

One of my favorite preachers, J.C. O'Hair, once wrote, "If the Bible says 'one baptism' for today, what Christian has the right to demand more than one? Do you think that the apostle Paul intended to teach a 'water' ceremony, in Romans 6:3 and 4, as a witness to the world of the believer's death, burial and resurrection? Before answering, read I Corinthians 1:14 and 16: '*I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.*' Did Paul write 'I thank God I did not help you to be a witness to the world...?' The baptized Corinthians walked as men. They behaved like unbelievers. Did they witness to the world by their water ceremony that they were crucified and buried with Christ, and that the old man

had been crucified...? That water ceremony will not help the believer, in any way, to walk in newness of life. Neither does that water ceremony convince any sinner that a Divine transformation has taken place in the baptized person's life. The baptism that produces the Divine transformation is a baptism not made with hands, baptized into the death of Jesus Christ. All of the religious or spiritual men in the world cannot baptize any one into the death of Jesus Christ. This is a Divine operation, and this Divine baptism is the only baptism that is necessary to guarantee the believer that he will appear with Christ in glory. The believer should convince the unbelievers, as well as all other believers, that his old man has been crucified with Christ, that he has died with Christ, that he has been buried with Christ, that he has been raised with Christ and that he is walking in newness of life; that he is a new creation. How? Not a 'water' witness; but a 'walk' witness. By walking in the Spirit instead of walking in the flesh; by seeking those things which are above where the risen Christ is seated; by putting to death the things mentioned in Colossians 3:5. This is God's Word, the Bible way of convincing the world that baptism has changed the believer."⁹

THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT

The solution to Ephesians 4:5 is that our "*one baptism*" today can only be *the baptism of the Spirit* that occurs the instant we believe:

***"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,
whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or
free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."
(1 Corinthians 12:13)***

Today, when we accept Christ as our Savior, the Holy Spirit baptizes us into the Body of Christ¹⁰, God's true church today (Eph. 1:23), His called-out assembly of saints. God's church today is not a dead human organization but a living divine organism. There are many members but one Body. All of us believers all around the globe are one in the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:4; 1 Cor. 12:12), *knit together in love* (Col. 2:2), nourished by the head, which is Christ (Col. 2:19), who is *the fulness of Him that filleth all in all* (Eph. 1:23). Just as we fill His Body, Christ fills all of us. Christ becomes our all, filling our souls with the beauty of Himself. The spiritual life inside of us is now the glorified resurrected Lord Jesus Christ - "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (Col. 1:27).

Not only that, the moment we believe, the Holy Spirit indwells us. We become the temple of the living God (1 Cor. 3:16-17). We are earthen tabernacles made for His good use. Just as God resided inside The Most Holy Place in the Israeli temple of the Old Testament, so too, God resides inside each of us. We are His Most Holy Place

⁹ [O'Hair, J.C.](#), from his wonderful booklet, "[Is Water Baptism a Witness to the World?](#)"

¹⁰ The church is not the bride, as many teach. John defines for us what the bride is in Rev. 21:2-9 in which he reveals that New Jerusalem is "*prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*" (vs. 2). Then, one of the seven angels tells John, "*Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife*" (vs. 9).

today. Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 1:22 that God *“hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”* The Holy Spirit taking up residence inside of us is God’s unbreakable seal until the day of our redemption. He’s the earnest, God’s guarantee of His purchased possession, the non-refundable deposit, if you will, of His purchased possession guaranteed as His forever. Not only that, Eph. 1:14 tells us that the Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, guaranteeing that every believer shall inherit the Kingdom of God, as an heir of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17).

One also cannot overstate the significance of Paul telling us three times in his letters that *we are sealed by the Holy Spirit* (2 Cor. 1:22, Eph. 1:13, 4:30). This means that the Lord Jesus Christ carried out a work on Calvary so all-sufficient as to give us an eternal life, an eternal security, eternal peace with God, cause for us to *rejoice evermore* (1 Thess. 5:16), and an *everlasting consolation* (2 Thess. 2:16). Even if we become faithless after we’re saved, *yet He abideth faithful*, because *He cannot deny Himself* (2 Tim. 2:13). This reason for our security rests not in the consistency of our faithfulness but in His faithfulness, because He cannot betray His holy, righteous nature. He cannot take back what has been promised to us, because to take back a promise He’s made to us is to deny Himself, to deny His own holiness. And what did Paul say about God’s gifts in Rom. 11:29? *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.* There are no takebacks when it comes to God’s gifts.

The operation of the baptism of the Spirit isn’t simply relegated to making us members of the Body of Christ, indwelling us, and sealing us for all time. The moment we believe, we are also spiritually *washed* and *renewed* by the Holy Spirit:

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost...”

(Titus 3:5)

Our *washing of regeneration* is our thorough spiritual regeneration by the Holy Spirit in which we are brought from a state of unrighteousness into a state of perfect righteousness by receiving His life. We are *regenerated* by the Spirit from our death to His life, no longer dead in sins *in Adam* but alive unto God *in Christ*. This is the death of our old selves, which is our *old man*, who’s been crucified with Christ, and this is the deliverance from *our* death into *His* life. This is our liberation from the consequence of sin, from the dominion of sin, from the power of sin, and the impartation of His divine life to us, which is the *new man, created in righteousness and true holiness* (Eph. 4:24).

The moment we believe, we are *washed* by the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:11). We are *transformed* by the Spirit. We are *translated* into the Kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1:13), whereby we became new creatures. *“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”* (2 Cor. 5:17). We are *metamorphosed* into a new spiritual reality, into a new state of being with God’s life inside of us. We are now *His* perfect *workmanship* (Eph. 2:10). In the Greek,

workmanship is *poyeema* from which we get the modern word *poem*. We are His poem. We are His great work of art. We are His masterpiece. We are His perfect work as a result of our spiritual *washing of regeneration* through the Holy Spirit.

Paul also tells us in Titus 3:5 about the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*. Every time Paul mentions “*renewing*,” “*renew*,” or “*being renewed*,” he refers to the mind, which is renewed by the Spirit through the study of His Word. The Holy Spirit is the active agent that enables us to transform our minds so that we may realize who we are now in Christ, so that we may *put off the old man* and *put on the new man*, so that we may no longer look up at the Lord through the eyes of the old man but that we may look upon ourselves through the eyes of the new man and see ourselves as God sees us in Christ, identified with His Son on the cross, and as righteous as His Son.

Victory in God’s grace is not the power of positive thinking. Victory in God’s grace is the power of accepting God’s truths of who we are now *in Christ* and we live our lives according to those truths. By studying His Word, the Spirit renews our minds, helps us to learn who we are in Christ, to know the things freely given to us by God (1 Cor. 2:12), to help us put on the new man, and to live free from the dominion of sin, all of which enables us to align our earthly walk with our new Heavenly identity.¹¹

Eph. 4:23 says, “*And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.*” The mind is likely where the “*spirit of man*” resides, which gives us our God-consciousness (Job 32:8; Prov. 20:27; Eccl. 12:7; Isa. 26:9). Our minds are where we learn about the things of God by the Holy Spirit through the Word, which makes us *spiritually minded*. Since the spiritual warfare today takes place in the mind, the *renewing of the mind* is that which is needed to perfect our walk and protect our souls from the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:10-18). Renewing does not mean reviving ourselves constantly. Instead, this is the re-wiring of our brains into a new way of thinking, a new way of looking at the world and ourselves, and a new way of living our lives. This is the process by which the Word of God opens our spiritual eyes and manifests His power into our souls. God uses His Word and the power of His Spirit to create in us spiritual intelligence as well as divine motives flowing out of His love, and grace becomes the predominant character.

***“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.
For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ
have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there
is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female:
for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”***

(Galatians 3:26-28)

Paul tells us here that we are the children of God by faith in Christ, all one in Christ, equals in Christ, regardless of race, sex, or station in life. All of us who “*have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*” Through the baptism of the Holy Spirit,

¹¹ “Aligning our earthly walk with our heavenly identity” is an expression I learned from Pastor Hal Bekemeyer, which I love using.

we have all *put on Jesus Christ*. We are clothed with Christ. We wear Christ like a robe. We are thoroughly covered with Christ. A covering in the Bible carries with it the idea of atonement. We are, therefore, fully covered by the sacrificial atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. As God covered Adam and Eve with animal skins, so too, He covers us today with Himself. As the Angel of the Lord had Zechariah change out of his filthy garments into clean clothes and told him, *"Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee"* (Zech. 3:3-5), so too, we are changed out of the filthy rags of our sins and clothed with the purity of Christ. We wear Christ, just as Aaron and the priests wore holy garments (Exo. 28:4), just as Job put on the Lord's righteousness like a robe (Job 29:14), and just as Isaiah celebrated, *"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels"* (Isa. 61:10). As the clothes of the Israelites *"waxed not old"* after wandering in the wilderness for 40 years (Deut. 8:4; 29:5), so too, we as new creatures will never *"wax old."* His life in us will also never *"wax old,"* because in Him is *newness of life*, a life of eternal newness.

DEAD, BURIED, AND RISEN WITH HIM

Now we come back to Romans 6:3-4:

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
(Romans 6:3-4)

How can these verses be anything other than our spiritual baptism whereby we're baptized *into* Christ, baptized *into* His death, buried *with Him* in baptism and also *"risen with Him"* (Col. 2:12) by the glory of the Father? These verses do not speak of positional truths only, but rather these verses speak of the literal, spiritual reality of what God has made us in Christ. These verses speak of our literal, spiritual transformation the moment we believed as much as all the other passages about the baptism of the Spirit. We were so thoroughly identified with Christ upon our salvation that *His* crucifixion became *our* new spiritual reality. God allowed us to be transformed *spiritually* as Christ was transformed *literally* after His resurrection.

Our souls were not thrown into a time machine to experience with Christ what He experienced on the cross in some weird out-of-body existential incident. No. When Christ made that sacrifice, He made that sacrifice alone. None of us were there with Him. But the moment we believed we were identified with Christ in that our souls were simply united *with Christ in His work on the cross*. Paul wrote in Rom. 6:5, *"For if*

we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:5). In other words, if we spiritually died with Christ, then it goes without saying that we were also risen with Christ. Col. 2:12 tells us that "*ye are risen with him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." We are, present tense, risen with Christ, which begs the question: "How can we be risen with Him if we haven't died yet?" We've been identified with His death and resurrection. *Since* we're spiritually identified with His death, then we'd naturally also be spiritually identified with His resurrection as well "*like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father.*" Thus, we died spiritually "*in the likeness of His death*" and we're now risen spiritually "*in the likeness of His resurrection,*" which means that His death became our death. His burial became our burial. His resurrection became our resurrection. The newness of His life after His resurrection has become our "*newness of life.*" As a result of our spiritual death, burial, and resurrection *with Christ* through the one baptism of the Spirit, we are now and forever victorious over sin and death as much as Christ Himself is forever victorious.

God loved us so much as to make us so intimately identified with His Son that when we place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, we spiritually die *with Him*. Our *old man*, which is our old selves, is crucified *with Him* on that cross. Then, we are spiritually buried *with Him*. Our old man and all our sins, including our bondage to sin as part of the fallen human race *in Adam*, are buried *with Him*. And finally, we are spiritually risen from the grave *with Him*, "*like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father.*" Our resurrection with Christ nullified the sting of death and the power of sin over us. We are made victorious in our spiritual resurrection *with Him* now freed from the bondage of sin and death just as Christ Himself was freed after He rose again, and we are now living *His* resurrected life, an eternal *newness of life*.

The Lord before His death led a sinless life, which meant that He had no death to die because He never sinned. So why did Christ hang upon a cross in agony shedding His blood and giving up His life when He never committed any sins? Because the sins of the world were imputed to Him so He may be *our* sacrifice. Thus, He died *our* deaths, a perfect sacrifice for sin we could never make ourselves. Calvary became the meeting place between Christ and the sinner. We come to Calvary acknowledging by faith that "This is not *His* death He is dying but He is dying *my* death for *my* sins and He rose again so I may by His grace live a new life of victory forever reconciled to God."

Grace in no way overlooks sin. Grace pays the ultimate penalty for all our sins and then grace turns around and offers salvation as a gift by faith alone. It was God's own incomparable grace that made Christ to be sin for us so we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. As our sins were imputed to Him, so too, His death, burial, and resurrection have been imputed to us. As He was baptized into *our* death *by grace*, so we are baptized into *His* death *by faith*. As He, by grace, became one with us in our death, so we, by faith, became one with Him in His death, "*crucified with*

Him" (Gal. 2:20), "*buried with him by baptism*" (Rom. 6:4), and "*risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead*" (Col. 2:12).¹²

In that moment of salvation, we were joined in an eternal union to Christ in Heaven and the all-sufficiency of His work on the cross. Christ's life became our life. Christ's victory became our victory. Christ's riches became our riches. Christ's glory became our glory. When we place our faith in Him, we are brought into the *perfection of His work on the cross*. We are brought into the *perfection of His victory*. We are brought into the very *perfection of Christ Himself*. When we place our faith in Him, we are forever identified with His work on the cross, spiritually transformed as Christ was literally transformed, and we're made to be risen with Him by the same power found within the glory of God the Father, which raised Christ from the dead. We enter a new state. We became *new creatures* (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15) with God's righteousness imputed to us (Rom. 4:23-25). We're made *alive unto God* (Rom. 6:11), *complete in Him* (Col. 2:10), *accepted in the beloved* (Eph. 1:3), *blessed with all spiritual blessings* (Eph. 1:3), *sealed by the Spirit* (Eph. 1:13), seated in the Heavenlies (Eph. 2:6), *forgiven all trespasses* (Col. 2:13), *circumcised with the circumcision made without hands* (Col. 2:11), baptized into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13), one with Christ (Eph. 5:30), freed from the *curse of the law* (Gal. 3:13), *heirs of God* and *joint-heirs with Christ* (Rom. 8:17), washed, regenerated, and renewed by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5), and we're now living His resurrection life until our bodies are redeemed (Eph. 2:4-6).

Our identification with Christ is why we are able to be *blessed with all spiritual blessings* (Eph. 1:3) the moment we believed. What Christ accomplished for us by our spiritual identification with His death, burial, and resurrection is to guarantee that our salvation is eternal, to make that eternal life a reality the moment we believed, and our spiritual transformation makes it possible for us to receive all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places, and this empowers us beyond all that we ask or think to have victory over sin, victory over temptations, and victory through all the sufferings of this present time. Why? Because nothing can ever undo a death, burial, and resurrection. Thus, we can never lose our eternal life, because we're dead, buried, and resurrected *with Christ*! What Christ accomplished for us – He conquered sin and death at Calvary. He condemned sin in the flesh. He took back, on our behalf, power over sin in our corrupt bodies, and by virtue of our spiritual identification with His work on the cross, we've been transformed into new creatures (1 Cor. 5:17), freed from sin's dominion over us (Rom. 6:2,7,10-20,23) by the Holy Spirit who has freed us from *the law of sin and death* (Rom. 8:2), and we now have the power to bring our sin-corrupted bodies into subjection to our regenerated souls (1 Cor. 9:27). Thus, sin now becomes a choice in our lives. We're free to choose to yield to the flesh or yield to the Spirit.

Paul tells us in 2 Tim. 2:11, "*It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him...*" Are we dead with Christ? Gal. 2:20 says, "*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live...*" Are we buried with Christ? Rom. 6:4 says that we are

¹² I have to give C.R. Stam some credit here for teaching me some of the truths in this paragraph in his [Romans](#) commentary at the bottom of page 123.

“buried with him by baptism...” And are we risen with Christ? Col. 2:12 tells us *“...ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”* This isn’t something we just acknowledge intellectually. This is something we must let into our hearts and souls for all time. This is something that we must reckon as true for ourselves. We must begin to see ourselves as God sees us in Christ - dead, buried, and risen *with His Son*. Then we can begin to live our lives according to what God has made us in Christ. Until you take the time to meditate upon your identity in Christ, and you actually see yourself as dead, buried, and risen with Christ living His resurrection life, right here, right now, then, and only then, can you function properly as a believer living the way God the Father wants you to live.

Christ’s resurrection as a means of our justification according to Paul’s gospel is crucial to our identification with Christ. If Christ was resurrected for *our justification*, then our identification with His death, burial, and resurrection guarantees that we are living His resurrected life now, which guarantees that we are the new creatures God says we are, which guarantees that we are literally freed from sin, which guarantees that we have His eternal newness of life, which guarantees our eternal security.

There is this innate need inside all of us to be identified with something greater than ourselves. Like a charity. Or a set of political beliefs. Or identified with whatever set of skills you may have, like an athlete with extraordinary skills in a sport or an artist being identified with a certain form of art. Or a salesman with the skills to sell anything. Well, God the Father has something to say about this. God the Father wants you to be identified with something greater than yourself. God the Father wants you to be identified with His Son and what He accomplished for you at Calvary. He doesn’t want you to look up at Him in tears and regret through the eyes of the old man because that old man is dead forever. God wants you to look upon yourself in joy through the eyes of the new man. He wants you to see yourself as He sees you in His Son, identified with Him and the victory He accomplished for you at Calvary and that now you are as righteous as He is, transformed to the uttermost, a new creature, *all things new*, freed from the bondage sin, and alive unto God.

The brilliance of God the Father choosing to identify us with Christ in this manner is that He not only brings us into His Son’s victory over sin and death accomplished by the cross, but He also brings us into His *glory* in that victory over sin and death. By identifying us with His Son, we’re placed into His victory *and* His glory in that work. Unfathomable are the depths of love that would inspire God the Father to share with us not just His Son’s victory over sin and death but also His glory, as well as His Son’s inheritance. The Father has shown in this doctrine that He loves us as much as He loves His Son, that He is willing to bless us as much as He blesses His only begotten Son, because He could not do more for us and He would not do less.

I know Christians have so many questions about their spiritual lives today. “Will I lose my salvation?” “Is God punishing me for secret sins?” “Is God mad at me?” “How do I deal with sin?” The answer to all of these questions is Rom. 6:3-4. *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?”*

Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The answer to all these questions begins with us embracing what *He* has done and what *He* has made us *in Christ*. Our eyes are not turned downward in remorse upon ourselves and our mistakes. Our eyes are directed upward to Christ in joy about the victory He's given us through His all-sufficient sacrifice on the cross. We share in that victory with Him because the Father has chosen to so completely identify us with His sacrifice through the one baptism of the Spirit that we are new creatures.

Let's consider those questions one-by-one.

- **"Will I lose my salvation?"** Know ye not that you have been gloriously identified *with Christ* in His death, burial, and resurrection, which means that you are dead, buried, and risen with Him, which means that you are now as righteous as His Son? Can anyone or anything undo a death, burial, and resurrection? Will Christ ever lose His righteousness? No? Then how can we?
- **"Is God punishing me for secret sins?"** Why should God punish you for secret sins when He's already punished His Son for all your sins – past, present, and future – once for all time? All of your sins have been paid by His blood forever. Justice for all your sins has been carried out on that cross at Calvary. Is God guilty of double jeopardy, of punishing people twice when the consequence of sin was satisfied once at Calvary? *God forbid!*
- **"Is God mad at me?"** Know ye not that because you are identified with Christ, God the Father sees you now and forever as righteous as His Son? Has God ever been mad at His Son? The evidence of all the spiritual blessings and eternal glory we've been given shows us just how much God joyfully celebrates our faith in His Son. God the Father showers us with endless blessings in this life and in the life to come such that we cannot humanly fathom just how glorious eternity will be for us.
- **"How do I deal with sin?"** Know ye not that you've been spiritually washed having died *with Christ*, been buried *with Christ*, and risen *with Christ*, all of which has freed you from sin's power over your soul in a *newness of life*? We've been transformed and freed from sin's dominion over our lives! Reckon it so! Get into His Word. Renew your mind. Allow the words of Christ to dwell in you richly. Pray without ceasing and live like the saint God has made you in Christ Jesus!

- **“Shall we continue in sin?”** *God forbid.* Know ye not that our identification with Christ’s work on the cross has freed us from the bondage of sin? Why should we wish to continue *in* sin when we’re now dead *to* sin and victorious *over* sin *with Christ*?

To add water to Romans 6 is to literally water down the power of these verses and detract in our minds the glorious all-sufficiency of the cross. To add any work whatsoever to our salvation is an affront to the power, the glory, and the perfection of His all-sufficient sacrifice on the cross. Our victory is all by Christ, with Christ, through Christ, and in Christ. Our testimony for, and identification with, the Lord Jesus Christ is not expressed through a water ceremony but through *His life manifested in us* after we’ve been transformed by the Holy Spirit. The *one baptism of the Spirit* and the *washing of regeneration* perfectly aligns with Rom. 6:3-4, because this is about our glorious identification with Christ, our spiritual renewal, our eternal union with what He accomplished for us at Calvary, our complete transformation into new creatures, our divine life given to us by God, our oneness with Christ, our deliverance from sin’s bondage - all through His death, burial, and resurrection by which we are *sealed by the Spirit* and given a *newness of life*, which is one of my favorite expressions.

Christianity is not a religion. Christianity is a life, a permanent *newness of life*. When we get saved, we enter a new life in which a whole spiritual world we could not see with our eyes is now revealed to us in His Word by His Spirit. We have a new life in the Spirit that’s in stark contrast to our old life in the flesh. There is also in this expression the permanence of God’s life dwelling in us, a life that is always new, a life with an eternal vigorous energy, a life that never fades or grows old, a life as fresh and new for all eternity as it was the moment we believed. Just as Christ’s life and light will never extinguish, so too, His life and light inside of us will never extinguish. It’s a life that gives us endless joy, endless peace, and endless love. It’s said that the soul is where it loves, rather than where it lives. Our souls love Christ and we live *in Christ*, because we are *one with Christ*. And the life of God reigning in our souls becomes the life of our souls forevermore. It’s a life that will never fade, never die, always new.

Just as Israel was identified with Christ as their *Messiah* through the *baptism of water*, so too, we are identified with Christ as our *Savior* through the *baptism of the Spirit*, and we now may celebrate as Paul celebrated:

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

(Galatians 2:20)

CHAPTER 3

The Old Man is Dead!

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

(Romans 6:6)

“That ye 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; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

(Ephesians 4:22-24)

“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him...”

(Colossians 3:9-10)

What is the old man? Is he literally dead or only positionally dead? What is the new man? How do we put off the old man and put on the new man? How do we reconcile the verses about the old man in Ephesians and Colossians? The Ephesians were *instructed* to put off the old man. Yet, Paul tells the Colossians, “*seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds...*” What are we to think of those two verses? Why did Paul give different sets of instructions to the Ephesians and the Colossians? Is putting off the old man a one-time act or something we continually do? How would we know if we’ve successfully put off the old man and put on the new man?

A common view about the old man from various pastors and teachers I’ve heard over the years went something like this: “What Paul teaches in Rom. 6:6 is that the old man is only *positionally* crucified with Him, that the ‘old man’ is essentially

synonymous with '*the flesh*,' and as a result, the old man wars against the new man. Therefore, we must starve the old man and feed the new man."

I truly wish I could join these dear brothers with this view but then we'd all be wrong. Through hilariously twisted logic about positional truth, these brothers of mine have miraculously brought the old man back from the grave wreaking all kinds of havoc inside of us, when Paul definitively declares his death once and for all when he wrote that "*our old man is crucified with him*"! As the late Paul Sadler would often say in his messages with his wonderfully deep voice, "Brethren, hear my words and hear them well!"¹³ Well, brethren, hear my words and hear them well! *The old man is dead and buried! He is gone forever!* Believe it! Love it! And live it with all joy!

WHAT IS THE OLD MAN?

How does God view us today? "*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*" (1 Cor. 15:22). Today, in God's eyes, we are either *in Adam* dead in our sins or we are *in Christ* alive unto God through His perfect work on the cross. Paul wrote in Eph. 2:1,5, "*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins... Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*". We become quickened, made alive, by God the Father through the instrumentality of the Spirit made possible by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I love the contrast between Adam and Christ in Romans 5:12-19 and 1 Cor. 15:45-49. Adam is the *first* Adam whereas Christ is the *last* Adam. Adam was made a *living soul* whereas Christ was made a *quickening spirit*. Adam was the *First Man*, *earthly*, whereas Christ was the *Second Man*, *heavenly*. Sin entered the world by one man's *disobedience* whereas the righteousness of God is now extended to the world because of Christ's *obedience*. In Adam all become *dead in sins* whereas in Christ all become *alive unto God*. In Adam we have *death* whereas in Christ we have *eternal life*. In Adam, we bear the image of the *earthy* whereas in Christ we bear the image of the *heavenly*. In Adam we have *judgment* whereas in Christ we have *justification*. In Adam *sin reigns* whereas in Christ His *grace reigns*. In Adam we become *unrighteous* whereas in Christ we become *righteous*. By one man's disobedience all were made *sinners* whereas by Christ's obedience all who place their faith in Him are made *righteous*. In Adam, the law entered so the *offense* might abound whereas in Christ, where sin abounded, *His grace did much more abound!* In Adam, *sin has reigned unto death* whereas in Christ, His *grace reigns unto eternal life! Halleluia!*

In a wonderful booklet called "The Second Things of the Bible," J.C. O'Hair made these fantastic comparisons between the first man and the Second Man. The first man is Adam and the Second Man is Christ. He writes, "The Second Man made the first man. But the Second Man was the seed of the first man. Satan gained the power of death by separating the first man from God. He lost the power of death when the

¹³ Pastor Paul M. Sadler, President of the Berean Bible Society from 1987-2016, <https://www.bereanbiblesociety.org/history-of-the-berean-bible-society/#psadler>

Second Man was separated from God on the cross, and then arose from the dead.” Later, he writes, “Because the first man partook of the tree; the Second Man died on the tree. Because the first man tasted of the fruit of the tree; the Second Man tasted death for every man on the tree. Because the first man was disobedient unto death; the Second Man was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Because the first man hid in the garden from God; the Second Man was hid from God on the cross. Because the first man brought the thorns; the Second Man wore the thorns. Because the first man was driven from the garden; the Second Man went into the garden. Because the first man brought the curse; the Second Man bore the curse.”¹⁴

We also find in Rom. 5:12 that *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”* Sin entered the human race through Adam’s transgression and death passed upon all men. I’d suggest that the means by which sin in the flesh is passed down from parent-to-child is most likely through the male seed, which may be why Christ, who was without sin, was *“made of a woman”* (Gal. 4:4). Having Mary’s DNA passed on to Him is what connected Jesus to the human race. *Not* having the corruption of the flesh passed on through the male seed is what made Christ *without* sin in the flesh. Romans 8:3 says He was made *“in the likeness of sinful flesh”*. Even though He possessed the flesh of humanity, His flesh was only *in the likeness of sinful flesh* but without sin.

We, on the other hand, are born with the *“infirmity of our flesh”* (Rom. 6:9; Gal. 4:13). We grew up constantly yielding our souls to satisfy the flesh which made us *“servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity”* (Rom. 6:19). Having a “sin nature” simply means we were born in bondage to sin in the flesh. We habitually yielded ourselves to the flesh, which made us *“servants of sin,”* (Rom. 6:17), which separated us from the life of God. Eph. 2:3 tells us that *“we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”* It became part of our *nature* to be in bondage to sin in the flesh and the mind. Also notice how we *were*, past tense, *by nature the children of wrath, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind*. Why does Paul speak of our sin nature in the past tense? Because the old man is dead!

David wrote in Psalm 51:5, *“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”* Did David’s mother sin when she conceived him? Certainly not. David twice called her *God’s handmaid* (Psa. 116:16; 86:16). David simply refers to the fact that he was conceived by two people who were *in Adam*, who lived as members of the fallen race of mankind corrupted by sin in the flesh, just as we all are, which is why in his mother’s womb David was shaped *in iniquity*. The corruption from the male seed was passed down to him, and he was formed to become a man with the corruption of sin in his flesh, which likewise made him part of the fallen human race *in Adam*. Like David, we have the snares of sin in our flesh and a weakness in our souls to yield to our flesh. Even without sin in the flesh we would still sin, just as Adam and Eve sinned in

¹⁴ O’Hair, J.C., Second Things of the Bible, <https://www.bereanbiblesociety.org/j-c-ohair-online-library/>

the Garden without being born with the corruption of sin in the flesh and just as Lucifer and his angels all fell into rebellion against God without being born with sin.

At what point does a sinning child become accountable to God? We know from Psalm 51:5, which we read in the previous paragraph, that life begins at conception. David was a life and a person when his parents conceived him (cf., Job 31:15). We learn from the story of Jonah that God does not want children to die prematurely (Jonah 4:11), especially if it's due to judgment for the sins of their parents, about which they were too young to understand. The Lord said in the last verse of the book of Jonah, *"And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand...?"* That's 120,000 children. Jonah preferred that everyone in Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, to receive judgment before they could ever have the opportunity to receive justification. However, God preferred that everyone in Nineveh receive the opportunity for justification before He ever carried out His judgment.

Christ Himself said in Matt. 18:14, *"Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."* It is the will of God the Father that all children should not only be born but that they also all grow up into a healthy, faithful, loving relationship with Him while they're alive, which was the very point of His act of creation. We also learn from 2 Samuel 12 that when David's illegitimate son conceived in adultery with Bathsheba had died at birth, that child went to be with all the other saints in the afterlife. David said, *"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me"* (2 Sam. 12:18-23). We can praise the Lord always for the fact that a child who dies before reaching an age of accountability will forever be with the Lord, never to be judged for sins they were too young to understand.

So when does a child reach the age of accountability? Although some in Christendom try to make the case from Luke 2:42-52 that because Jesus was found in the temple at the age of 12, then this must mean that the age of accountability is around 12 years of age. Tell me, what child was ever like Jesus? Of whom can it be said, as it was of Jesus, that He *"waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him"*? What other 12-year-old child could astonish doctors with his wisdom and brilliance like Jesus (Luke 2:46-47)? Might it be possible that His development was just a tad more accelerated than the rest of us?

On this topic, teachers also quote often Isa. 7:15-16, *"Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings."* These verses likewise do little to clarify the age of accountability for us because the previous verse, Isa. 7:14, tells us, *"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."* Isaiah 7:15-16 are specifically talking about the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the point of those verses is the spiritual bankruptcy of the nation being *forsaken of both her kings* at the time when Jesus, as a child, would *know to refuse the evil, and choose the good*. Jesus was able as a child to *know to refuse the*

evil, and choose the good, which is a far more advanced understanding of moral responsibility at a far younger age than anyone else who ever lived.

When Moses told his people in the wilderness the words of the Lord as to why He would not allow them to enter the promised land, he said, *“Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it”* (Deut. 1:39). The children who could not discern between good and evil would ultimately enter the promised land, and we learn in Numbers 14:29 that those children were under 20 years of age. Thus, Scripture seems to indicate that the age of accountability is on an individual basis when each child has grown up enough to have a clear knowledge of sin, who can maturely discern between good and evil, right from wrong, and may be held morally responsible as an adult for consciously choosing to do wrong and to sin against God. Essentially, it’s when they can be tried as adults, because not one child will stand before God at the Great White Throne Judgment. That judgment is for morally responsible adults. Because of the example of the children in the wilderness, I suspect accountability with God comes sometime in the late teens, early 20’s, depending upon the development of that child.

Next, every unsaved person, shaped in iniquity in a mother’s womb, born into a bondage to sin in the flesh, grows up beyond the age of accountability to become what Paul calls *“the natural man,”* the natural state of every unbeliever *in Adam*. The natural man *“receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”* (1 Cor. 2:14). Because the minds of unbelievers did not wish to *“retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind”* (Rom. 1:28). Thus, the natural man naturally resists *“the things of the Spirit of God”* because in his reprobate mind these spiritual matters *“are foolishness unto him.”* The *natural man* prefers to live in bondage to sin minding the things of his flesh (Rom. 8:5), *“fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind”* (Eph. 2:3), with a carnal mind at enmity with God (Rom. 8:7; Col. 1:21), walking in the vanity of his mind (Eph. 4:17), and also living lockstep with *the course of this world* because his mind is blinded by the *god of this world* (Eph. 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:4).

A HISTORY OF THE FLESH

What does the Spirit mean when He writes *“the flesh”* in His Holy Scriptures? Is the flesh code for something else, like our sin nature, or the old man? Let’s look at the history of the flesh in the Bible, beginning with the first reference to flesh.

“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and

brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

(Genesis 2:21-24)

Notice that the first reference to flesh in the Bible has nothing to do with a sin nature that didn't exist before the fall. This is a literal reference to flesh, not just skin but the muscles, too, all that which covers the bones. God *took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof*, which I suspect is a reference to both muscle and skin because God had to get through the skin and what is called the Intercostal Muscle Sprain in order to get to the rib to take it out. The skin and muscle were both opened and closed perfectly to take out the rib to create the woman.

If we're to take seriously the Law of First Reference in the Bible¹⁵, then we'd have to conclude that the word *flesh* is to be taken literally as both a reference to skin and muscle, which is distinct from the bones, which Adam himself understood when he said in vs. 23, *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh*. In other words, she is made from me. She is my skin, my muscle, and my bones.

There's that expression, "I wasn't born yesterday." Adam certainly wasn't born yesterday when he spoke those words. In fact, he was born the same day as the woman, the sixth day of creation, and yet, on the day he was born, being in his original state of righteousness made in the image and likeness of God, he understood so much of what God was doing. He was marvelously intelligent about not only what God had accomplished but also the meaning behind why God created Eve in the way that He did and the meaning of marriage and this was on the day he was born!

Adam knew he was created after all the other creatures on the earth. He was the last of the creatures, and at the same time the most important of all because He was made in God's image and likeness. However, Eve was made after Adam, and out of Adam, which put a particular honor upon that sex, as the glory of the man, as Paul referenced in 1 Cor. 11:7. Eve was *made of a rib out of the side of Adam*, not out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.

Yet, Adam understood even more than this. He understood instantly on his own birthday God's design for marriage, that out of one became two and when the two come together to consummate that union in marriage, they become one – one person, one soul, one heart, one mind, and one flesh, or one body in a unified whole. Because of that union, the husband is to love his wife more than himself and the wife is to love her husband more than herself. Because of that union, as Paul says in 1 Cor.

¹⁵ The Law of First Reference in the Bible suggests that we may see and discover in the first reference to a term the proper meaning of that term in the mind of God.

7:4, *"The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife."* What does that mean? It means that in that union of marriage, the two have become one whole, which means they are to care for each other as a whole unit. They are considered one body, having no separate or independent privileges, cares, concerns, etc., each being equally interested in all things that concern their union as one in marriage.

This union in a marriage was brilliantly used by God to illustrate our oneness with Christ in His body in Ephesians 5. Just as Eve was bone of Adam's bone and flesh of Adam's flesh, we are now bone of Christ's bone and flesh of Christ's flesh (Eph. 5:30). Just as we would care for and nourish the health of our own bodies, so too, Christ cares for and nourishes us because we are one with His Body. Just as the husband cares more for the wife than himself because she is one with him, so too, Christ cares for us more than Himself because we are one with Him. Just as, in a physical sense, the two become one flesh because of the marriage, so too, in a spiritual sense, we become one with Christ because of the cross. That union with Christ becomes consummated forevermore by our spiritual death, burial, and resurrection with Him, which took place the moment we trusted in Him.

But back to the word *flesh*. In the Bible, there are 420 references to flesh in 369 verses. Out of curiosity, I read every verse mentioning flesh, and I'd suggest that *flesh* is to always be taken literally. One cannot make the case under any circumstance that the word *flesh* is somehow code for something else, like a sin nature, or the old man. Flesh is simply skin and muscle. The most figurative way that God ever uses the word flesh is when he speaks of all mankind, such as what we would find in Genesis 6.

In the context of Genesis 6, we have the corruption of the human race with this new breed of nephilim, but mostly, we have excessive violence and wickedness in the Earth. In Gen 6:13, Moses writes, *"And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth."* In other words, the Lord says, *all flesh*, as a means of saying, essentially, all mankind, but He clarifies here that it's all mankind who has filled the earth with violence, and the Lord will destroy them with the Earth.

Before this verse, however, we're given some interesting insight as to what led mankind to this place of judgment. In Gen. 6:3, we find, *"And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."* He isn't saying that man's lifespan has been changed to live for only 120 years. He's saying that the Lord's judgment will befall the Earth in 120 years. With the exception of Noah and his family and all those pairs of animals, all flesh will die in 120 years. The reason for this judgment wasn't just the giants combined with the greatness of the violence and the wickedness, but the Lord also says here that *"My spirit shall not always strive with man."* The Lord's Spirit, the Holy Spirit, was in a state of constant spiritual striving with man. How did that work? The Spirit wrestled with mankind, possibly through spiritual conviction, admonitions of conscience, as a way of beseeching them to turn from their excessive indulgence of sin back to God.

However, the cause for the violence wasn't simply due to man's mind and soul rejecting the strivings of the Lord's Spirit. What makes this period particularly noteworthy was the excessive indulgence of flesh that brought about the great violence and the great wickedness. The Lord says here, *for that he also is flesh*, which I don't think is meant as a reference to a sin nature. He says, *he also IS flesh*. This is a reference to his composition as a man. *He IS flesh*. He is not simply soul and spirit but *he also is flesh*, and that earthly flesh is the great antithesis of the Spirit. In the context of all mankind striving with His Spirit, the Lord singles out here the makeup of man, which is to point the way to the corruption in the flesh to which all mankind was enslaved that caused him to willfully choose to reject God's Spirit, which was vigorously trying to pull all mankind back to a saving relationship with God.

This wasn't just the soul of man choosing to sin. This was the soul's excessive indulgence of his flesh that brought about the great violence and wickedness in the Earth before the flood. *For that he also is flesh*. The flesh here is singled out as the great contradistinction to His Spirit, the great barrier between man's soul and the Lord's Spirit. Man, in his flesh, strived against the Lord's Spirit just as Paul tells us that our flesh strives against the Holy Spirit inside of us (Gal. 5:17). *For that he also is flesh*. This is just a component of his make-up as a man *but* at the same time, his flesh wasn't such a barrier that he was incapable of making a decision about God. If man in his corrupted flesh was incapable of making a choice about God, then what would be the point of the Lord's Spirit striving with him to bring him into a loving relationship?

His Spirit strived with man in those days of extreme violence and wickedness because even in those extremes man was capable in his free will of making the right choice about God. The Lord said *For that he also is flesh*. *He also*, that is, one and all, are made of corrupt flesh, and the world at the time was in a state of depravity and violence because they all rejected the Lord's Spirit trying to bring them back into fellowship, and they all willfully embraced extreme indulgences of their flesh.

Violence and murder are extreme indulgences of the flesh. James would write in Jas. 4:1, *"From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?"* Wars and fightings spring from the raging lusts of the flesh. What we have is the inclination of the soul toward the lusts of the flesh desiring violence and carnality over the life-giving direction of the Spirit of the Lord. This is the soul addicted to satisfying extreme lusts of the flesh, which stood opposed to the Spirit's strivings. And this is the Lord saying, essentially, "I'm not going to do this forever. *My spirit shall not always strive with man*. My longsuffering will suffer no more. When the whole lot of mankind has given themselves over to excessive indulgence of flesh over a relationship with Me, I will withdraw My Spirit. I will strive no more, end this age, and render judgment upon all mankind."

In Gen. 6:5, we find, *"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."* We're given even more insight into the cause of this great violence: the heart. Fascinating to me that the Lord highlights two leading factors to all the great

violence and wickedness that was in the Earth at the time. He doesn't talk about the soul or the mind or the spirit of man. He talks about the flesh and the heart. And we have an interesting expression, *that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*. Notice that the heart is an imaginative heart. Man imagines doing evil before carrying it out. Notice also that the heart *thinks*. The heart in close collaboration with the mind makes emotional decisions. Satisfying the desires of the flesh is an emotional decision, because there is an emotional greediness to it all (Eph. 4:19), even lust. Consider all the sins listed at the end of Romans 1: *fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents...* Those are all emotionally-driven behaviors led by a corrupted thinking heart choosing to fulfill the desires of sinful flesh.

There is a close connection between the heart and the mind. Paul makes a fascinating connection between the two in Eph. 4:18. He says that the unbelieving Gentiles have their *understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart*. When one is in a state of alienation from the life of God with their willful ignorance, the heart becomes darkened being cut off from His light, which leads to a corruption of your emotional life, and as a result, the corruption of all your understanding soon follows. The corruption of the heart leads to a corruption of the mind because the two operate so closely together. The mind is ignorant because the heart is blind being cut off from His light, and the mind soon becomes darkened and blind as well.

Of course, when it comes to hearts, we often think of Jer. 17:9, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*" The heart is *desperately wicked*. The heart is incurable in its moral depravity. I liked what John Wesley had to say about this verse. "There is nothing so false and deceitful as the heart of man; deceitful in its apprehensions of things, in the hopes and promises which it nourishes, in the assurances that it gives us; unsearchable by others, deceitful with reference to ourselves, and abominably wicked, so that neither can a man know his own heart, nor can any other know that of his neighbour's."¹⁶

Solomon would write in Pro. 28:26, "*He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.*" A study of the heart in the Bible will illuminate through many verses that the unregenerate heart is full of iniquity, is hardened, impenitent, deceitful, proud, subtle, malicious, covetous, foolish, lustful (Ezekiel speaks of a *whorish heart* in Ezek. 6:9). The heart loves evil, and in fact, is a fountain of evil. The Lord Himself would say in Mark 7:21-23, "*For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*" Notice that it's out of the heart of men that proceeds evil thoughts. I have a theory that the unregenerate man is guided by his corrupt heart over his mind, but the believer is

¹⁶ Wesley, John, "[Wesley's Notes on the Bible – The Old Testament: Proverbs – Malachi](#)", 120

guided by a renewed mind over the heart, enlightened by His wisdom in His Word, which then gives direction to the emotional life God intended for us to experience.

Paul would write in 1 Cor. 9:27, *"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection..."* The whole corrupted body is to come under subjection to the regenerated soul and the emotional life of the believer in the heart is directed by a renewed mind. Paul would write 2 Cor. 4:6, *"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."* Notice what the light is that shines in our hearts. It's knowledge. What knowledge? It's *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*. That knowledge is what shines into our hearts today, the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ. The knowledge of Christ's glory *shines* in our hearts. His wisdom directs our emotional lives today.

Solomon would make the point in Ecc. 8:11 that *"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."* Unregenerate man doubles down in doing wickedness because of the Lord's longsuffering, which is why every dispensation ends in failure. In fact, Solomon would also make the point in Ecc. 9:3 that excessive indulgence of doing evil leads to *"madness in their heart while they live."* The heart can become mad in excessive indulgence of evil. What we have before the flood is nothing less than the madness of the human heart on display because of the excessive indulgence of the flesh.

There are also 20 different words, 16 Hebrew and 4 Greek, that are either translated as flesh or the definitions involve the flesh somehow. They're all literal. They all literally mean flesh. The many Hebrew words for flesh all had distinctions, emphasizing a different aspect about flesh, sometimes meaning the flesh of animals or the flesh of man, sometimes live flesh or dead flesh, sometimes cooked flesh or uncooked flesh, sometimes nakedness or even obesity.

In the Greek the 4 different words translated as *flesh* make distinctions between the flesh of animals verses human flesh. When Paul speaks in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 about eating flesh, that Greek word meant animal meat, which is also easily born out by the context because Paul is addressing the topic of eating meats sacrificed to idols. Flesh simply means flesh.

In Strong's, there is also a collection of 3 Greek words, G4559-G4561, and these 3 words describe human flesh, not just the skin but the muscles, too, all that which covers the bones. One of those three definitions simply refers to the softness of the flesh, used only once in the Bible by Paul in 2 Cor. 3:3, in which he wrote, *"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."* Here, Paul uses *sar-kee-nos*, translated as *fleshy*, to highlight that they were the living epistles of Christ with a softness in their hearts because of *the Spirit of the living God*, which is in stark contrast to those hard tables of stones, a reference to the law and the ten commandments. In other words, we're the epistles of Christ not because we obey His law but because of what God has made us in Christ by the Spirit.

The other two definitions for the Greek words translated as flesh simply mean flesh. One means *pertaining to the flesh* and the other, a Greek word called, *sarx*, used 151 times in the so-called New Testament, is just a very broad term for flesh. To figure out what is meant when *sarx* is used as flesh is born out by the context. Consider, for example, John 1:14. "*And the Word was made flesh,*" which is clearly a reference to the physical flesh of Christ, which is certainly not code for a sin nature or an old man the Lord never possessed. His flesh was without sin. We know well the Lord was *made in the likeness of sinful flesh* (Rom. 8:3). His flesh had the same physical form and appearance of the sinful flesh of man but without the corruption of sin.

Sarx can also allude to a generational or familial relationship such as when Paul would write in Rom. 9:3, "*For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,*" in other words, my relatives by blood in the flesh. The Jews were mostly family with Abraham as their father.

Sarx can be used as a reference to all humankind, such as 1 Cor. 1:29, in which we find, "*That no flesh should glory in His presence.*"

But Strong's and Thayer's and others would make the case that *sarx* also means human nature, and in particular, the corruption of sin in our flesh. How can this be? Before Christ, Alexander the Great was spreading Koine Greek throughout the world in all the regions he conquered. This language progressively developed over the course of 300 years until Christ was born. Does this mean that the carnal world at enmity with God developing the language of Koine Greek somehow knew that there was the corruption of sin in the flesh and incorporated that meaning into the word *sarx* before this doctrine was ever taught in the New Testament? Or is this a matter of modern thinkers interjecting their own definition into the word of a dead language because of their own personal theology? Or is this a matter of the Holy Spirit taking a word that existed in Koine Greek and expanding upon its meaning?

Take, for example, the Greek word *baptizo*. We mentioned before that some would insist that *baptizo* means to fully immerse in water as a means of justifying their own doctrines of water baptism when none of the old definitions of *baptizo* ever said to fully immerse. *Baptizo* simply means to wash, and yet, the Spirit used the word *baptizo* as a means of also teaching identification. The water baptism in the Gospel period was a means by which the people of Israel were identified with their Messiah who had arrived. The spiritual baptism in Paul's letters is a means by which we are identified with Christ as our Savior through what He accomplished on the cross.

The Spirit sometimes took a word that existed and expanded its meaning only for those who have spiritual eyes and can understand these concepts in God's Word with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the Spirit has done the same by expanding the meaning of "flesh." He taught us so explicitly about the corruption of sin in the flesh that every time we see that word in the Bible, we can't help but think of that corruption inherent in the flesh so much so some have added that meaning to the definition even though in the original Koine Greek, flesh only meant flesh.

Paul never used the word *sarx* expecting everyone to know the full definition of *sarx* to somehow understand that he is referencing the corruption in the flesh. But he uses this word to explain in many verses that our literal, physical flesh is corrupt. Romans 6:19 speaks of the *infirmity of your flesh*, the malady, the sickness, the disease of sin that's in the flesh. In Romans 7:18, Paul says, *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing*. The definition of the Greek word *sarx* and the context in which it's used in verses like these dictates that we must take the meaning of flesh literally, that Paul is specifically talking about skin and muscle and the corruption of sin that is in those components. Eph. 2:3 tells us, *"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."* In light of everything we covered from the Old to the New Testament, how can we not take flesh literally here? We all had our conversation in times past. We all were in bondage to the lusts and the desires of our flesh, which made us all the children of wrath.

Yet, mankind in his spiritually bankrupt state is still capable in his free will of making a choice about God. As Joshua told his brethren in the wilderness, *"if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD"* (Jos. 24:15). As Moses told the people of Israel, *"choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live"* (Deut. 30:19). As Solomon said of the wicked, *"...they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD"* (Prov. 1:29). As Isaiah said to his idolatrous nation, *"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool"* (Isa. 1:18). As Jesus told His people, *"Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"* (Mark 8:34). Or as Jesus said in Luke 13:34 *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!"* God does not betray man's free will and force a man to become saved. As we see here in Luke, the Lord laments that His desires were thwarted again and again simply because His children chose to rebel against His callings.

Paul said in Acts 17:30 *"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent"*. He said in Romans 1:16 *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."* Also, *"Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed"* (Rom. 9:33; 10:11), and *"whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"* (Rom. 10:13). Paul wrote that the Lord *"will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim. 2:4; cf., 2 Pet. 3:9), which is why he spent so much time in his ministry *"warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus"* (Col. 1:28). We learn in Heb. 2:9, *"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower*

than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man". And in Rev. 22:17, John writes, *"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."* If the multitude of offers, commands, exhortations, pleadings, admonishments, and warnings in the Bible are to be taken seriously, then every man *in Adam* must, in his free will, have the ability to respond to God's Word either to his salvation or to his condemnation. Otherwise, God is a liar, and He's making a mockery of His creation.

Paul wrote that the natural man *"receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"* (1 Cor. 2:14). He means that the natural man is incapable of knowing by his own reasoning those things God only reveals to us by the Spirit in His Word. It's the disability of man in his natural fallen state to comprehend the spiritual things of God without the assistance of the Holy Spirit. However, he is certainly capable of recognizing the existence of God through the testimony of creation, as well as His eternal power and Godhead (Rom. 1:20-21). He is certainly capable of recognizing his own spiritual ruin, his need for redemption, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, he can understand the simplicity of the gospel. In his own free will, he *can* accept God's free gift. The Holy Spirit is the active agent by whom God is illuminated to us through His Word. Only the Spirit of God, who is capable of searching the *"deep things of God,"* whose knowledge is as infinite as God Himself, can make known to us the gospel by which we are saved, as well as all the spiritual blessings we have in Christ, and the glory that God has prepared for those that love Him. Through the Spirit, the life in the Words of God fly off the pages of Scripture into our souls.

THE DEFINITION OF THE OLD MAN

Many commentaries would overly simplify the definition of the *"old man"* as our old sin nature, which means to be in bondage to sin in the flesh, but if Paul meant our old sin nature, I think he would've said *"old nature"* just as he spoke of our nature in Eph. 2:3. The *old man* isn't simply the old nature, although the *old man* includes the old nature. I'd suggest that a more Biblical definition is that the *old man* is everything that we were *in Adam*, our old selves in its entirety. He's called a man, because like a human body, the *old man* is complex, consisting of many various parts both spiritual and material – the heart, the mind, the spirit, the soul, the flesh – all of which were dead in trespasses and sins in our state of enmity with God before we got saved. Paul would not have us focus on *just* the sin nature but all the many ways in which we were corrupt so that we may fully put off every aspect of corruption that was once the *old man* and we may fully put on every aspect of righteousness that is in the *new man*.

So all that we were *in Adam* embodied by the phrase the *"old man"* includes every aspect of corruption in us before we got saved, as well as our position before God being dead in our sins because we were alienated from His life, and also our

habitual practice of sinning because we were living in bondage to our flesh, which made us “*servants to uncleanness*.” This is why the Colossians are said to have put off “*the old man with his deeds*” (Col. 3:9) because the *old man* is intricately tied to his habitual practice of sinful *deeds* by yielding to the lusts of the flesh in addition to his complete state of corruption and his position of being dead in his sins.

PROVE TO ME THE OLD MAN IS DEAD!

The death of the old man doesn’t begin in Romans 6:6 but in Romans 6:3-4, the great verses about our spiritual identification with Christ, which we covered in the previous chapter. “*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*” Prayerfully consider, and seriously meditate upon, the entire process of our identification with Christ. See yourself as spiritually baptized into His death. See yourself as spiritually buried with Him by baptism. And see yourself as spiritually *raised up from the dead with Christ*. Do not ever forget that His crucifixion became your new spiritual reality. Do not ever forget that God allowed you to be transformed *spiritually* as Christ was transformed *literally*. His sacrifice became your sacrifice. His death became your death. His burial became your burial. His resurrection became your resurrection. The newness of His life after His resurrection became your “*newness of life*.” As a result of your death, burial, and resurrection *with Christ*, you are now and forever victorious over sin and death as Christ is forever victorious.

How can the old man, everything that we were *in Adam*, survive a transformation as complete and as glorious as that? How can the old man ever possibly survive a death, burial, and resurrection *with the Lord Jesus Christ*?

We are living His resurrection life right now, which is how we have victory over sin and death, because we have spiritually died and risen *with Christ*. Christ made this victory possible by taking all that we were *in Adam* and put that old man upon that old cross 2,000 years ago and crucified him. Our old man stayed bound in the grave and a new man rose from that grave in resurrection life with Christ our Lord! Pastor Holtorff once wrote that “Our only hope, our only asset for victory in this warfare is a grave back there somewhere in which this old man was laid alongside of Jesus Christ.”¹⁷

Never forget that when we place our faith in Him, we are united with Christ in an eternal union. We are one with Christ. We are in Christ, and He is in us. Our identification with Christ and His work on the cross so thoroughly transformed us that we were made into completely new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17). “*Behold all things are become new*”! *All things new*! Does not *all things* mean *all things*? Does not *new* mean *new*? How can we be completely *new creatures*, *all things new*, being dead, buried, and resurrected *with Christ*, transformed by the Spirit, walking in a *newness of life*, and yet, all that we were *in Adam*, embodied by the phrase the “*old man*,” somehow didn’t

¹⁷ Pastor Holtorff, “Christ Our Life”, [Bible Study for Bereans](#), December, 1936

die after being crucified *with Christ*? Make no mistake. When we were resurrected *with Christ* – the *old man* didn't make the trip. To say that the old man didn't die, or that he's still alive hanging on that cross, is an affront to the glorious doctrine of our identification with Christ and His all-sufficient work on the cross. How can *all things become new* if the old things of the old nature in the old man were still alive in us?

God didn't *partially* transform us. He *completely* transformed us into *completely new creatures*. Everything we were *in Adam* is gone forever and we're now *completely* righteous as His Son because He *completely* remade us spiritually into *completely new creatures*. Was not Christ's work on the cross so all-sufficient as to be able to put to death the old man in order to give us a new man? Was not Christ's work on the cross so all-sufficient as to be able to make *all things new*? And was not Christ's work on the cross so all-sufficient as to be able to make us *literally* freed from sin?

This isn't just about the interpretation of Romans 6:6, as to whether it's a positional truth or a practical truth. This, to me, goes back to the heart of the all-sufficiency of Christ's work on cross and to the heart of our spiritual identification with Christ, which was so perfect that God was more than able to crucify that old man, to spiritually crucify everything we were *in Adam*, and He was more than able to transform us into wholly *new creatures* so that all we need to do is to renew our minds, to reckon as true what Christ has already accomplished in us, to put off in our thinking all the old ways and old habits of an old nature now gone, because we are now freed from sin with a new nature. We no longer look up at the Lord through the eyes of the old man *because the old man is dead*. We now look upon ourselves through the eyes of the new man, as God sees us in Christ, as righteous as His Son. We reckon these truths as a reality, right here, right now, and we live according to those truths! That is at the core of putting off the old man and putting on the new man.

A pastor once told me that if I'm to convince him that the old man is dead, then I need to show him every verse in Paul's letters to prove my case, which is funny, because all I need is Rom. 6:6. "*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him...*" Do you know what "crucified" means in the Greek? It actually means crucified. Imagine that! Do you know how Webster's 1828 defines "crucify?" "To put to death by nailing the hands and feet to a cross. To mortify. To destroy."¹⁸ How can the old man be alive in us when he *is put to death with Christ*? What man has ever been crucified and lived? Was Christ only *positionally* crucified? Did not Christ literally die for us on that old rugged cross? Did any of the malefactors who were crucified alongside Jesus live? Has anyone in the Bible or in history ever survived a crucifixion? The word *crucified* leaves no room for survival. If you've been crucified, you've been put to death. Further, there is *absolutely* no room *whatsoever* for *any* chance of survival if you've been crucified *with Christ*, because Christ *literally* died on that cross!

Let me ask another question. If the *old man* is somehow synonymous with *the flesh*, then how can *our flesh* be crucified *with Christ*? How is that even possible? Christ died on that cross, and yet, our flesh still lives. One pastor suggested that the old man

¹⁸ Webster, Noah, [definition of crucify](#), Webster's 1828 Dictionary

is still alive in the sense that he's still hanging on the cross! How can that be when Rom. 6:3-4 speak of our spiritual identification with Christ in His death, burial, *and* resurrection as a one-time event the moment we believed? How can we still be dealing with an old nature that somehow went into a time machine to perpetually hang on that cross some 2,000 years ago when our souls have already been declared by God as dead, buried, and risen *with Christ*? How does that make any sense?

Here's another verse, Rom. 8:9, in which Paul wrote, "*But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit...*" If the *old man* is synonymous with *the flesh*, then doesn't this verse state unequivocally that you are not in your old man anymore but in the Spirit?

Charles Henry Mackintosh once wrote, "But what is Christianity? It is something entirely new — heavenly — spiritual — divine. It is based upon the cross of Christ, in the which the first man came to his end — where sin was put away — judgement borne — the old man crucified and put out of God's sight for ever, so far as all believers are concerned. The cross closes, for faith, the history of the first man."¹⁹

Arno Gaebelein once wrote, "God therefore does no longer behold the believer as in Adam, but he sees him in Christ; the old man has been put to death in the death of Christ 'that the body of sin might be annulled that henceforth we should not serve sin.' God looks upon the believer as being dead with Christ to sin."²⁰ Exactly! How can we be dead with Christ to sin if everything we were in Adam before we were saved, which included our bondage to sin, is still alive and active inside of us?

"Ah," some might say, "look at what Paul says right after that phrase." Okay. "*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*" Does this not mean that the old man is somehow synonymous with the flesh? Absolutely not. This verse makes a *distinction* between the old man and the flesh. The old man is crucified, but the body of flesh still lives. We've only been thoroughly transformed *spiritually* whereas the physical body still remains. The only thing left to complete our salvation is the death of our corrupted bodies, because everything about us *spiritually* has been transformed to make us as righteous as Christ. We would not be as righteous as Christ if our old natures, all that we were *in Adam* in utter bondage to sin in the flesh, were still alive in us. The reason Paul says "*that henceforth we should not serve sin*" is *because* the old man is dead. His death made us free from the bondage of sin in the flesh!

Paul presses this point further in verse 7. "*For he that is dead is freed from sin.*" Well, we're all still alive, are we not? So what died? *What died*? We all spiritually died with Christ, didn't we? We were all buried with Christ. And we were all risen with Christ, and the old man, everything we were *in Adam*, our old natures, *died with Christ*! If we died with Christ, then the old man certainly died, as well, but we have been resurrected into a newness of life. It is an absolute impossibility that we can be freed from sin while also retaining the old man who was in total bondage to sin.

¹⁹ [Mackintosh, Charles Henry](#), In his wonderful booklet, [Man of God](#), pg. 6

²⁰ [Gaebelein, Arno](#), Introduction to his commentary on [Romans](#)

A lot of commentaries, I suspect, fall back on this idea that we have only been positionally freed from sin and the old man is only positionally dead because they couldn't explain why they kept on sinning. However, Paul explains it for us.

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

(Romans 6:17-22)

He first says, “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin...” Why does Paul say that we *were*, past tense, *the servants of sin*? Because the old man is dead! The *old man* was a servant of sin, enslaved to sin in the flesh. With the old man taken out of the way, we are no longer *servants of sin*. How can we be a servant of righteousness if we still possessed in us an old nature that was a servant of sin? Paul tells us in verse 20 that “For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness” and then he tells us in verse 22, “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God...” Do you see the mighty spiritual transformation that took place in our lives? Before we were saved, we were servants of sin and free from righteousness. After we were saved, we’re freed from sin and we’ve become servants of His righteousness. We’ve been translated from *servants to sin* to *servants of God*. How can we be servants of His righteousness if the old nature serving sin still existed?

Notice also that Paul does not speak of the infirmity of the old nature still present in of us, but he only speaks of *the infirmity of our flesh* - distinct from the old nature. Never forget that Paul speaks of our old nature in the past tense in Eph. 2:3. He said in that verse we were by nature the children of wrath, which can only be a true statement if the old man was literally crucified with Christ. Notice also that we only *put off* the old man *with his deeds* (Col. 3:9), but we *mortify* the deeds of the flesh (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5). We put to death the practice of sin in the flesh. Why doesn’t Paul ever tell us to mortify the old man? Because the old man is already dead! God knew we could never kill the old man, and this is why He killed him for us. Now we’re to quit living like the sinners we *were* and live like the saints we *are in Christ*.

I can hear the objections already. “Doesn’t the fact that Paul speaks of the deeds of the old man as well as the deeds of the flesh make the two terms synonymous?” Absolutely not. There is a distinction between these expressions. We only *put off* the old man *with his deeds, because* the old man is already dead. However, we *mortify*, we put to death, *the deeds of the flesh, because* the flesh is still alive.²¹

Notice, too, that Paul doesn’t write in Romans 6 about us being free to choose to yield to the old man vs. the new man or to the old nature vs. the new nature. He talks about us being free to yield to *the flesh* or yield to *His righteousness* (Rom. 6:19). That alone is the reality of our new life in Christ in these sin-corrupted bodies. When it comes to sin, we only have two choices: *the flesh* or *His righteousness*. The old man isn’t even a factor because the old man *was in bondage to the flesh* and Paul already definitively declared his death in Rom. 6:6. It is only *because* of the death of the old man that our souls have been liberated from the bondage of sin, and now our corrupted bodies are to be in subjection to our regenerated souls with a new life free to choose between sin in the flesh or the righteousness of Christ. We could not be quickened, or made alive, unto God if the old man was still alive in us. We could not be free from sin if the old man was still alive in us. We could not be free to choose between the flesh or His righteousness if the old man was still alive in us. We could not have the power in us to serve Christ if the old man was still alive in us. The only way Christ could have made us free to make a choice between the flesh and the Spirit is by putting to death all that we were *in Adam* and by giving us a new life *in Christ*.

Let’s assume for the sake of an illustration that you had a father who had a monumentally detrimental impact on you when he was alive. He taught you how to drink and swear and live for yourself satisfying all the lusts of your flesh. Now he’s dead. Yet, he still influences you, doesn’t he? He still has an impact on your thinking from when he was alive, doesn’t he? So much of your life has been shaped because of the impact he had on you. Your bad father may be dead, but he still influences you from the grave. Paul tells us that we’re to reckon him dead, and we’re to put off all the bad habits he taught us. It is possible to not only reckon him dead but also to fully put off all the bad habits he taught us when he was alive. We put off his influence and we put on the influence of Christ’s new life inside of us through the study of His Word

²¹ So what are all those nasty deeds of the flesh that must be mortified? Paul tells us in Gal. 5:19-25. He writes, “*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*” When Paul writes, “*they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh*” does he mean that positionally or practically? Yes.

yielding to His righteousness and walking in the Spirit. Make no mistake. The only influence that old man can have on us is the influence we give him in our minds.²²

Paul says in 2 Cor. 3:18, *“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”* This glass that we’re beholding is the Word of God as defined in James 1:23. So by the grace of God we are able to see through the glass, through the Word of God, the glory of His majesty in the face of the exalted Son of God seated at His right hand. When we read the Word of God and we behold the glory of Christ Jesus, the glory of not only what He accomplished at Calvary but also the glory of all the He is, that process changes us from the inside out to become like His image. From glory-to-glory, as Paul said, His glory transferred to us. The more we focus on Christ, the more we grow, and the more we’re changed into His glory by the Spirit.

We’re like a mirror in the sense that the reflection of His light can only come from us being in contact with that light, which is through His Word. A mirror in a dark room projects no more light than any other object, but when that mirror is placed in the sunlight, that mirror will reflect God’s heaven of beauty. Thus, in order for us to reflect the light of Christ in our souls, we must have continual contact with His light through the study of His Word. The ones who truly reflect His light in the world are those who stay in contact with that *Sun of Righteousness* through His Word. Through that process, Christ’s thinking becomes our thinking. Christ’s love becomes our love. Christ’s humility becomes our humility, and Christ’s servitude becomes our servitude. His Word starts in our spirit, works into our souls, and lives out in our bodies.²³ How can this be possible if we still possessed our old nature in bondage to sin in the flesh?

Our souls are now free to live according to the new life given to us. We’re free to put off in our thinking all the ways and habits of the old man, which we could never do if the old man was still alive in us. We’re now free to put on all the ways and habits of the righteousness of Christ now alive in us. The old man brought death. Christ brought life. But *“he that is dead is freed from sin.”* If the old man was a slave to sin in the flesh and we’re now freed from sin having spiritually died and risen *with Christ*, then how can we not be freed from the old man as well? Is not the death of the old man the only way we can be freed from sin’s dominion? The old man was *in bondage* to the flesh but now we’re *freed from sin*. Why? Because *he that is dead is freed from sin!* How can we be regenerated from the dead, made alive unto God, if the corrupt old nature is still alive in us? How can we be *complete in Him* (Col. 2:10) if we’re still incomplete and lacking inside ourselves because we still possess our old natures?

E.W. Bullinger once wrote, *“Behold all things are become new.”* Yes, the man in Christ is a new man, with a new life in a new world. *‘All things are become new.’* He has life in Christ, he has immortality in Christ. He has life instead of death, salvation instead of sin, justification instead of condemnation, acceptance instead of banishment, peace instead of enmity. We have new affections, fixed upon things

²² Credit has to be given to Pastor Hal Bekemeyer for this wonderful sentence.

²³ This is an expression I believe I learned from Pastor Richard Jordan in his [“Inside Out”](#) series.

above; new hopes, entering within the veil; a new song put in our mouth; and a new heart with which to praise Him for setting our feet on the Rock of Ages, for ordering our goings, for holding our hand, for guiding our feet in the way of peace.”²⁴

Les Feldick put it this way: “*Knowing this that our old man* (who's that? Old Adam! The fleshly body here in the circles, and that mind, will, and emotion that is still sin-bent, that's old Adam.) *is crucified* (what does crucifixion do? It kills! It puts to death. Okay. What was the first law? The soul that sinneth shall surely die, so how are we going to fulfill it? By identification with His death, and the best way I can put it is this: When you and I can believe that when Christ was hanging there on the Cross, He died your death, and so God saw you and I on the Cross in the Person of Christ. As He laid in the tomb those three days and nights, God saw you and I in that tomb. And when He arose victoriously over sin and death, God saw you and I in resurrected life. Now that's identification by faith) *with him, that the body of sin* (old Adam) *might be destroyed* (knocked out of commission, it's lost its power. It's like the breaker on a fuse box, you can shut the power off, but the power is still there, just waiting for someone to flip the power back on), *that henceforth we should not serve sin* (old Adam). Have you got the picture? Because that's exactly where the unbeliever is. He's living to satisfy the desires of Old Adam. But the believer now has let God put old Adam to death, by Crucifixion. But God didn't leave us in the grave, He gave us new life.”²⁵

WHAT IS THE NEW MAN?

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

(Ephesians 4:23-24)

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

(Colossians 3:9-10)

These are the only two references in the Bible to the new man in us. Notice in both that the new man is created after the image of Christ, who created him, who we know is the image of God. The new man is created *in His image*, which takes us back to the Garden of Eden. The new man is a new creation made in the image of God just as Adam himself was a new creation made in the image and likeness of God.

²⁴ Bullinger, E.W., from his booklet, [A New Creation](#).

²⁵ From [Book 21](#) of [Through the Bible with Les Feldick](#).

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them”

(Genesis 1:26-27).

Gen. 1:26 uses both “image” and “likeness” in stating God's intention to create man, whereas verse 27 uses only “image” to describe the actual creation, thus indicating that “image” fulfills the meaning of “image” *and* “likeness” in the previous verse. First, how can we be like God if we're flesh whereas God is a spirit? We're His likeness in that we're a triune being (1 Thess. 5:23) just as God is a triune being (1 John 5:7). Just as God is three-in-one, being one God made up of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so too, we're three-in-one being one person made up of a spirit, soul, and body. The word “*image*” reflected not only our likeness of God, but also the original state of righteousness of Adam before the fall into sin. We lost His image, His state of righteousness, when sin entered the world through Adam's transgression.

Charles F. Baker wrote in his book, “Dispensational Theology,” “The fact that Adam had a concreated holiness is borne out by several lines of evidence. The image of God in Ephesians 4:24 in which the new man is created is said to be in righteousness and true holiness. If the sinner restored to God is said to be created in true holiness, then surely the first man as created could have been and should have been created in holiness. Also, it appears from the creation account that God pronounced man *very good*, and this goodness must refer to more than the perfection of the physical body. And the further fact that Adam enjoyed fellowship with God indicates that he must have been righteous to enter into and to enjoy such a relationship.”²⁶

The image and likeness of God gives value to human life, which is why it was acceptable to God to sacrifice animals in the Old Testament as a ransom or counter-payment for sin because animals were never created in the image and likeness of God. This fact of God's moral-likeness makes man worth saving, worth the price that God's Son paid on the cross when He gave His life a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:6).

In Gen. 5:1 only the word “likeness” is used. Moses writes, “*This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him.*” Why only “likeness”? Because we lost His image, His righteousness, when mankind fell into sin. We lost the moral likeness of God, the original state of righteousness mankind possessed before the fall into sin.

In Gen. 9:6, the Lord is talking to Noah after the flood and He establishes human government. In particular, the Lord institutes capital punishment because, “*Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God*

²⁶ [Baker, Charles F.](#), “The Nature of Man,” [Dispensational Theology](#), (Grace Publications), 240

made he man," which I suspect is a reference to man's original creation being in the moral likeness of God before the fall. Murder merits capital punishment because man was created in the image of God, created in His moral likeness. When we became unrighteous, we were only in His likeness but not in His image.

Paul tells us in Col. 1:12-15, *"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature."* Christ is the image of God, *the firstborn of every creature*, which is also mentioned in Rom. 8:29 in which Paul writes, *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."* The image of God was not in what was seen but in what was not seen – the holy, righteous integrity of Christ Himself, and God the Father's will before the foundation of the world was that after we believe we would bear the image of His Son, which is the image of God Himself, *the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ* (2 Cor. 4:6). We're now through our salvation able to bear the image of God which was lost after the fall of mankind into sin in the Garden of Eden. As Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 15:49, *"And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."* Here we have the great distinction between being *in Adam* and being *in Christ*, all that the old man embodied and all that the new man embodies. We once in Adam bore the image of the earthy, the fallen race of mankind, and now that everything that we were in Adam, as the old man, has died, we are now a new man, a new creation in Christ able to bear the image of the Heavenly, which is Christ Himself, who is the image of God. The new man is Christ's life in us, and we are made able to bear the image of the Son of God.

So, in a sense, the new man restores us to the state of original righteousness of man as we were in the Garden before the fall being free from sin and righteous in God's eyes where we can now once again be in His image *and* likeness and enjoy a loving relationship and fellowship with the entire trinity of God. The divine image is restored to the soul and lived out through the body. Eph. 4:24 tells us that the new man *is created in righteousness and true holiness*. The renewed, regenerated man in us has the righteousness of God imputed to him and is made able to walk in His righteousness. This proves that righteousness constituted a part of the image of God in the way that man was created. The object of the work of redemption is to restore man to a relationship with God and to restore in him the lost image of God.

Even Lewis Sperry Chafer, in reference to Eph. 4:22-24, wrote, "In Romans 6:6 the old man is declared to be crucified in the crucifixion of Christ; and in Colossians 3:9, it is stated of the believers that 'ye have put off the old man and his deeds.' The disposing of the old man is wrought in that particular aspect of the death of Christ which is unto sin (Rom. 6:10), and is also made an actuality by the Holy Spirit in all who believe. It should be observed, however, that the old man now 'put off' is not identical with the flesh which, without question, is to abide with each believer to the end of his

earthly pilgrimage (Gal. 5:16, 17); but it is rather the first Adamic-relationship which, for the believer, passed out of existence with the death of Christ, being replaced by the New-Creation relationship in Christ, the Last Adam. The connection with the first Adam, which was as vital as the life stream itself, has been broken by divine power to the end that a new connection might be established with Christ. The appeal here is in accordance with the injunctions of grace. It is because the old man had been put off that they were to abstain from their former evil ways, rather than that by abstaining from evil ways the old man might be put off. Indeed a renewing of mind by the Holy Spirit is needed (verse 23) to the end that the vital importance of this purity of life shall be comprehended at all times and under all circumstances.”²⁷ I love the point that he makes that the putting off of the old man is how we may abstain from sin, as opposed to the idea that abstaining from sin is how we put off the old man. That is pure veritas.

Thus, we have here the great distinction between being *in Adam* vs. being *in Christ*, and all that the old man embodied vs. all that the new man embodies. We once *in Adam* bore the image of the earthy, as all the fallen race of mankind, and now that everything that we were *in Adam*, embodied by the phrase *old man*, has died, we are now a new man, a new creation *in Christ* bearing the image of the Heavenly, which is Christ Himself. Christ now lives in us and we can bear the image of the Son of God.

THE DEFINITION OF THE NEW MAN

If the old man is everything that we were *in Adam*, then the new man can only be defined as everything that we are *in Christ*. The new man is not simply a new divine nature but a whole new being created in righteousness and true holiness – in heart, mind, spirit, soul – all of which made us able to transform us into His image in our walks. We have His righteousness in the new spiritual reality of what God made us in Christ and we are able to bear His image outwardly in our walks through the study of His Word. The old man was dead in sins and in bondage to sin in the flesh whereas the new man is alive unto God and freed from sin’s dominion in the flesh.

The old man is the first Adam whereas the new man is made in the image of the last Adam. So what can be said about the distinction between Adam and Christ can also be said about the old man and the new man. In the old man, we bore the image of the *earthy* whereas in the new man we bear the image of the *heavenly*. The old man was *dead in his sins* whereas the new man is *alive unto God*. In the old man we had *death* whereas in the new man we have *eternal life*. In the old man we had *judgment* whereas in the new man we have *justification*. In the old man *sin reigns* whereas in the new man *His grace reigns*. The old man was a servant to *unrighteousness* whereas the new man is a servant to *His righteousness*. In the old man, *sin has reigned unto death* whereas in the new man, *His grace reigns in us unto eternal life*. If the old man embodies all that we were *in Adam* and the new man embodies all that we are now *in*

²⁷ Chafer, Lewis Sperry, from his book “[The Ephesian Letter: Doctrinally Considered](#)”

Christ, then it is not possible for both natures to co-exist inside of us. All that is said of us with the new man cannot be true if the old man still existed.

THE NEW CREATURE VS. THE NEW MAN

Paul makes two references to the fact that we are new creatures.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

(Galatians 6:15)

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

Since Christ died for all and we're all dead, then our relationship is not based upon His earthly ministry, but His heavenly ministry as He is now, crucified, risen, and glorified, in which our transformation is unlike anything that's ever taken place to believers in time past. We stand in the power of a new life as risen *with Christ*. We are made the righteousness of God *in Him*. As He is now, so are we in this world living His resurrection life. It is a real, living, certain reality before God, in which through grace, we and Christ are one, though all flows from Him, and all is dependent upon Him.

The new creature and the new man are similar concepts used differently to achieve different results. I'd suggest that there are slight distinctions between the two. A new creature is what you are. A new man is what you put on. There is a permanence about being a new creature. We are eternally established by this immutable declaration that we are new creatures, but there are degrees of success in how well we put on the new man. The new creature reinforces eternal security whereas putting on the new man is a process that improves our walk. A new creature is what God declares you to be. Putting on the new man is how you transform yourself into the image of Christ and live according to the reality of who you are in Christ, aligning your earthly walk with your new heavenly identity by the Spirit through the study of His Word. One cannot fail at becoming a new creature, but one can fail to make that mental transition of reckoning yourself as dead, buried, and risen with Christ, of

reckoning the old man as wholly dead, and reckoning yourself to be freed from sin and alive unto God. The new creature is the sum total of our transformation by God through the operation of the Spirit. Putting on the new man is when we learn from His Word how to live according to who we are in Christ. The new creature is a practical reality of what we are in Christ whereas putting on the new man is more of a practical application to help us live our lives freed from sin in perfect unison with our new divine life inside of us. The vitality of the new man comes alive when we renew our minds in knowledge after the image of Him that created us. God did everything to transform us spiritually, to make us alive unto God as righteous as His Son by virtue of the cross, but we still have to become active participants by studying His Word in order to become Christ-like in a practical sense in our daily walk in the world.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DEATH OF THE OLD MAN

“So, Joel, what do you have against positional truth? That’s, like, a thing with you.” I love positional truth! I think truth is positioned all throughout the Bible in what are called “chapters” and “verses.” “So are you saying there are no positional truths in Paul’s letters?” Absolutely not. We are all, positionally, equal members of the Body of Christ, positioned under Christ who is our Head. God the Father has “*made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*” (Eph. 2:6). Those are positional truths.

But what really lights my fire is when “positional truth” is used to make a verse not mean what it very plainly says. Paul says in the clearest of words that *our old man is crucified with him!* He is dead and buried with Christ! “No-no, brother Joel, the old man isn’t *actually* crucified with Him, he’s only *positionally* crucified with Him. And we’re not *actually* freed from sin, we’re only *positionally* freed from sin” when Paul tells us seven times in Romans 6 that *We. Are. Free. From. Sin.* To quote one of my mentors, Pastor Hal Bekemeyer, “Words mean things!” To tell a believer that these are only positional truths is to shackle that believer from enjoying real spiritual growth, because they say we’re not to accept these verses as a literal reality of who we are now in Christ, which is ironic because we grace believers are some of the most literal interpreters of the Bible in all of Christianity. To tell the believer that the old man isn’t literally dead is to blind the believer from fully seeing himself as God fully sees him in Christ – dead, buried, and risen with His Son, the old you gone forever, which made you freed from sin’s dominion over your soul! To say that these are only positional truths is to rob the believer of the true intent and power of these verses, which is to help us reckon the literal, spiritual reality of what God has made us in Christ, completely transformed, as righteous as His Son, dead, buried, and risen with Him, and freed from sin. If these verses are only positional truths, then why must we reckon them true when they’d have little to no impact on our walk? Have ye no faith? Reckon that old man dead and your soul freed from sin’s dominion as God says you are!

Romans 6 is not about positional truth. Romans 6 is about the new, practical, literal reality of who we are in Christ, of what God has made us in Christ, identified

with His Son, completely transformed, the old you now gone forever, and you are now *literally* freed from sin's dominion. We're now free from all the corruption of ourselves before we were saved. We're now free from our old bondage to sin in the flesh. We're now free to be servants of His righteousness, which was never possible when the old man was alive in us. We're to reckon all these great, literal truths of Romans 6 as a reality and we live our lives according to these truths! These are some of the most blessed, glorious, Praise-God-Forever truths in all of Paul's letters! Thank God every second of every day for the brilliance and the glory of what He has made us in Christ!

"Okay, Joel, what about Romans 7:15 in which Paul writes, '*For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I*'? Is this not an indication that we still have our old natures?" Now I love these dear brothers who have tried to use this verse and others in Romans 7 to somehow highlight our struggles as believers today. The problem is that the context of Romans 7 in no way makes that verse have anything to do with our walk today as believers.

First, Paul's writing to the Jews. What does he say in Rom. 7:1? "*...for I speak to them that know the law.*" Did you ever know the law experientially? Were you ever under the Mosaic law? Were the Gentiles in Rome ever under the Mosaic law? Paul is writing specifically to his kinsmen in the flesh and he speaks of the past. He connects with his kinsmen over the commonality they all shared when they *were*, past tense, *in the flesh* (Rom. 7:5) and how the motions of sins in their flesh brought forth fruit unto death under the law. Paul in Romans 7 illustrates to his fellow Israelites (and to us for our learning) his internal conflict as a Jew in the flesh *under the law*. He illuminates vividly the strength of the law in stark contrast to his weakness in the flesh and the utter fallacy of trying to attain His righteousness by perfectly obeying the law.

When was Paul, the former Pharisee, under the law? *Before* his conversion. Although some try to claim that Paul speaks here of his desire to go back under the law after his conversion, Paul never says in Romans 7 that he had desired to go back under the law, and nowhere else in Scripture can this claim be supported.

Paul wrote, *I was*, past tense, *alive without the law once* (Rom. 7:9). When was Paul ever alive without the law in the past? There is only one answer. There is only one time when a person may die in their sins and have eternal life with God without accepting Christ as Savior and that is when you are a child. Not one child will ever stand before God at the Great White Throne Judgment. It was as a child before reaching the age of accountability, until Paul grew up to become morally accountable to God by the law as an adult, that he *was alive once* before his conversion. He said, "*I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*" When did Paul ever *not* know sin? When he was too young to understand. Even adult Gentiles without the law understood sin having "*the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness*" (Rom. 2:15).

Some argue that Paul was always under the law, "*Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee*" (Phil. 3:5). Certainly, that is true. However, Paul was never

accountable to God by the law as a child. What Paul speaks of in Romans 7:7-11 is his transition from childhood to morally responsible adult being taught the meaning of sin by the law. He was, as a child, free from the condemnation of the law until he reached the age of accountability. When he became old enough to understand, the law taught him what it meant to sin (Rom. 7:7). Then, when he became an adult, the sin that already existed in his flesh as a child *revived* and he died (Rom. 7:9). This was the moment he became dead in his sins as an adult. Once Paul reached the age of accountability being responsible for knowing exactly what sin is when the commandment came, he succumbed to the desires of his flesh. He sinned against God for which he would be held responsible, and that meant he died as a result. He said, "*sin revived, and I died.*" How can Paul die again after he was made alive unto God when he got saved? In verse 11, he explains that the sin in his flesh took the opportunity when the commandment came to deceive him, "*and by it slew me.*" He did not die in his walk after his conversion trying to follow the law. He, as a young Jew, when he reached the age of accountability, became a man who was dead in his sins *because* he disobeyed the law. He became a dead man walking, because he had suddenly become alienated from God's life because of sin and also because God's righteousness had not yet been imputed to him for his faith, like Abraham, because he was not converted until he was on the road to Damascus. The law was never a means of justification but of *sanctification*, because justification for those old testament saints was only obtained by faith, as illustrated by David and Abraham in Romans 4.

But as a Jew, as a *Hebrew of the Hebrews*, Paul wanted to obey the law. He consented unto the law that it was holy, just, and good (Rom. 7:12,16). This was not a consent to the goodness of the law *after* his conversion but rather him growing up as a Hebrew. And because of the sin in his flesh, he was unable to fully obey the law as he desired (Rom. 7:18). The members of his body warred against his mind, which brought him into captivity to *the law of sin* (Rom. 7:23). The law of sin, elsewhere called the *law of sin and death* (Rom. 8:2), is a natural law working in our physical bodies. *The law of sin* is the corruption that brings about the death of our bodies because of sin, which is followed by the *second death*. That corruption of sin in his flesh was bringing about the death of his body (Rom. 6:23). When Paul acquiesced to the desires of his corrupted flesh, he sinned (Rom. 7:23), which meant he would die in his sins like every unbeliever. Also, as a result, he was in bondage to sin in the flesh. "*So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin*" (Rom. 7:25). Paul was not a sinner because he broke the law. He broke the law because he was a sinner.

When Paul writes in verse 14, "*For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin,*" he's setting the stage for an illustration in which he'd share his inner thoughts and struggles when he was in the flesh under the law. Then he says in verse 15, "*For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*" Not one Jew to whom he was writing who knew the law couldn't relate to that very thought and the hopeless struggle they experienced in the flesh to fulfill the law. The struggle for Paul was so exacerbatng, he would cry out, "*O*

wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” This is the cry of a man in the flesh under the law seeking deliverance *before* his salvation, because the law was merely a *schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ* (Gal. 3:24-25).

So *who has* delivered us from the bondage to sin in this body of death? The Lord Jesus Christ, whose name should be praised forevermore. We get out from under the law in chapter 7 and into the Spirit of Christ in chapter 8 whose spiritual baptism made us “*free from the law of sin and death*” (Rom. 8:2). Romans 7 is about a past experience written for the Jews when they were, past tense, *in the flesh* (Rom. 7:5). When we get out from being in the flesh under the law in chapter 7 and into the Spirit of Christ in chapter 8, Paul explains that we believers are not *in the flesh, but in the Spirit* (Rom. 8:9). A seismic shift had taken place from his old life under the law to his new life in Christ by the Spirit. His life in the flesh under the law in Romans 7 only served to illustrate *how* we have been freed from our bondage to the law of sin in our bodies, which was through Jesus Christ’s all-sufficient sacrifice on the cross by which He condemned sin in the flesh (Rom. 8:3) and made us able to fulfill the righteousness of the law by walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit (Rom. 8:3-4).

In chapter 7, Paul was in bondage to *the law of sin* (Rom. 7:23). In chapter 8, he’s been freed from *the law of sin* (Rom. 8:2). In chapter 7, Paul spoke of the past when he was still *in the flesh* (Rom. 7:5). In chapter 8, he speaks of our present tense spiritual reality how we *are* no longer in the flesh but *in the Spirit* (Rom. 8:9). In chapter 7, Paul could not fulfil the law walking in his flesh. In chapter 8 Paul *could* fulfil the law by love walking in the Spirit. What could not be accomplished in the flesh under the law may now be accomplished in the Spirit free from the law of sin.

How can we be in the Spirit walking after the Spirit if we are still in bondage to sin in the flesh? Christ conquered sin for us at Calvary. He condemned sin in the flesh. He took back for us, on our behalf, power over sin in our corrupt bodies, and by virtue of our spiritual identification with His work on the cross, we’ve been transformed into new creatures (1 Cor. 5:17), freed from sin’s dominion over us (Rom. 6:2,7,10-20,23) by the Holy Spirit who has freed us from *the law of sin and death* (Rom. 8:2), and we now have the power to bring our sin-corrupted bodies into subjection to our regenerated souls (1 Cor. 9:27). Paul’s showing us in Romans 7 and 8 that believing Jews are now freed from that conflict they experienced in the flesh under the law and how they’re now made able to fulfill the law through love (Rom. 13:10), because they are now no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit (Rom. 8:9), and because they are now free from *the law of sin* and free to *walk after the Spirit* (Rom. 8:4).

How is it that we are even able to be free from *the law of sin* so that we may *walk after the Spirit*? Because the old man is dead!

“Fine, Joel. What about Eph. 4:22? Paul says, ‘*That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.*’ When Paul says, ‘*the old man, which is corrupt,*’ doesn’t this mean that the old man is still alive, because he *is* corrupt, present tense?” No. It’s the *former conversation* of the old man that is corrupt. Why should Paul mention the *former* conversation if the

old man is still alive? He'd be talking about the *current* conversation because he still exists, wouldn't he? The life that once was in the old man is now gone forever. What Paul's saying is that we're to put off in our minds, we're to put off in all our thinking, all the ways that we used to live and the all ways that we used to speak, because all the former ways of the old man is corrupt. Now that the old man is dead, the only thing left is to put away the *former conversation*, the old manner of living.

The Colossians were successful in putting off the old man. Paul said in Col. 3:9, "*seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.*" If the old man is still alive in us, then how can we ever have any success in putting him off? "Well," some might say, "the verse in Colossians is positional and the verse in Ephesians is practical." What? Balderdash! My friends, mark my words and mark them well. Do not ever forget this principle. These verses prove it is possible to put off the old man with complete success and it is possible to put on the new man with complete success. This process is simply done with the renewing of our minds through the study of Scripture.

We also learn in Eph. 4:22 that the former conversation of the old man was according to *deceitful lusts*. The life we used to live was defined by us being deceived by the lusts in our flesh. The lusts of the flesh always deceive us. The flesh promises gratification and happiness if we fulfill its sinful lusts, but the more we sin, the more miserable we become. We fall into this vicious cycle searching for happiness by satisfying the flesh, but we never find that happiness, although we know that happiness can be found, that there has to be something more to this life than us living to satisfy the selfish greediness of our own flesh.

Romans 6 gives us the answers we need. We learn that everything we were before we got saved, the old man, was put death with Christ when we first believed, and we're now to reckon our old selves dead. We're to count it so in our minds what God tells us about our old selves. We're dead, indeed, unto sin, and alive unto God. We're to renew our minds by studying His Word so that we may realize who we are in Christ, so that we may *put off the old man* and *put on the new man*, so that we may no longer look up at the Lord through the eyes of the old man but that we may look upon ourselves through the eyes of the new man and see ourselves as God sees us in Christ, identified with His Son on the cross, and as righteous as His Son. By studying His Word, the Spirit renews our minds. He helps us to learn who we are in Christ. He helps us to put on the new man and to live free from the dominion of sin, all of which enables us to align our earthly walk with our new Heavenly identity. We learn these truths. We reckon these truths. And then we yield to His righteousness.

PUT OFF AND PUT ON: A THREE-STEP PROCESS

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that

is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye 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; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

(Ephesians 4:17-24)

First, we're to put off the old man with his deeds, which is to not only reckon the old man dead and gone forever (Rom. 6:6-11), but we also set our minds to putting off the old man *with his deeds* (Col. 3:9), which is to put away all the bad habits of our old selves. We're to put off our corrupt thinking. We're to put off our corrupt living. We are to no longer think and live as we did before we were saved. This is where doctrine *is* application, because if you have not accepted by faith what Paul tells us in Romans 6 that the old man is crucified with Christ, that everything bad that you were before you got saved is gone forever by virtue of the fact that you've been spiritually identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, and transformed into new creatures freed from sin – if you've not accepted these truths, then you've not yet fully put off the old man, and you'll remain stagnant in your spiritual growth.

Second, in Ephesians 4:22, Paul tells us, *"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts"*. Later, in verse 24, Paul tells us, *"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."* One does not simply put on the new man in verse 24 after putting off the old man in verse 22. There is another step involved in this process before you put on the new man, and that additional step can be found in verse 23, the verse between those two verses. What does Paul say in that verse?

In verse 23, Paul tells us, *"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind"*. The believer's mind is *"renewed"* through the study of His Word as we transform our thinking to mirror the mind of Christ, allowing the words of Christ to dwell in us richly, while bringing every single thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). We replace the corrupt thought processes of our past with God's new *grace thinking*. Paul said, *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 2:5). Just as Christ gave Himself wholly to do the Father's will, so should we by allowing His thinking to become our thinking. We allow His love to become our Love. His joy our joy. True spiritual growth comes from, not just by how much Scripture we know, but also by how much we think like Christ and apply the Word of God to our daily walk. The more we learn to trust God and reflect that trust in Him in every aspect of our thinking, the more spiritually mature we become. The evidence of spiritual maturity is

not simply knowledge of the Scriptures, but the demonstration of that knowledge by exhibiting the mind of Christ. The knowledge of Christ's love for us should cause us to love Him in such a way that it is demonstrated in our walks committed to serving God. Spiritual maturity is marked by having that spiritual knowledge being put into practice.

Third, we learn from Col 3:9 that after we've successfully put off the old man reckoning him dead, after we've put off all his bad habits through the renewing of our minds, we then put on the new man and continually encourage each other in consistently wearing all the great aspects of the new man. There can come a point in your spiritual maturity that you have successfully put off the old man with all his deeds. This *can* be done because we are in a total victory program by His grace. We're not only victorious in what Christ accomplished for us, but we can also be totally victorious in perfecting holiness in our walks to the glory of Christ. The difference between these verses in Ephesians and Colossians is that in Ephesians we're told what to do, and Colossians is the encouragement we give one another after we're successful in putting off the old man *with his deeds* and putting on the new man. We simply encourage each other in continuing to wear all the great aspects of the new man.

What exactly are all the qualities that we're to put off and put on? Consider what Paul tells us in Colossians 3:8-15. *"But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."*

Finally, we have 3 verses about the old man and you can follow a progression of thought in those verses. **First**, in Romans 6, you reckon the old man dead and that you're literally freed from sin's dominion. **Second**, in Eph. 4, you put off all the bad habits of the old man through the renewing of your mind. **Third**, Col. 3:9, after you've successfully reckoned the old man dead, putting off the old man with all his deeds through the renewing of your mind, you put on the new man. Then, as a body, we continually encourage each other to exhibit all the great aspects of Christ.

I loved how Pastor Richard Jordan once said, "Jesus Christ didn't come to improve your old man. He came to give you a new one... You were not created to imitate Christ in your own strength with your own abilities. You were created to contain Christ in your new man so He can live His life out through you."²⁸

²⁸ [Jordan, Richard](#), "Depression – The Source and the Solution," transcription via [Don Avnon](#)

CHAPTER 4

Freed from Sin

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

(Romans 6:1-2)

“Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

(Rom. 6:9-11)

I once fell away from the Lord. I hit rock bottom with depression and alcohol, and I came crawling back to the Lord in utter shame. I sought to give my life to Him and to understand what it means to experience real, powerful, spiritual growth with God. And I still remember arriving at Romans 6 for the first time in years. I kept rereading all those verses declaring our freedom from sin, and I kept thinking, “Are you kidding me, Paul? You can’t be serious. Freed from sin? Really?”

Of course, many commentaries had, I suspect, similar reactions and essentially concluded that, “no-no, Paul doesn’t mean that you’re *actually* freed from sin. How can that be? Clearly, we are all still sinning! Thus, Paul must mean that you’re only *positionally* freed from sin. This can only be a judicial reality, not a literal reality in your life. We cannot actually be freed from sin but only *positionally* freed. However, the good news is that divine power is available to help you deal with sin.”

Wait a minute. Paul says, “*reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord*” (Rom. 6:11). He said we are to *reckon*. We are to acknowledge as true right here, right now, that we are *dead to sin* and *alive unto God*. Paul doesn’t even make this point in passing in one or two verses.

He hammers this point again and again, at least seven times, in this chapter. Notice all these references in Romans 6 declaring that we are freed from sin:

1. *"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"* (Rom. 6:2)
2. *"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."* (Rom. 6:6)
3. *"For he that is dead is freed from sin."* (Rom. 6:7)
4. *"Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Rom. 6:9-11)
5. *"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."* (Rom. 6:14)
6. *"Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."* (Rom. 6:18)
7. *"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."* (Rom. 6:22)

Isn't Romans 6:22 amazing? He says, *"But now being made free from sin"*! We have been made free from sin! God made us free from sin! So are we or are we not literally freed from sin's dominion over us as God tells us here? We considered in the previous chapters our transformation by virtue of our spiritual identification with Christ, the death and burial of our old selves, and our new life in Christ as completely new creatures. Now we've come to these passages that flood Romans 6 about our freedom from sin's dominion over our souls. How can this not be a *literal* reality of what God has *made* us in Christ? How can we not be literally freed from sin's dominion over our souls if we are spiritually dead, buried, and risen *with Christ*? Once you have fully grasped the magnitude of your identification with Christ, then the question becomes, "How can it not also be true that we've been literally freed from sin's dominion?" Why? Because *he that is dead is freed from sin*.

Men who've written Bible commentaries telling us that Paul only speaks of positional truth or judicial realities in Romans 6, I believe, all failed to fully grasp first our identification with Christ and then lacked the faith to reckon what Paul tells us to reckon, that we are literally freed from sin's dominion. How else can one explain anyone's unwillingness to accept what's black and white in God's Word?

I've asserted this idea before and it's worth asserting again. There are no positional truths or judicial realities whatsoever in Romans 6, and I pray everyone reading these words will see these truths as well. At the heart of Romans 6 is the literal spiritual reality of what God has made you in Christ. If words have any meaning at all, then Paul operating under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit means exactly what he says. We are *dead, indeed, unto sin*! We are *freed from sin*! We were *made free from*

sin, and we *became the servants of righteousness*! We are alive unto God as righteous as His Son! Sin no longer has any dominion over our souls! Reckon it so!

Paul asks the question in Rom. 6:2, “*How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*” Why should we live *in* sin if we are dead *to* sin? If we’re so identified with Christ that we spiritually died *with Him*, we’re buried *with Him*, and we’re risen *with Him*, which means we’re living His resurrected life in the here and now, how can it not also be true that we’re literally dead to sin as well? If we’ve died with Christ, then how can we not also have died to sin as well? How can it not be true that our resurrected life with Christ has also freed us from sin’s power? Does not death free a person from sin’s dominion? Then how can our death with Christ not free us as well?

Does death have power over Christ? No. Does sin have power over Christ? No. Does death have power over us anymore? No. Does sin have power over us anymore? No. Why? Because we died *with Christ*. Because we were buried *with Christ*, and because we were risen *with Christ*. We are one *with Christ*. We are *in Christ*, and He is in us. We now share *with Christ* in His victory by the cross over sin and death!²⁹

“*For he that is dead is freed from sin*” (Rom. 6:7). If this is merely a judicial truth, then what does it mean in a judicial sense to be dead and freed from sin? How can one be dead and freed from sin in only a judicial sense? Dare I even ask the question, “What does it mean to be dead?” Is it not true that in death, we’re separated forever from the bondage of sin just as the soul is separated forever from its sin-cursed body? Are we not completely separated forever from the bondage of sin just as a dead man is separated forever from the power of sin in his flesh? *For he that is dead*, which was a completed act, *is freed*, our current state, *from sin*. Friends, mark my words and mark them well. We are literally and truly freed from sin’s power over us. If we died *with Christ*, then we are also dead *to* sin through *His death*! How can we not literally die *to* sin if we’ve spiritually participated in Christ’s death? Just as we were dead *in* our sins being separated from the life of God, we are now dead *to* sin being separated from the dominion *of* sin over our souls through the victory that’s in Christ!

“*Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord*” (Rom. 6:9-11). If our glorious identification with Christ is true, and we know it is, if He died unto sin once and we died *with Him*, then how can it not also be true that we died to sin as well and that sin no longer has any dominion over our souls whatsoever?

What Paul emphasizes in Romans 6 are the literal realities of our glorious spiritual transformation, which needs to become a literal reality in our day-to-day walks. We have literally been identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection through the baptism of the Spirit. We have literally been given a new man inside of us, which is God’s divine life created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24). Our old man, which is our old selves, is literally crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6).

²⁹ Many thanks to [Doug Dodd](#) and his wonderful article “Stopping Sin in the Age of Grace”

We are literally new creatures; *behold, all things new!* We have literally been freed from sin and made alive unto God. You will never grow in your spiritual walk until you reckon as true that you have literally died to sin by participating in *His death*.

As William Kelly often wrote, “As it is of grace, so it is by faith.”³⁰ As God has blessed us immeasurably by His grace, so we live in those blessings by faith. We were once the instruments of unrighteousness as slaves to sin in the flesh (Rom. 6:19), which made us the *servants of sin* (Rom. 6:20), but now through the gracious blessings of God, we by faith accept the reality that we have been identified with His Son, spiritually cleansed by the Holy Spirit, washed and regenerated, transformed into new creatures, and made into instruments of *His righteousness*. Our souls are regenerated from our death to His life. We’re made able to live as *servants to God*. We’re made able to live as “*the servants of righteousness*” (Rom. 6:18), “*as those that are alive from the dead*” (Rom. 6:13). We’re set free from the slavery of sin to become, if we choose, the slaves of His righteousness, no longer in the flesh but *in the Spirit* because His Holy Spirit now dwells inside us all (Rom. 8:8). We cannot be an instrument of His righteousness if we are still enslaved to sin as we were before we got saved.

Romans 6 is not a matter of accepting judicial realities but a matter of *sanctification*, of how our new imputed righteousness *works in us from the inside out* into our day-to-day living so the lost may see in us the divine life we’ve been given *in Christ*. The strings to sin have been cut forever. Sin no longer rules our lives. Sin no longer controls our decisions. Sin no longer has any dominion over our souls whatsoever because we’re alive unto God and free to yield to His righteousness.

However, while we may be freed *from* sin, we’re not freed *of* sin while we live in these sin-corrupted bodies, which “*lusteth against the spirit*” (Gal. 5:17). However, the freedom we’ve been given *from* sin by the cross is the key to victory *over* sin in the flesh. The power to stop sin in our lives begins in the mind renewed by His Word and with our reckoning, accepting as fact what God tells us, that we are transformed, freed from sin, and then we begin to live like the righteous saints God has made us *in Christ*.

There is an old adage that says: “We have been saved from the *penalty* of sin. We are saved from the *power* of sin, and we shall be saved from the *presence* of sin.” When we trusted Christ as our Savior, we were, past tense, saved from the penalty of sin, which is the *second death* in the Lake of Fire, an eternal separation from God. We are right now, present tense, saved from the power of sin, so that we can do what we could never do before, which is to serve God and walk in His image. We will be, future tense, saved from the presence of sin. At the catching away of the believers, the Rapture of the church, we will be delivered out of this world of sin into a sinless environment living inside our new, Heavenly, glorified bodies (Phil. 3:21).

KNOW, RECKON, AND YIELD

³⁰ One may view William Kelly’s complete works [here](#).

Victory over sin is a battle that's won in the mind. We are transformed into His image in our walks by the *renewing of our minds*, so that we may *prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God* (Rom. 12:2). We have been given *the mind of Christ* (1 Cor. 2:16). We study His Word so that His mind may be in us (Phil. 2:3-5). If we are risen with Christ, and we know we are, then we are to *seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God*. We set our *affection on things above, not on things on the earth* (Col. 3:1-2). Spiritual warfare is largely a psychological warfare, and that battle is waged and won in our minds. The victor in our minds must always be God's Word, which is truth itself, and the empowerment He's given us by His grace. The famous armor of God in Ephesians 6 is largely a state of mind about how we are protected and empowered by His truth such that we need only take a defensive position in this spiritual warfare. We cannot have victory over sin unless we've been nourished up in His Word, knowing full well our identity in Christ, what God has made us in Christ, knowing how to appropriate that power and the fruit of the Spirit, knowing how to deal with people in grace, and knowing how to properly engage in spiritual warfare. We, like Timothy, must be *nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine* (1 Tim. 4:6), which empowers us to *war a good warfare* (1 Tim. 1:18) and to be *strong in His grace* (2 Tim. 2:1).

Victory over sin takes place in the mind. Paul lays out three simple steps to victory in Romans 6 with three key words—*know*, *reckon*, and *yield*. We *know* these truths. We *reckon* these truths a reality, and we *yield* to His righteousness.

WE KNOW THESE TRUTHS

Many Christians today assume that God is trying to show them things through their circumstances when God made it abundantly clear that He has revealed His mind to us in His Word, which we must have dwelling in us richly. God says He does not want us to be ignorant of what He teaches in His Word about the keys He's given us to have victory over sin. Paul emphasizes four times in Romans 6 grace doctrines that we should *know*. We're to *know* that we've been spiritually baptized into His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4). What Christ experienced on the cross has become our new spiritual reality. We're also to *know* that as a result of our identification with Christ our old man is crucified with Him (Rom. 6:6). All that we were in Adam is dead and gone forever, laid to rest at the foot of the cross. Since the old man is dead, *"henceforth we should not serve sin"*, because *"he that is dead is freed from sin"* (Rom. 6:7). We're to *know* that *"Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more,"* that death has no more dominion over Him any more than sin has dominion over Him, which is why neither death nor sin have any dominion over us either (Rom. 6:9-11). And we're to *know* that we may yield ourselves as servants to obey sin or servants to obey God's righteousness (Rom. 6:16), which now makes sin a conscious choice in our lives.

Rather than live in bondage to serve sin in the flesh, as we were doing before we were saved, Christ has given us freedom through His sacrifice on the cross. He has

given back to us control over our souls, the ability to choose to sin or to yield to God's righteousness. We're now free to say "no" to the flesh. The power of control over our lives has been transferred away from bondage to sin in the flesh and given back to our souls to choose to yield to His righteousness. By studying His Word and allowing the life in His Words to strengthen our inner man by the Spirit, we may perfect holiness in our walks. What choice will you make? What direction will you give your life? Your spirit is no longer in bondage to the flesh and the sin that resides there. Your soul is no longer in bondage to the flesh and the sin that resides there. And now through the application of sound grace doctrines, *your body is to come under subjection to your regenerated spirit and soul yielding to His righteousness* (1 Cor. 9:27). By embracing these truths about our freedom from sin, we come to understand that sin inhabits our flesh but does not have any control over our souls whatsoever.

"Hey, Joel, what about Galatians 5:17? Paul wrote, '*For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*' Isn't he saying that it's impossible to do the things we would do for God?" Absolutely not. He's saying we cannot do the things we would do for God *on our own, by our own willpower*. What does Paul say in the previous verse? "*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh*" (Gal. 5:16). Pastor Hal Bekemeyer once asked the question, "Which is stronger – your flesh or God?" We have all the power of God Himself inside us to help us have victory over sin in our flesh. The degree of success we may have over that war between the flesh and the Spirit is in direct proportion to how well we "*walk in the Spirit*" because having success over sin by walking in *His Spirit* is what *brings glory to God*. So how does one walk in the Spirit? We allow the Spirit to teach us and strengthen our inner man when we study His Word and we walk according to the spiritual wisdom we've gained from God through our study of His Word. Our success over sin in our walk is always to *His praise* and not our own, because success may only be achieved through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit. Just as our salvation is not based upon our works, so too, our success over sin in the flesh is not based upon our works (or our willpower over the body) but upon the quality of our walk *in His Spirit*.

We *can* have a *practical* victory over sin every day by walking in His Spirit. Those victories are to the praise of the entire Godhead. God the Father willed before the foundation of the world that a sacrifice should be made for the sins of all mankind so that we today may be freed from sin and alive unto God for His good use. Christ essentially said, "I will make that sacrifice." And the Holy Spirit said, "I will guarantee that sacrifice with the earnest of Myself." And now we may rejoice in this total victory program given to us by His grace and we can say as Paul said, "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*" (Phil. 4:13). The strength God gives us as we walk in His Spirit is the process by which we achieve success over sin, and we then praise God for all the victories over sin in our daily walk *with Him*.

Sin in our flesh today no longer causes us to do anything because we are "*free from the law of sin and death*" (Rom. 8:2) as a direct result of our spiritual

transformation through the baptism of the Spirit. For a believer to sin today in God's age of grace, the believer must choose to do so in light of all that God has revealed to us about our glorious identification with His Son, in light of our total transformation into new creatures, and in light of the knowledge of our freedom from sin. "I can't" becomes "I can" through the empowerment of His Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*" (Phil. 4:13). The only power sin has over us is the power we give sin in our minds.

Paul wrote that death reigned "*even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression*" (Rom. 5:14). That curious phrase, "*after the similitude of Adam's transgression*" speaks of the way that Adam transgressed. How is it that we are *not* sinning after the way Adam sinned? Because this verse isn't about *what* Adam did but *how* he did it, which was by choice. Once we were in bondage to sin in the flesh, our sins were hardly ever a choice, because we were slaves to sin. We sinned out of habit, which became our nature, because we were in bondage to the flesh. So how is it that Adam sinned when he didn't have a sin nature? Adam sinned by making a choice. He chose to do what he did when he could have, and should have, said "no." Now that our sin nature was crucified with Christ along with our old man (Eph. 2:3), sin in our lives becomes a choice just as it was a choice for Adam.

Today, in our risen state with Christ, as righteous as He is, we are now free to make a choice. Shall we choose to walk after the flesh or walk after the Spirit? Shall we choose to be servants of sin or servants of God's righteousness? Shall we yield our bodies to be instruments of unrighteousness or shall we yield our bodies "*unto God, as those that are alive from the dead*" (Rom. 6:13)? When we sin, we make a conscious choice to do so in the face of God's victory program over sin given to us by His grace. When that moment of temptation arrives in your life, what choice will you make? Never forget "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*" (Phil. 4:13).

WE RECKON THESE TRUTHS A REALITY

Living the grace life today is like the illustration of the caterpillar turning into the butterfly. After the metamorphosis is complete, the new butterfly cannot fly unless the caterpillar accepts that he is a new creature. We cannot appropriate that power to fly as new creatures unless we first renew our minds.

Do you want to walk worthy of His calling? Do you want to be fruitful unto every good work, growing in spiritual strength, empowered by His grace? Do you want to be motivated by His love "*unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness*"? Do you want to have the vitality of a spiritually rich Christian life? Do you want to be *filled with all the fulness of God* (Eph. 3:19)? The only way we can accomplish this is to *know* the truths He gives us in His Word, and we reckon all these truths a reality in our lives right here, right now. We cannot walk after the Spirit if we are ignorant of His Word, and if we fail to reckon everything that God says we are in Christ.

Your day of real spiritual growth in your life is a day of reckoning. It's the day you *reckon* God's truths a reality, the day you reckon as true who you are in Christ, what God has made you in Christ by virtue of your identification with His Son's all-sufficient work on the cross. It's the day you declare yourself to be dead, buried, and risen *with Christ*. It's the day you reckon your old man dead. And it's the day you reckon yourself literally freed from sin. It's also the day, and every day, you choose to *yield to His righteousness* by allowing yourself to submit to the direction of Holy Spirit through the study of His Word about how you may exhibit His righteousness in the outliving of your faith in your walk. It's the day you allow yourself to be empowered by His grace with the Spirit through prayer, meditation, and the study of His Word. Then we store that knowledge in our souls to guide our feet.

To me, the most brilliant aspect of the victory program we have in God's grace is that His grace does not replace our efforts needed to fly as new creatures. The brilliance of God the Father allowing us to be free from sin while also being free to choose to yield to sin in the flesh or yield to His righteousness is that we will always rely on God for victory in every circumstance of our lives and He *always* gets the glory! Praise God forevermore for the brilliance of His victory program of grace! *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."* (Rom. 11:33-36)

Paul tells us in Rom. 6:11, *"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."* To "reckon" is to take inventory, to take stock, "to count it so" as true right now. We took our first steps of faith at our salvation by accepting that Christ died on the cross, was buried, and rose again, as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. We accepted that truth by faith. We reckoned that truth a reality and believed on His Son unto eternal life. Now, in our quest for spiritual growth to serve God as He would have us to serve Him, we take our next steps of faith and we reckon as true right now what God tells us about the new spiritual reality of all that we are in Christ, victorious with Him, transformed by Him, renewed in our minds through His Word, and we are now and forevermore freed from the power of sin just as Christ was freed from the power of sin. We reckon ourselves to be dead, indeed, unto sin and *"alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."* God tells us that we are *dead to sin*. Do you believe it? Have you reckoned it? The power to stop sin in our lives begins with us reckoning that we have been freed from the power and influence of sin, and we're free to live like the saints God has made us in Christ.

Arno Gaebelein wrote, "The believer therefore is dead to sin, the old man was crucified, put completely to death in the death of Christ, and the believer is alive to God in Him. But this wonderful part of the Gospel must become a reality in the life and experience of the believer. God beholds us as dead to sin in Christ and alive in Himself; this must be lived out. This is the solemn responsibility of the justified believer. And we

are not to do this in our own strength, but in the power of the indwelling Spirit, who is also given to the believer... Inasmuch as we have died to sin in the death of Christ, the practical deliverance of sin and its dominion must be manifested in our lives... And furthermore, we are more than dead and buried with Christ 'as Christ was raised up by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' We share in His resurrection. What the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ did to Him, raising Him from the dead, He does to all who believe on Him. 'He hath raised us up together' (Ephesians 2:6). We possess His life, the risen life and therefore we should also walk in the power of this life. Our old man (what we are in Adam), was crucified with Christ. When He died we also died. Our old man was crucified with Christ 'that the body of sin might be annulled, so that we should be slaves to sin no longer...' The body of sin is our mortal body with the law of sin in its members. And as long as we have this mortal body, the law of sin is in its members. But the operation of that law is annulled for the believer, who in faith... reckons himself to be dead unto sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus. And therefore, the believer is enabled to be no longer a slave to sin, as the natural man is. A dead man is justified or discharged from sin; the tyrant's power is at an end when the subject over which he domineers is dead. And so we being crucified with Christ escape the tyrant's power, and ultimately when the Lord comes this mortal body will be changed and sin itself will be forever gone."³¹

Also, I must share the words of F.W. Grant. "'In Christ Jesus' is the definition of all Christians, and it defines them as a people identified with the One who as a man has entered into the presence of God; 'for in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God' (Rom. 6:10). 'In Christ' is the language of complete identification. Crucified with Him on the Cross, His resurrection was the divine declaration of our acceptance with Him in His work and place. Henceforth the eye of God sees us ever in Him alone. We are reckoned, and are to reckon ourselves, as with Him dead, buried, quickened, risen, and in Him seated in the heavenly places before the Father. His delight in us is His unchangeable delight in His Beloved Son... I must accept [the] perfection of my Father's providing, and find in the Lord Jesus a new self that needs no mending and cannot be improved... I am privileged to turn away from what I find in myself as a man down here, then, because in the death of the Cross, the death wherein I died with Him, 'sin in the flesh' has been fully dealt with. The condemnation of it by God has already found its full expression on the Cross. For faith, not for experience, I too have died, and that 'to sin,' because 'he died unto sin once.' I reckon myself to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus."³²

WE YIELD TO HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

Paul says to "yield" four times in three different verses in Romans 6. In verse 13, he says, "*Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto*

³¹ In his [Romans](#) commentary

³² From his booklet, "In Christ Jesus"

sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” In verse 16, he says, “*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*” And in verse 19, he says, “*I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*”

What does it mean for us to yield to His righteousness? We give ourselves over to His Word. We allow ourselves to submit to the direction of the Holy Spirit, and we live our lives by His principles of grace. When we study His Word renewing our minds, we consent in our minds to His truth. We give ourselves over to the teaching of the Spirit, and we follow His directions to exhibit His holiness in our walk with Him.

Ephesians 5:18 tells us “*Don't be drunk with wine but be filled with the Spirit.*” I knew a man who struggled to understand the connection between being drunk with wine and being filled with the Spirit. I, on the other hand, as a not-so-accomplished drinker, immediately understood this verse all too well. Herein lies the Replacement Principle³³ for every drinker. Instead of being *under the influence of alcohol*, we should be *under the influence of the Holy Spirit*. When we're under the influence of alcohol, we talk differently. We act differently. The same is true when we're under the influence of the Spirit. We talk differently than the world talks. We act differently than the world acts. Interesting to me about this verse is that all believers who are saved have the Spirit but notice that not all believers are *filled* with the Spirit, meaning that not all are *under the full influence of the Spirit*.

Notice, too, the present tense imperative, *be filled*, be *always* filled, be *influenced* by the Spirit, or *keep on being filled* with the Spirit. This isn't a one-time action but a continual effort on our part. So how does one be filled with the Spirit? We study His Word. What is the evidence of someone who is filled with the Spirit? The evidence is laid out for us in the next three verses. “*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God*” (Eph. 5:19-21).

The same process by which we are filled with His Spirit is the same process by which we yield to His righteousness, and by which we're empowered by His grace through the life in His Words in the Scriptures. I'd suggest that there are 3 key ingredients to this process of yielding to the Lord's righteousness:

1. “**Study** to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

³³ The Replacement Principle. I learned that one does not simply stop drinking but one replaces drinking with something else, which I chose to be the life of Christ. Many thanks to [Nancy Paulson](#) and her wonderful article called “[How to Deal with Sin](#),” which addresses the Replacement Principle

2. “**Meditate** upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all” (1 Tim. 4:15). Paul also wrote, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think on these things**” (Phil. 4:8).
3. “**Pray** without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17).

MAKE NOT PROVISION FOR THE FLESH

Paul tells us in Rom. 13:14 “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. What does Paul mean when he says “provision” here? Webster defines *provision* as “The act of providing or making previous preparation.”³⁴ Some may say that if you have a problem with drinking, don’t make plans to go to a bar. Don’t give your flesh a chance to tempt you. But there’s more to it than that. All the Greek dictionaries would say that Paul means *provision* in the sense of *forethought*. We do not in our minds give any forethought or make any mental preparation to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. We first *mortify* the deeds of the flesh (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5). We put to death the practice of sin in the flesh by reckoning that we are no longer what we were before we got saved and that we are now a completely new creature because we’re dead, buried, and risen with Christ. Then, we do not give even the slightest forethought to fulfilling any of the lusts of our flesh.

This is the attitude of a renewed mind over a corrupt flesh, the mind of a new creature transformed by the Spirit and empowered by His grace through the life in His Word, a mind that is now free from the bondage of sin, which means that our minds are free to put to death the practice of sin. Plus, our minds are free to not give any forethought to gratifying our corrupted flesh in any way whatsoever. The only power the flesh can have over us is the power we give the flesh in our minds.

I love the fact that Paul says in Rom. 13:12 to just *cast off the works of darkness*. He doesn’t say to confess our sins. He doesn’t even say that we should apologize to God for doing those sins. He says, simply, that we are to *cast off* all those *works of darkness*. This is very similar to what the Lord told the adulterous woman in John 8 when He said, “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.” We’re free from condemnation. We’re free from the bondage of sin. And we’re likewise free to *go and sin no more*. Victory over sin is as easy as casting them off in our minds. Why? Because we’re no longer weak in the faith. Because we know that we’re empowered by His grace to cast off those works. Because we know what God has made us in Christ.

What we have in Rom. 13:14 is another beautiful illustration of the Replacement Principle. We don’t spend our days focusing on the sin, focusing on

³⁴ Webster, Noah, [definition of provision](#), Webster’s 1828 Dictionary

failure, focusing on a misconception about the power of the flesh over our souls. We cast off that power just as we cast off those works. We forget those things that are behind us and we continually reach forth unto those things that are before us (Phil. 3:13). We put the past behind us and keep moving forward giving no forethought to the power of the flesh, to fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, and what do we focus on? We focus our minds upon putting on the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives, not simply in our behavior but also in our thinking, in our motivations, and in our emotional lives.

I know there may be some thinking, "I hear you, Joel. I understand what you're saying. But, man, I've got this sin that is just kicking my bottom like you wouldn't believe. What do I do to have victory over that sin?" I'm reminded of a story of a man preaching at a youth conference on "the sins that so easily beset us." He spoke of old sailing ships needing to have barnacles scraped off from the underside of the ships. Then he said, "Young people, let me ask you. Have you got barnacles on your bottom?" Let me ask you, "Have *you* got barnacles on *your bottom*? How do you get rid of all those barnacles?" You'll be happy to know there's no scraping involved.

You simply cast them off in your mind. How do you do that? Spend time in His Word. As long as we live in these mortal bodies there will always be that conflict between the flesh and the Spirit (Gal. 5:17). But if we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. And how do we walk in the Spirit? We study His Word. We strengthen that inner man by His Spirit. We allow all His words of grace to be fortified in our souls forever. We reckon as true what God has made us in Christ and then we spend time getting into the finer details of all that it means to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. We cast off those works of darkness and we put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

I once read that to be clothed with a person is a Greek expression, which means to assume the interests of another, to enter into his views, to imitate him, and to be wholly on his side. Thus, we clothe ourselves with Christ in the outliving of our faith in our walks. We enter into His views. We imitate Him, and we become wholly on His side no matter the cost. We move forward and never look back. Living the grace life is about running ever faster in that race for the crown by putting on more of Christ in our walk. Instead of focusing on, for example, anger in your life, focus instead on the love of Christ living out through you. Quote verses to yourself. Focus on the meaning of those verses. How do those verses apply to the situations you're in?

The issue here is a matter of faith. How do you see yourself? Do you see yourself as being weak in the flesh over some kind of sin? Do you look up at the Lord in tears through the eyes of the old man or do you look upon yourself in joy through the eyes of the new man because you now see yourself as God sees you in Christ? The problem here isn't that you're inherently weak. The problem here is that you haven't yet by faith reckoned yourself to be strong. The problem isn't that the flesh is too strong for you. The problem is that your mind hasn't yet freed itself from the bondage of sin to become empowered by His grace, the power of living according to what God has made you in Christ, so that His life can live through you. Christ gave his life for you, so He can give His life to you, and live His life through you.

CHAPTER 5

She Lost Her Faith by Prayer

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”

(John 15:7)

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

(Matthew 7:7-8)

Let's examine a story of defeat. Although this dear woman shall remain anonymous, this is the kind of story about which I'm sure many of us are familiar. This is the story of a woman who said she stopped believing in God because of prayer. She said she lost her faith when she and her husband were attending a denominational church some years ago. Her husband felt an acute pain. After having undergone a number of tests, he learned that he had an advanced form of cancer with a somber prognosis about his chance of survival. Naturally, the couple brought this matter to their church and to everyone they knew and pleaded with all to pray for his recovery. The whole church prayed for him. The pastor and the elders prayed for him. Friends and family members prayed for him. Other churches prayed for him. All the while, her husband grew ever sicker and weaker as the cancer progressed.

Her pastor encouraged her by taking her to the words of Jesus in verses like Matthew 21:21-22, *“Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”* The pastor told her, *“Have faith and do not doubt His Word. God will heal your husband just as He promised here in Matthew 21 and also in John 15:7 in which Jesus said, ‘If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for*

you.’ God promises,” he said, “that if you ask what you desire, it shall be done without any shadow of a doubt. Believe it. Trust in God, and your husband shall be healed.”

These weren’t simply isolated verses that she turned to for comfort. The Lord made these promises again and again during His earthly ministry. In Matt. 7:7-8, the Lord said, *“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”* In Matt. 18:19, the Lord said, *“Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.”* In Luke 11:9-10, the Lord said, *“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”* In John 14:13-14, the Lord said, *“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.”*

Church members also pointed out to her James 5:14-15 in which James wrote, *“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”* “You see,” her pastor told her, “the Bible says that the prayer of faith will save the sick and the Lord will raise him up. Believe it, and God will heal.” So they followed the directive of James down to the smallest detail of anointing him with oil and the laying on of hands as they prayed over him in the name of the Lord.

Her husband died.

She was utterly devastated.

In shock and in tears, she turned to her pastor for answers. And what did he tell her? He suggested that her husband’s death could only have been due to the fact that she or her husband must’ve at some point doubted or did not have enough faith. Or maybe there was some secret sin in her life or a secret sin in the life of her husband. Or maybe they failed to tithe one week. Or maybe her husband wasn’t a Christian.

She was at a loss for words. She never once doubted God’s Word. She believed with every ounce of sincerity she could muster within herself. In tears, she begged God in prayer night and day to heal her husband never doubting His promises. How much faith was enough faith to have her prayer requests honored? Did not the Lord say repeatedly, *“That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven”*? Out of all the many Christians who prayed together for her husband, was there not enough authority being gathered in His name that their request could be honored? Out of all those Christians, was there not enough faith to save her husband?

How about when the Lord said plainly, *“Ask, and it shall be given you... For every one that asketh receiveth”*? What about John 14:13-14 in which the Lord said, *“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it”*? And where did it

say that a secret sin in her life would cause her husband to die? And why should a secret sin in her husband's life cause him to die when James clearly wrote that *"if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven"*? She knew her husband was saved because he spoke often of his faith in Christ's finished work on the cross. He was a passionate student of the Word, and he witnessed to many to bring them to a saving faith in Christ. He loved Christ as much as any man she ever knew.

So, naturally, she came to, what seemed to her, the only logical conclusion to the loss of her husband and this whole emotionally exhausting ordeal – that there really is no God, that every promise in the Bible about receiving whatever you ask in prayer must be a lie, and that everything she once believed as a Christian was a fraud.

Even if we have not heard this anonymous woman's story, I'm sure we've heard similar stories of faithful saints with dying loved ones clinging to the prayer promises in the Gospels only to be devastated by the death of their loved ones. As a result, their faith is made shipwreck as they reel in anger against God who apparently, in their minds, lied to them in His Word and betrayed their faith in His promises.

What's the solution to this problem?

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT OF THE GOSPELS

Before we can understand the Lord's prayer promises during His earthly ministry, we must carefully consider the context of the Gospels in light of the entire Holy Word of God. After the fall in the Garden of Eden, God promised a Redeemer (Gen. 3:15). Later, when God created the nation of Israel through Abraham, He promised a land (Gen. 12:1-2; Heb. 11:8-16). And God promised to David a future kingdom here on earth (Psa. 2:7-8; Jer. 23:5; Isa. 42:4).

Christ, the Messiah of Israel, would come into the world through the line of David and establish His kingdom here on Earth (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Matt. 1:23). As Zechariah wrote, *"The Lord shall be king over all the earth"* (Zech. 14:9). He'll reign out of Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3; 24:23; Jer. 3:17). His reign will extend over the entire Earth. *"Yea,"* David wrote, *"all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him"* (Psa. 72:11). *"Yea,"* Zechariah wrote, *"many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord"* (Zech. 8:22). Daniel would prophesy, *"And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him"* (Dan. 7:14). All of Israel's sufferings and sorrows will be gone (Isa. 35:10; 40:2; 61:3). The governments will be purified (Isa. 11:4; 61:11; Jer. 24:5). War and bloodshed will be abolished (Isa. 2:4; 9:6). Health and long life will be restored to the human race (Isa. 35:5,6; 65:20). The animal creation will be tamed (Isa. 11:6-9). The sin curse will be removed from the Earth (Isa. 35:1,2,6,7). And on and on the prophecies went about His Kingdom here on Earth with the Lord literally sitting on David's throne in Jerusalem.

God also promised Moses that Israel would be *"a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation"* (Exo. 19:6). They would be priests in a thousand-year kingdom (Rev. 20:4-

7) in which they've inherited the uttermost parts of the earth, in which the Lord would sit upon David's throne (Jer. 23:5-8), and Israel would bless the world about Christ. Zechariah would proclaim, *"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you"* (Zech. 8:23; cf., Isaiah 61:6; 1 Peter 2:5,9; Rev. 5:10, 20:6).

John the Baptist spoke of a baptism with water, with the Holy Ghost, and with fire (Matt. 3:11), which was fully anticipated by the Jews at the time because it was prophesied by Isaiah when he wrote, *"When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning"* (Isa. 4:4; cf., Eze. 36:25, Zech. 13:9; Jer. 31:31-35). So when the Lord and the apostles proclaimed the *"kingdom is at hand"* (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7), they were proclaiming the arrival of the prophesied earthly kingdom, and Israel would nationally become God's prophesied kingdom of priests, who would bless the entire world about their Messiah. They were to be the instrument of God's blessing to the whole world about the Son of God.

All of Israel needed to receive their Messiah by faith, be baptized of water, Spirit, and fire, to become the nation of priests God had always intended for them so that they may bless the whole world about Christ in His kingdom. Through the priests of Israel, the world would find salvation in Christ. The Lord's words during His earthly ministry were not meant for the Gentiles, which is why the Lord said in John 4:22, *"Salvation is of the Jews."* In Luke 1:77-78, John the Baptist's father, Zacharias, said the Messiah had come *"To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God."* When a Gentile woman came with her request to the Lord, He first refused to speak to her and later told her *"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel"* (Matt. 15:24). The Lord's message was to Israel and for Israel because God had promised His people a kingdom on Earth, and they alone would be the instruments of His blessing to the world about Christ.

Please carefully consider that what the Lord said about prayer during His earthly ministry was a special authority given only to His disciples and that it was in preparation for life in His kingdom here on Earth after His Second Coming.

While all the Bible is written for us, not all is written to us. To understand God's will for our lives today, we must understand our place in the Bible.

When the new covenant is established with Israel at the Lord's Second Coming, they will all be perfectly righteous in their glorified bodies. God will write His laws onto their hearts, and they will obey Him perfectly (Jer. 31:31-34). Only after the Lord's Second Coming, only after the new covenant with Israel has been established, and only after He has written His law in their inward parts, then anything His disciples asked in prayer *in His kingdom*, they will receive, because those prayers will be in perfect alignment with the will of God the Father, which is precisely why the Lord said, *"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."*

But, of course, when the Prince of Peace came, His own people rejected Him and crucified Him. In Luke 13, we'd read about the parable of the fig tree in which we'd learn that God the Father, who was the husbandman, convinced Christ to give the olive tree another year to produce fruit. Thus, in the beginning of the book of Acts, God offers forgiveness and another chance to Israel. In Acts 3:19-21, Peter tells the people of Israel that if they would repent for their sin of murdering their Messiah, God would not only forgive them, but send Jesus back to them, and give them all He had promised concerning their kingdom on Earth and the times of refreshing in which there would be no more bloodshed and there would be peace, health, long-life, and the reign of the Lord's righteousness out of Zion just as it was prophesied.

We don't have to look very far into the book of Acts to see that all Israel would not repent. They would not accept God's offer of forgiveness. They would not accept the return of Jesus Christ and the coming of His Kingdom. In chapter 4 of Acts, the Apostles are arrested. Later on, they are arrested again, threatened, beaten up, and finally in Acts 7, a Spirit-filled Stephen was murdered. They had rejected the King, and now they rejected His message of forgiveness and the return of Jesus. Stephen looked up and saw Christ standing at the right hand of God in judgment (Acts 7:55-56).

As a result, God "*cast away*" the nation of Israel for a time. As Paul wrote in Romans 11:15, "*For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?*" He'd later write in verses 25-27, "*For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*" Notice in these verses that the casting away of Israel is temporary. Paul makes the point that if the casting away of Israel brought about the offer of reconciliation to the world through Christ's sacrifice on the cross, then just imagine what the receiving of them later shall be. This will be nothing less than life from the dead! This is the long-awaited resurrection of the saints at the Second Coming of Christ, which brings to mind Ezekiel 37:12 when God told Israel, "*Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.*"

Notice, too, that the blindness of Israel is only temporary "*until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*" The nation of Israel was "*cast away*" for a reason and for a season, and the Kingdom they waited for was put on hold. But God's promises to Israel shall one day be fulfilled. Why? Because "*the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*" (Rom. 11:29). Thus, Paul writes, "*And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*" The salvation Paul mentions here is not the soul salvation of every Jew who ever lived but rather, the national deliverance of Israel from all their enemies. God's promises to Israel shall, indeed, be fulfilled. However, we are living in a temporary interruption of

the prophetic program, a period of grace, in which the kingdom promised to the children of Israel was put on hold, and all those great prayer promises made to the Lord's disciples in the Gospels during His earthly ministry would also be put on hold.

After Pentecost in Acts 9, the Lord did something that had never been prophesied or promised. Instead of plunging the world into the seven-year tribulation, the time of Jacob's Trouble, in which He'd unleash His wrath upon the world (Acts 2:16-20), God reached down in utter grace and saved the man who was leading the rebellion of Israel (Acts 9:1-16). He saved His greatest enemy, a man named Saul, who would later become the Apostle Paul. The enemy, who was "*a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious*" (1 Tim. 1:13) and who called himself the "*chief*" of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15), was saved by the exceeding abundant grace of God and sent to the Gentiles with a message that had never been revealed before.

Paul writes: "*For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery...*" (Eph. 3:1-3). The Lord Jesus Christ had a mystery, a secret, and He revealed this new secret message about this new "*dispensation of the grace of God*" to this new Apostle Paul, who reveals in his letters to us a whole new victory program by God's grace through Christ's all-sufficient work on the cross for both Jew and Gentile alike.

His grace program for us today would be entirely different than the kingdom program taught and proclaimed before him. In Rom. 3:21-22, Paul writes, "*But now* the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference". In Romans 7:6, he writes, "*But now* we are delivered from the law..." In Eph. 2:13, he writes, "*But now* in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." And in Rom. 16:25-26, Paul writes, "*Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith...*" Consider that what Peter taught at Pentecost in Acts 3:21 were the things, "*which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began*", but what Paul taught was "*the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began*".

IN RESPONSE TO THE HATERS

I know what all the haters out there would say. "No, brother Joel. All of the Bible is written to us. It's all about us, and there is only one gospel." Oh really? Paul highlights two gospels in Gal. 2:7. He writes, "*the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter.*" How do you reconcile those two gospels? "Well," some might say, "it's the same gospel but a

different audience.” So how do you explain Matt. 10:7 in which Christ said, *“And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.”* Is that what we preach in our churches today? That the kingdom of heaven is *“at hand”*? Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead? When was the last time you saw someone raised from the dead in your church? Paul said, *“I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved... how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day”* (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

Christ told the disciples, *“Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”* Is that how we disseminate the gospel today? By avoiding the Gentiles, avoiding the Samaritans, and speaking only to *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*? Is that God’s plan for us today? Paul said God *“would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus”* (Col. 1:27-28). Christ told a Gentile woman in Matt.15:24 *“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”* Paul said in Rom. 10:12 that there is no difference between Jew and Greek.

Many would ask, *“What about the thief on the cross? Wasn’t he a Gentile?”* Let me ask you, what was it that he believed that got him saved? When he was hanging on that cross, did he think that Christ was in the process of paying for the sins of the whole world? How could he know that Christ was paying for the sins of the world when even the demonic realm couldn’t comprehend that (1 Cor. 2:8)? The thief simply believed that Christ was the Messiah, which was the gospel during the Lord’s earthly ministry (John 3:15-16). This is not the gospel that Paul preached, which was faith in the Lord’s death, burial, and resurrection as a payment for all sins (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

In the so-called *“Great Commission,”* Peter and the 12 were told, *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost...”* Paul said in 1 Cor. 1:17 that *“Christ sent me not to baptize.”* Do you think Peter and the 12 could say that? They were specifically told to baptize. We mentioned earlier that Matt. 3:11 showcases three baptisms: baptism by water, Spirit, and fire. Yet, Paul says in Eph. 4:4-5 that *“there is”* only *“One Lord, one faith, one baptism.”* Does not one mean one? How can this one baptism not be the baptism of the Spirit that takes place the moment we believe (1 Cor. 12:13)? And why was it that the Lord didn’t send Paul to baptize? Paul answers that for us. He said, *“lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect”* (1 Cor. 1:17). Any work that is added to your salvation is an affront to the power and to the glory and to the victory and to the all-sufficiency of Christ’s redemptive work on the cross at Calvary!

In the Israeli program, their blessings were conditional under the *“If/Then Principle”* found in Deut. 28. Under Paul, all our blessings are unconditional after we

believe. God the Father has *"blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places in Christ"* (Eph. 1:3) and made us joint-heirs with Christ (Rom 8:17).

In the Gospels, forgiving others was a requirement to receive forgiveness from God the Father. The Lord said in Matt. 6:14-15, *"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."* Paul says that we've already been forgiven! Eph. 4:32 tells us, *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."* Plus, Col. 2:13 tells us, *"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."*

Israel was promised an earthly inheritance. They were told again and again that they shall inherit the Earth. As David wrote in Psa. 2:8, *"I shall give Thee... the uttermost parts of the Earth for Thy possession"*. In Psa. 22:27, he'd write, *"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee."* In Psa. 72:8, he'd also write, *"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."* Paul tells us we've inherited heavenly positions. Eph. 2:6 tells us that God has *"raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."*

The Lord obeyed the laws of Moses and told His followers to obey the law. He said in Matt. 23:2-3, *"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."* Paul tells us repeatedly we're *"not under the law but under grace"* (Rom. 6:14-15). In the Ten Commandments, the Jews were told to *"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy"* (Exo. 20:8; Deut. 5:12). Paul tells us in Col. 2:16, *"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days"*. Do you think the scribes and Pharisees sitting in Moses' seat would have all their people observe the Sabbath? Do you think they'd judge someone who didn't observe the Sabbath? You know they would! And yet Paul tells us, let no man judge you about observing Sabbath days.

In the Israeli program, many meats were forbidden such as we might find in Lev. 11:7-8. *"The swine is unclean to you... of their flesh ye shall not eat and... not touch."* Paul tells us that *"every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving"* (1 Tim. 4:4). I praise the Lord every time I can have some fried swine with my eggs for breakfast!

In the Israeli program, if you lived with an unbelieving mate, Ezra 10 told you to put that mate away according to the law. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 7 that if you have an unbelieving mate, live with them so they might be led to Christ.

The Lord told the rich man to give away all his possessions and follow Him. Paul tells us in 1 Tim. 5:8 that *"if any provide not for his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."* Tithing was part of the old Mosaic law given to Israel (Lev. 27:30-33). Paul tells us that God took that old Mosaic law *"that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross"* (Col

2:14). What Paul teaches about tithing can be found in 2 Cor. 9:7, *“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”* That’s grace!

I ask you – how do you reconcile all these contradictions? There’s only one answer. Paul is our apostle for today. I beg you. Please prayerfully consider that what the Lord revealed to us through Paul was entirely different than what had been taught before him, which is why Paul three times talks about *“my gospel”* (Rom. 2:16; 16:25; 2 Tim. 2:8), because his good news was different than the good news of the kingdom being *“at hand.”* This is why Paul three times under inspiration of the Holy Spirit tells us to *“be ye followers of me”* (1 Cor. 4:16; 1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17), because he is our apostle for today and because Paul’s conversion by grace through faith was to be a *“pattern”* to all who *“should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting”* (1 Tim. 1:16).

He’s a pattern because we are in a new *“dispensation of the grace of God”* (Eph. 3:2), an interruption in the prophetic program in which God is now dispensing His grace to all, Jew and Gentile alike, who come to Him by faith trusting in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as a payment for all our sins. God revealed this to Paul in a *“mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory”* (Col. 1:25-27). We are, therefore, careful to rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15). In the Majority Text manuscripts, which is the written Word of God, *rightly dividing* was accurately translated in the King James Bible from the Greek word, *orthotomeo*, which means to dissect correctly, or to make a straight cut, or to rightly divide. We must make a straight cut in the Bible between what is spoken to us and what isn’t, between God’s kingdom program for Israel and God’s grace program for us, between prophecy and mystery, between Israel and the church today, the Body of Christ.

THE SUFFICIENCY OF HIS GRACE

I think back to this poor woman who lost her husband. God never lied to her in His Word. Her church leaders failed her because they neglected to rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15), to make a distinction between what’s spoken to us and what isn’t, between prophecy and mystery, between God’s kingdom program for Israel and God’s grace program for us, and recognize that the prayer promises in the Gospels were not given to us today but to the apostles with their Kingdom in view. Even in the letter of James in which he wrote of the *“prayer of faith”* and how God would heal the sick, we need only read the first verse of his letter to see that he is simply writing to *“the twelve tribes scattered abroad.”* This is not *“our mail”* in the Bible.

In order to understand prayer for us today, we must turn to Paul. He wrote thirteen letters, Romans to Philemon, and we never read a prayer promise like *“Whatever you ask,”* or *“ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”* Instead, the emphasis in his letters is quite different.

Consider 2 Cor. 12:7-10. Paul writes, *“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”* God allowed Paul to suffer with this *“thorn in the flesh,”* a messenger of Satan to buffet him, which may have been a demon or a person or both, a demon-possessed person, who verbally assaulted Paul relentlessly day and night. Whatever it was, Paul pleaded with the Lord in prayer to remove this problem, which was a completely natural reaction. He begged in prayer three times for the Lord to fix this problem and get rid of this thorn in the flesh. When the Lord responded to Paul, did He say He would intervene? No. Did He say, *“Whatever you ask you'll receive, if you have faith”*? No. Did He say if he prays with two or more then he'll receive whatever it is he asks? No. Did He say that if Paul starts a prayer chain He might intervene? No.

The Lord told Paul that His grace would be sufficient for him. His *grace* would carry him through all his trials. His *grace* would empower him. His *grace* would be the means by which he could endure all long-suffering with joy, and His *grace* would enable Paul to serve Christ with power. While we want the Lord to fix all our problems, the Lord wants to show us the sufficiency of His grace and the magnificence of His power working in our souls so that we may say as Paul said, *“Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”*

Paul's whole attitude about suffering changed. He learned to actually take *“pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then am I strong.”* Imagine that! Taking pleasure in infirmities! Taking pleasure in needs and persecutions and distresses! He's not even taking pleasure in these problems for his own sake but for Christ's sake! Why? Because people can see the evidence of His life in Paul. It is not God's will to take away all our problems, to fix all our illnesses, to remove all our suffering, to keep us from experiencing persecution or the adverse effects of living in a sin-cursed world, but it is God's will in all the circumstances of our lives to give us all the grace and the strength we'll ever need to not only get through those hard times but to also rejoice in them!

God does not show His love to us through our circumstances. He showed His love to us through the sacrifice of His Son and all His many spiritual blessings with which He showered us after we got saved. Why should God punish us for “secret sins” when He's already punished His Son on the cross for all the sins of all mankind for all time? All sins, every last one of them, past-present-future, have all been covered by the blood of Christ, and Paul tells us in Col. 2:13 that He's *forgiven you all trespasses*. Instead of changing your circumstances, God changed *you*. Instead of choosing to manifest His power *externally* in our circumstances, He's chosen to manifest His power

internally in us, strengthening us with all might by His Spirit in the inner man (Eph. 3:16), helping us to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Eph. 6:10), doing all things through Christ who continually strengthens us (Phil. 4:13) while also being “*strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness*” (Col. 1:11). He has empowered us through the riches of His grace to endure all long-suffering with joy with the love of Christ shed abroad in our hearts, so that through any suffering, we may glorify God for all that He is, for all that He’s done for us, and for all the empowerment we have been given by His grace, because we know that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us, and nothing can ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:18-39).

The biggest point of all is that why *wouldn’t* God emphasize in Paul’s letters empowerment from within when we have all been dead, buried, and resurrected with Christ, transformed into new creatures with His newness of life in us? Because of the way we are made, God *always* causes us to *triumph in Christ* (2 Cor. 2:14). We are *always confident* (2 Cor. 5:6). We *always have all sufficiency in all things* because *God is able to make all grace abound toward us* (2 Cor. 9:8). We are *always* given peace by all means from the Lord of peace Himself (2 Thess. 3:16). We are *always* unashamed of the gospel, *always bold* (Phil. 1:20), and as a result, we *pray always* (Eph. 6:18). We *give thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Eph. 5:20). We *always* make requests with joy (Phil. 1:4), and we *always* lift up the saints to God in our prayers (Col. 1:3, 4:12, 1 Thess. 1:2, 2 Thess. 1:11, Phm. 1:4).

HOW DO WE PRAY?

We pray *unto the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ* (Eph. 5:20).

What takes precedence over everything? Praise and thanksgiving to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 15:11). You praise Him for the eternal life He’s given you through His Son’s glorious sacrifice. Praise Him for the glory of His grace (Eph. 1:6). Praise Him for this whole program of grace He conceived before the foundation of the world was ever laid. Praise Him for all that He has accomplished for us, in us, and through us, identifying us with His Son, and transforming us into new creatures, blessed with all spiritual blessings. Thank Him for every single person you know, including unbelievers. Praise Him for those individual believers you know, naming them by name, and even listing the qualities in them you admire, such as their testimony of *faith, hope, and love*. Thank Him for the enemies you have and the opportunities you’re given to share His gospel of grace to them. When you are enduring severe trials and tribulations, glory in your infirmities and praise Him for His strength being made perfect in your weakness. Praise Him for the brilliance and glory of His grace, as well as His eternal purpose to glorify His Son in the heavens for all eternity through the church, the Body of Christ. Praise Him for the victory that is already yours by Jesus Christ our Lord, knowing that nothing we ever face physically or

spiritually will ever separate us from His love. Praise Him for the victories He's given you to overcome every temptation, sin, and every difficulty in life. And if you encounter persecution or health issues, how can you praise Him? Praise Him for the opportunities this gives you to glorify His Son. Praise Him for the new ministry this may bring. Praise Him for the sufficiency of His grace, the empowerment of His grace, the comfort you find in His Word, and the strengthening of His Spirit. Praise Him for the fact that you know that no matter the outcome He will preserve your soul unto His Heavenly Kingdom. Praise Him for glorifying His Son through you.

After we praise Him what do we do? I'd suggest that you simply tell Him everything. Tell Him everything that you are thinking and feeling. Tell Him you love Him. Tell Him how grateful you feel about everything He's given you in Christ. Tell Him the things you are excited about and the things that worry you. Tell Him about the things you've learned in His Word and talk through how those principles may be applied to your walk. Tell Him the things you want to see in your own spiritual life and how you're dependent upon Him to achieve those goals. Tell Him about all the circumstances in your life. Tell Him about the things you want to see accomplished in those circumstances and your desire that His Son will always be glorified in you. Tell Him everything, every single detail, of every aspect of your life. It's spiritually and emotionally healthy for the heart, mind, and soul to be in prayer about everything.

Even now, I mince no words with God about issues I have and about the things I want in my life and the things I want to see in the lives of others. I have no problem telling God I want to see this person I know attending my church. I want that person saved, and I want them all to understand His grace and love His grace. Of course, I keep into proper perspective how His grace program operates, that He's not going to betray the free will of those people, and that achieving the things I want is Him working through me, and I'd talk to Him about that process. What can I do better to achieve the goal of what I want to see happen with that person? And I will praise God regardless of the outcome because at the very least a seed may have been planted, and perhaps those people were able to see in me the love He has for them.

Paul said, *"Pray without ceasing"* (1 Thess. 5:17). Be in a constant state of prayer, in a constant spirit of prayer, a constant readiness to pray, always eager to speak to God about everything in your life.

Did you ever notice all the times Paul used the expression *"without ceasing"*? Paul told the Romans that *"without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers"* (Rom. 1:9). Paul told the Thessalonians that he remembered without ceasing their *"work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father"* (1 Thess. 1:3). Paul also told them that he thanked God without ceasing (1 Thess. 2:13). And Paul told Timothy that *"I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day"* (2 Tim. 1:3). Paul was in a continual state of prayer, continually thanking God, continually remembering the saints, and continually lifting up those dear saints by name in prayer.

PRAYER IS SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

Consider 1 Tim. 2:8 in which Paul writes, *"I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."* There are three points made in this verse. Men are to pray everywhere. Men are to lift up holy hands. And men are to pray without wrath and doubting. When Paul says "men" here, I don't believe he means all mankind. I believe Paul actually means men. This is instruction directed to men specifically, although this doesn't exclude women, because in the next verse, he writes, *"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel..."* So the women are to pray in like manner but he had a different set of instructions specifically for women about adorning modest apparel.

So why does Paul give this instruction about prayer to men specifically? Is it possible that men are less likely to pray than women? That could be. I'd suggest, however, that there's a deeper reason than this. Paul is likely thinking ahead to everything he'll be sharing in his next chapter about male leadership in a church. Before he can even get into those topics, he makes points about sound doctrine, and especially about prayer. All men are called to embrace the sound doctrines of grace, to be fully equipped for spiritual warfare and the trials of life, to be spiritual leaders in their own lives, and spiritual leaders out in the world. Thus, study and prayer are essential ingredients to spiritual leadership. All saints are called to be prayer warriors. Prayer is a natural aspect of the intimate relationship we have with God, and a relationship isn't healthy if there isn't any good communication. Communication with God is Him talking to us in His Word and us responding to Him in prayer.

When Paul wrote that men should *"pray every where,"* what did he mean by that? I'd suggest that Paul simply means that our prayer life is not to be confined to one location, to only praying in church, or only praying at home, and that men should pray everywhere they are. There is no location that is wrong for prayer. There is no place more acceptable than another to God for prayer. I pray when I'm driving. I pray when I'm walking. I pray in the mornings, in the afternoons, and I pray at night. There is no expectation of time, location, or how often when it comes to prayer. Prayer can last all day if we so desire, and prayer can be as brief as a fleeting thought.

What did Paul mean when he said to *lift up holy hands*? Is this expression literal or symbolic? Yes. However, I'd suggest that this phrase is mostly symbolic, although there's nothing wrong with a literal lifting up of one's hands in prayer. On the whole, Paul seems to have in mind our *disposition*, our attitudes of humility when we pray, because he says, *"lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."* When one lifts up their holy hands symbolically in prayer, they are, in a sense, offering themselves, their very hands in service to God, as a potential answer to the prayer, such as when I say I want a certain man saved, I'm lifting up my holy hands symbolically so that God may work in me to accomplish those things I want to see happen in that man.

Finally, Paul says in 1 Tim. 2:8 to pray “*without wrath and doubting.*” Now this is a verse that has deep relevance to us today. If something unfortunate happens in your life, are you going to scream at God in anger? Are you going to blame God for the problems in your life? Are you going to doubt His Word about His love for you? We must pray without anger at God or anyone else in our lives. We must pray in a spirit of charity, *without wrath*, and *without doubting*. Doubting what? Every promise God has given us in His Word. Everything God said He accomplished for us by the cross, everything He said He accomplished in us the moment we believe, and everything He will accomplish through us when we walk in His Spirit.

GRACE IN YOUR PRAYER LIFE

Consider 1 Tim. 2:1-2 in which Paul writes, “*I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*” Notice how these two verses comprise of one complete thought. Verse two cannot exist without verse one. Too often, I think we isolate verse two. We quote verse two about prayer for kings out of context, and we come to an incorrect conclusion without the context of verse one. Plus, I’d suggest that it takes a lot of meditation on the first verse to understand the meaning of the second verse. Paul starts by saying, “*I exhort therefore...*” Everything he wrote in chapter 1 has led to this point – to pray. In all circumstances – pray.

He lists 4 aspects of prayer.

- i. **Supplications** – making requests for yourself.
- ii. **Prayers** – communing with God, sharing with God your thoughts and emotions about everything.
- iii. **Intercessions** – making requests for others.
- iv. And finally, Paul writes about the **giving of thanks** to God being made for all men. Just imagine. The *giving of thanks*, being *made for all men*. The key phrase of this entire sentence is all men. This means, in no uncertain terms, that Timothy was to be thankful to God in his prayers for all the saints as well as all the grievous wolves in his assembly at Ephesus (Acts 20:27-32). He was to be thankful in his prayers for the men who were rising up out of his congregation speaking perverse doctrines to create followers after themselves. He was to be thankful for all those Judaizers in his church speaking in error about fables, genealogies, and going back under the law (1 Tim. 1:4-11). He was to be thankful for all those who hated him, who opposed him, and who dismissed him because of his youth (1 Tim. 4:12). He was to be thankful for every person with whom he had to war a good warfare - thankful for all men.

But there's a bigger point to these verses. Do you know what these verses mean? These verses are all about grace in our thinking. These verses are a calling for us to exhibit grace in our prayer life. This is exhibiting grace in our attitudes in our prayers to God when we talk with Him about everyone we know. This is acting with grace in our prayers to God by expressing a sincere gratitude for even the worst enemies in our lives. This is grace in our thinking and in our requests to God that rises above any difficult circumstance we may be in. This is grace in our prayers that transcends our circumstances. This is us exhibiting grace to God in prayer *regardless* of the circumstances. This is us being models of grace when we talk to God about everyone we know, including those we don't know, like kings and those in authority, regardless of how bad the circumstances may be. This is us exhibiting grace to God by telling Him all the good things we want to happen to those who oppose us. This is His grace in us by praying that even our worst enemies may come to a saving faith in Christ or perhaps to come unto the knowledge of His truth for us today. This is grace in action in our prayer lives. This is what it means to be living the grace life through prayer. God acts in grace to us, and so in turn, out of gratitude, we act in grace with our requests to God about everyone we know. This is us reflecting back to God in our prayers the beauty of His own nature, His own goodness, and His own attitude of love and grace toward all men, including the kings we don't know, and the worst of men.

This is everything I wasn't before I came back to the Lord, and I was just so struck by the beauty of the grace life God would have us to live, and how much higher His ways ever were than my ways, because grace in our prayers about all the people in our lives becomes grace in our attitudes toward them in real life. Living with this degree of His grace in our lives is the most satisfying life one can live.

Paul is not saying that we specifically pray to God that someone like Nero creates a less hostile political environment that makes it possible for us to live a quiet and peaceable life. That's not what he's saying and that's not possible in this life. How can a king possibly give us a quiet and peaceable life when Paul tells us in 2 Tim. 3:12 that "*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*"? How is a quiet and peaceable life even possible in a political sense, when there is spiritual wickedness in high places warring against us continually until the Lord comes? When has God ever betrayed the free will of man?

In the Old Testament God used His means of *persuading* kings to move in the direction He wanted but He never betrayed their free will. But didn't God harden Pharaoh's heart? Yes, and what did He do? He shared with him the truth knowing full well how he'd react to it. He allowed Pharaoh's magicians to deceive him by mirroring Aaron's miracles only up to a point. And He irritated the corrupt Egyptian heart of Pharaoh with all those nasty plagues. But he never betrayed Pharaoh's free will.

Why would God betray the free will of man to cause legislation to be passed to advance His cause when we know good and well that God advances His cause today by using "*the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of*

the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are..." Why would God supernaturally force governments to pass legislation to allow us to live quiet and peaceable lives *and then* turn around and tell us "*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*"? What Paul is simply saying is that what we do for all men we also do for kings and those in authority. *Supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks.*

Can you imagine giving thanks for a monstrous tyrant like Nero? But that is what God has called us to do, because that is at the heart of living His grace life. The end result of us exhibiting grace in our prayer life isn't that God would change the circumstances with *all men* so that we may live a peaceable life with *all men* but that through these prayers, regardless of the circumstances, we will be empowered, that God would work in us, to live in peace with all of them and especially those in authority. This is about God working through us so that we may live in godliness and honesty *in the sight of all men* as well as kings and those in authority. This is about us living with grace guided by the Spirit that makes it more possible for us to be at peace with *all men* and those in positions of governmental authority. These verses show God's process to keep our hearts and minds *eternally vigilant about His grace in all our ways*. Our prayer life bleeds over into our real lives, and thus, we may more easily fulfill Rom. 12:18, the great cross-reference to 1 Tim. 2:2. Paul writes, "*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*" Notice in this verse that there are no guarantees to peace with *all men*. He only says, "*If it be possible.*" Notice, too, that Paul does not say to rely on any expectation of divine intervention in external circumstances. The emphasis here is on "*as much as lieth in you*".

So what lieth within us? The entire Godhead, who is "*able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us*" (Eph. 3:20). We have all spiritual blessings. We have the fruit of the Spirit. We have the words of Christ dwelling in us richly. We have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, which sings and makes melody to the Lord *regardless* of the circumstances. Being at peace with all men is bottom-up, not top-down. Being at peace with all men is made possible by our attitudes of grace, exhibiting love and grace in action, which is made possible by the empowerment within by the leading of His Spirit through the study of His Word and the power of God working *in us* above all that we ask or think. And this process is energized by us also being a model of grace in our prayers.

DIVINE INTERVENTION

Does God intervene today? Absolutely. Did God not intervene when He called you by His gospel? Did God not intervene when you were convicted by His Holy Spirit and you chose to embrace His gospel by faith? Did God not intervene when the Spirit indwelt you and baptized you the moment you believed? Did God not intervene when He identified you with His Son, crucified your old man, turned you into a new creature, made all things new in your life, and freed your soul from sin's dominion? Does God

not intervene even now when He teaches you through His Word by the Spirit? Or when He strengthens your inner man by His Spirit when you study His Word? Is it not by the intervention of God that we feel within ourselves all that joy and peace in believing, abounding in hope, which is through the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:13)? Is it not intervention that we even experience the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) in our lives? Are we not participating in His active, ongoing intervention within each of us when we allow ourselves to be filled with His Spirit? Is it not the work of intervention on God's part when Paul tells us in Eph. 3:20 that we are *"able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us"*? Is it not by God's intervention that we are also made able to stand strong in the power of His might (Eph. 6:10)? Is it not divine intervention when His strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9-10)? Are we not operating in a constant state of divine intervention within us when we are walking in His Spirit? Is it not by the intervention of God that we can, as Paul tells us, be *filled with all the fulness of God* (Eph. 3:19)? Does not God Himself intervene in the affairs of this world when He works through the saints, using *the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty and the base things of the world, and things which are despised, to bring to nought the things that are*? Is God not intervening when He works through His saints by His Spirit to minister to one another? To encourage one another? To edify one another? To build one another up? Or when one of His saints shares the gospel with an unbeliever? Is it not divine intervention any time His will is accomplished through His saints? Is it not continual divine intervention on the part of God by the Holy Spirit to restrain the mystery of iniquity at work today (2 Thess. 2:7)? Is it not also divine intervention that we've been given the spirit of power, the spirit of love, and the spirit of a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7)? It is an undeniable, irrefutable, Biblical fact that God is intervening more today than He has ever intervened in the history of all mankind.

Now the Calvinists would tell you that God is causing everything to happen. God caused that Coronavirus to happen. God has ordained before the foundation of the world who will get this virus. God has ordained everything the governments are doing right now. Consider this famous verse in Eccl. 9:11. *"I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all."* Notice how the wisest man who ever lived did not write that *"time and chance"* happens on rare occasions or happens only to a select few but that *"time and chance"* happens to everyone. Some would try to argue that Solomon didn't mean *"chance"* but meant *"time and occurrences."* Do you know what *"chance"* means in the Hebrew? It means *"chance."* A chance occurrence. Did you know that Moses spoke of the chance occurrence of a bird's nest in Deut. 22:6? Did you know that the young man who told David of Saul's death in 2 Sam. 1:6 spoke of how he *"happened by chance upon mount Gilboa"*? Did you know that the Lord Himself spoke of chance in the story of the Good Samaritan? In Luke 10:31, He spoke

of how “*by chance there came down a certain priest that way...*” Did you know that Paul also spoke of chance in 1 Cor. 15:37? He wrote, “*And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain...*” He’s not saying that if you plant a seed it may grow into a wheat or some other grain. He speaks of chance here in the sense that we hope that that planted seed will germinate into that particular grain, which may or may not happen. Not all seeds will always germinate into a plant. This illustration was used to make the counterpoint that, unlike the chance of seeds germinating, there is nothing iffy about us believers being resurrected into our heavenly bodies.

I’d suggest to you, dear friend, that the Biblical view of God’s sovereignty is that He is not only the supreme authority over all things but that He also leaves room for chance in His creation while still maintaining His supreme sovereignty over all things. This is a far higher view of His sovereignty than our Calvinists friends. God actually leaves room for chance and the free will of man.

So what does it mean if a believer gets the Coronavirus or any other sickness out there? Does this mean that God somehow ordained before the foundation of the world that that saint will get the Coronavirus like the Calvinists are teaching? That is complete heresy. Did God know before the foundation of the world who will get that virus? Certainly. But foreknowledge doesn’t mean He’s causing things to happen. Everything that’s happening now is simply the result of living in a sin-cursed world or of what Paul calls in Rom. 8:18 *the sufferings of this present time*.

I know what some would say out there. Some would say, “Yeah, brother Joel, I don’t think that Coronavirus was a natural phenomenon. I think that virus was a man-made bioweapon.” So what if it was? Man in his free will making poor decisions is all part of *the sufferings of this present time*. Governments in their free will making poor decisions is all part of *the sufferings of this present time*. God has told us repeatedly that He leaves room for chance in His creation, which includes man in his free will being free to make bad decisions that cause suffering.

Are you going to deny the words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself when He spoke of chance in Luke 10? If you get a virus, did God cause you to have it? I’d submit to you that it’s all chance, and it’s on you to do everything you can do to protect yourself and your loved ones. Are you going to accept blindly every medical advice you hear because you think that it’s somehow God’s will for your life or are you going to do your due diligence to make informed decisions about your health and the health of your loved ones? Because of chance, because of man’s free will, it’s on you to make the best decisions for yourself and your family. I have no problem telling God that I want to see someone recovered from an illness and see that person back in church, but I keep everything into perspective. Is God going to supernaturally give some doctor wisdom that doctor didn’t possess before? No. Is God going to betray the free will of that doctor to force that doctor to make precise moves in the surgery room so no mistakes will be made? No. If I prayed for someone to get better and they got better, does that mean God intervened? Let me ask you a question. How do you know that

God didn't already foreknow that that person would heal naturally and He did nothing? None of us can ever claim any intervention about a healing because if we actually knew that it was intervention, then we'd be walking by sight and not by faith. You are not meant to know, ever, and it's your job to pray about everything and walk in faith, and regardless of the outcome, you are to always thank and praise God. The freedom that comes from accepting the fact that chance exists in His creation, is that you now know that God is not to be blamed for all the problems in your life.

THE SPIRIT MAKETH INTERCESSION FOR US

Rom. 8:26 tells us that *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."* For years and years, I viewed this verse as discouraging when it comes to prayer. However, now I believe this is meant to be an encouragement to us, a source of comfort to us about prayer, because the emphasis is not our ignorance about how to pray, but the fact that in our infirmities, in our weakness, in our ignorance, the Holy Spirit is completely onboard with us about what we're feeling and thinking. He is on our side, and He is helping us with the message that's being given directly to God the Father when we pray.

Intercession simply means a helping hand. This means that it doesn't matter how good or bad your prayers are. The Holy Spirit is there to help turn that prayer into something powerful to God the Father. This means that we cannot ever fail at praying. This means that God will never think less of you based upon how well you pray to Him. This means that we cannot ever fail at prayer! We cannot do wrong when we pray, which means that we cannot be passive about prayer or neglect to spend time with God in prayer. The Spirit can't do anything if we don't pray. When we're not in prayer, we curb the good work that the Holy Spirit can do in us as well as through us. This also means, to the praise of His grace, that when we pray we are never ever alone.

Additionally, we have two intercessors. One is the Lord Jesus Christ who is at the right hand of God interceding for us (Rom. 8:34). And the Holy Spirit is our internal intercessor. He is within us interceding for us to God. Christ does His intercession in Heaven, the Spirit from earth. Just as Christ's intercession is direct to the Father, so is the Spirit's. The work of the Holy Spirit is to come to our aid when we struggle in prayer. He comes to our rescue and aids us by an intercession that overcomes our natural deficiencies as human beings. We need not worry over our lack of abilities, because it's the Spirit's perfect ability to turn our weak prayers into something effectual and powerful in the sight of God the Father.

No matter what may come – pray. No matter how you're feeling – pray. No matter the circumstances – pray. No matter how dark the days may become – pray and praise the God of all grace for the eternal life and spiritual blessings He's given you. No matter the severity of the sufferings – pray. No matter the stress or anxiety – pray. No matter the outcome of any situation in your life – pray.

Let God speak to you through His Word and you speak back to Him in prayer about everything in your life, every single detail, every emotion, every thought, every worry, and every ounce of praise – let God hear your voice in prayer.

CHAPTER 6

Be Strong in His Grace

“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

(2 Tim. 1:6-7)

What was Timothy’s gift? And how does Timothy’s gift relate to verse 7 that tells us that *God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*? Notice how verse 7 begins with the word “*For*” which ties it to verse 6. You cannot have no fear, but power, love, and a sound mind unless you have Timothy’s gift and if that gift has been stirred up. Once you figure out what that gift is, you can then see the empowerment we may all have in that gift. *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

So what was Timothy’s gift? Some pastors don’t want to put a label on it because they say the Bible doesn’t specify. Some think this may have been a spiritual gift of ministry. Some think this may have been the role of ministry. Some think this is teaching. Arno Gaebelein thought it was the gift of prophecy. Some would say the gift was Timothy’s zeal. Some tried to claim that this was the gift of an apostle. Adam Clarke said, “I think his gift was the Holy Spirit.” How do you stir up the Holy Spirit? “Come on, Spirit! Get to work in me. I know you can do it!” Who does that? Some would argue evangelism or ministry or preaching or being a soldier for Christ. Darby thought it was “a special preparation for his work” in his ministry. None of this makes any sense to me, because I’d suggest that Paul tells us exactly what that gift was.

Consider the facts. There are only two references to Timothy’s gift. We have in 1 Tim. 4:14, “*Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.*” We also have the verse we read, 2 Tim. 1:6, in which Paul writes, “*Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.*” Notice that this wasn’t just any gift. This was a *gift of God Himself*. He received this gift when everyone had laid their hands on him. Paul says this gift was given to him *by prophecy*. How is that

possible? Where in the Old Testament do we find prophecies about Timothy's gift? Or where do we find in the book of Acts someone prophesying about Timothy's gift? Nowhere. When Paul speaks of prophecy in this age of grace, we know he often means the supernatural spiritual gift of speaking God's Word to others until the Bible was completed. Paul simply means that Timothy received this gift through the spoken Word of God. Timothy was to *neglect not* the gift and to *stir up* that gift.

Not only that, Paul says, "*Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God...*" This wasn't something Timothy was to remember only once. He was to *always* remember that Paul charged him to stir up the gift of God. This was a gift that would abide in Timothy long after all the spiritual gifts had ceased (1 Cor. 13:8-10). This verse was written right when spiritual gifts had ceased because 2 Timothy was the last book written for the Bible (Col. 1:25). So what kind of gift of God could have been given to Timothy in the early part of Paul's ministry when spiritual gifts were in force and would continue long after spiritual gifts had ceased?

I'd suggest that Paul tells us exactly what that gift was. He writes in Eph. 3:7, "*Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.*" Notice that Paul's gift was not ministry. Paul's gift wasn't the role of ministry or a special ability to minister. Paul's gift was the grace of God itself, which made him able to become a minister. Paul had the same gift as Timothy, and that gift made him able to become an effective minister for Christ.

How does one define the *gift of the grace God*? I'd suggest that this is more than just eternal life. The gift of the grace of God encompasses the entire package of blessing in His grace. This is every aspect of everything God made us in Christ. This is the new man, us being *made alive unto God*. This is every spiritual blessing we've received from Heaven, and it's every ounce of glory that'll be revealed in us and given to us when it's all over. This is also the indwelling of the entire trinity of God inside each one of us. We are in God the Father, and He is in us (1 Thess. 1:1; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6). We are in Christ, members of His body, bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh (Eph. 5:30), and Christ liveth in us (Gal. 2:20). And we are the temples of the living God with the Holy Spirit inside of us (1 Cor. 3:16). We live in the Spirit, and we walk in the Spirit. *We are in the Father. We are in Christ. And we are in the Spirit.*

Notice also how God's gift of grace is tied to His *power*. God's grace and power go hand-in-hand. He says *according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power*. What Paul is saying is that God's eternal power that produces results gave him that whole package of grace, which transformed his life and made him able to become an effective minister for Christ. The same eternal power found within the glory of God the Father that resurrected Christ from the grave, which is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Glory (1 Peter 4:14), is the same power that spiritually transformed Paul, which transformed all of us the moment we believed, making us all dead, buried, and risen with His Son, victorious with His Son over sin and death, making us new creatures, freed from sin - all accomplished through His power in that

gift of the grace of God. We cannot have the whole package of His grace and be transformed by that gift without the instrumentality of God's eternal power.

But, see, the gift of grace is even more than this. It's more than just the power that was used to transform us into new creatures. Something else comes with that big package called the *gift of the grace of God*. We are also *given His power* to work in us and through us, particularly when we are weak. Part of that gift of the grace of God is the power of God working inside us, which is also what Paul's saying in Eph. 3:7. It's not just the power that transformed him. It's the effectual power that continually works in him to continually make him an effective minister, which is true for all of us. His power works in us through His Word and His Spirit to strengthen us and make us effective in our ministries, especially when we are weak.

Consider 2 Corinthians 12. Paul prayed 3 times for that buffeting messenger of Satan to be removed. The Lord told Paul that His grace was sufficient. And then what did Paul say? *Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.* This is God strengthening Paul's inner man through all his darkest times with all those sound grace doctrines causing him to rejoice with unending joy to carry him through to the very end. It's often in our weakness as we go through trials that we rely most on His strength working through us.

You might remember that Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1 is that through our studies we may come to grasp *what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power*, and he reminds us in Ephesians 3 that *God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us*. We don't realize how much we can accomplish and endure with the power of God at work in us.

Consider Rom. 15:13. *"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."* When we feel peace, peace of mind and heart, the peace that passes all understanding, and when we feel joy while abounding in hope, that is the power of the Spirit at work inside of us. And that same power of the Holy Spirit has shed abroad in our hearts the love of God. And Paul would tell us in Ephesians 3 that if we are rooted and grounded in love and if we can somewhat *comprehend* together in our studies *with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge*, then we all can *be filled with all the fulness of God*.

Well, you might think, "Christ died for us so obviously He loves us lots. That's easy enough." But, see, God's love for us isn't just expressed in His Son's act of atonement. His love for us is also expressed to us in the entire package of His gift of grace given to us. His love is also expressed in everything He made us in Christ. His love is expressed in everything He has given us, all the spiritual blessings of Heaven in this life and as co-inheritors with Christ, all of Heaven and Earth in the life to come. If we wrap our heads around the fullness of His love in the entire gift of the grace of God,

then we can be *filled with all the fulness of God*, because we are immeasurably empowered by the knowledge of just how much God has shown that He loves us.

When we study the entirety of His gift of grace, we then find ourselves swimming in the deep ocean of *the breadth, and length, and depth, and height* of the love of God in Christ Jesus. All of that love shown to us in His grace truly passes all human knowledge because we cannot comprehend it all. It's when we study His Word and gain enough depth of understanding about His love shown in His gift of grace that we may say as Paul said, *Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me... for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

In all of this love, all of this knowledge about His love which gives us power, as well as all of this peace of mind and heart, we can have no fear. No fear whatsoever. No reason to fear anything in this life. We may be *killed all the day long*. We may be counted *as sheep for the slaughter*, but we fear not because *in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us*. Because of that gift of grace, we have no reason to fear anything. Because of that gift of grace, we were transformed by His power and God is *able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us*. Because of that gift of grace, we have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts and our comprehension of the fullness of His love for us enables us, empowers us, to be *filled with all the fulness of God*. And because of that gift of grace, we have peace *with* God and the peace *of* God. We have peace of mind and heart, the peace that surpasses all human understanding. So, in short, what all this means, to sum it all up, is that because of His gift of grace, *God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*.

So what did Paul mean when he told Timothy to *stir up* his gift of grace? This Greek word is only used here and means "To kindle up, to inflame one's mind, strength, zeal." Stirring up the gift was not the stirring up of something spiritual inside of him like stirring a pot. Stirring up the gift was done in the mind, "to inflame [his] mind," perhaps like a soldier mentally preparing himself before he goes into battle. Thus, according to the grace given to Timothy, he would be empowered by that grace if only he would allow that grace to empower him in his mind. He would be strong in that grace if only he would allow that grace to strengthen him in his mind, and being strengthened in his mind about God's gift of grace, he would be able to step up as a spiritual leader, acknowledged and ordained by the laying on of hands by the *presbytery* and by the apostle himself, all of which should inspire him, as it should inspire us all, to be fearless about warring a good warfare, because Timothy had within himself all the power and strength he'd ever need by God's gift of grace.

This is why Paul tells Timothy in 2 Tim. 1:6 to stir up the gift, to inflame in his mind the empowerment of God's grace given to him to fulfill his calling, because he would tell Timothy in the next verse, "*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind,*" which is the empowerment we all have by His grace. One cannot be empowered by His grace unless one has been established in His Word, knowing full well his identity in Christ, what God has made him in Christ,

knowing how to appropriate that power and the fruit of the Spirit, knowing how to deal with people in grace, and knowing how to properly engage in spiritual warfare. This gift of God's empowering grace to fulfill his role as a spiritual leader first required Timothy to be *nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine* through mentorship. Then he had to be constantly in His Word, constantly meditating upon His Word, constantly in prayer, constantly walking in the Spirit, constantly keeping his sin-corrupted body under subjection to his regenerated soul, constantly bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, and if he failed to do these things, he'd be neglecting the gift that was in him. He'd be neglecting the empowerment he possessed within himself by God's grace, the strengthening of His grace, that made him able to excel in his role as a spiritual leader. To stir up the gift within you is to put into practice the grace doctrines you've been taught, to inflame in your mind all the empowerment you already possess by grace, because you've accepted by faith everything God has made you in Christ, and you use all the tools at your disposal, His Word and prayer, to strengthen your inner man to be effective in your ministry.

The bigger point is this. Timothy's gift is a gift that Paul possessed, and it's a gift that we all possess. What Timothy had inside of himself, the empowering grace of God, is something we all have inside of ourselves that makes us all able to excel in the ministries we all have in our personal lives. We, like Timothy, are to always be in remembrance to stir up that gift. We, like Timothy, should feel inspired having that gift inside of us so we may war a good warfare. We, like Timothy, are not to neglect the gift of His empowering grace inside of us. We cannot afford to neglect that gift because if we fail to study His Word, if we fail to meditate upon His Word, if we fail to pray always, we may run the risk of not only being weak in our ministries but also fall prey to the apostasy in the church that now abounds all around us.

In the 2nd chapter of 2 Timothy, Paul would say in the first verse, "*Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*" There is unquantifiable depths of strength for every believer *in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*. As Paul wrote in Phil. 4:19, "*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*" Or Eph. 3:20 "*...unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us...*" His exceeding abundant grace not only saves us but empowers us to the uttermost, to endure afflictions like valiant soldiers of Jesus Christ praising Him all the way, to be so overflowing with the love of God in our hearts that we may bless those that persecute us, that we may overcome evil with good, that we may all make full proof of our ministries standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, that we may be pillars for the truth of Paul's sound doctrines of grace, speaking the truth in love, being gentle unto all men, and showing all meekness unto all men. We may all be unshakably *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus* even in the midst of these last days of grace. Paul's words to Timothy are God's words to us so that we may all stir up the gift and properly war a good warfare for the Lord Jesus Christ.

NO FEAR, BUT POWER, LOVE, AND A SOUND MIND

We have four characteristics that make up God's gift of grace. No fear. Power. Love. And a sound mind. *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.* I first want to talk about fear and the spirit of fear. The Greek word for spirit is an interesting study. We all know this word, *pneuma*, which is a broad term that can mean many different things, like breath. We were all given the *pneuma of life*. Pneuma can also be angels or demons. In Heb. 1:7, the writer speaks of how the Lord *"maketh his angels spirits [pneuma], and his ministers a flame of fire."* Angels are spirit-beings, pneuma-beings. It can also be used to describe demons. You might remember the story of the Syrophenician woman in Mar. 7:25, *"For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit [pneuma]..."*

Then there is *Pneuma Hagion*, the Spirit that's Holy. It can also just mean spirit. God is *pneuma*. So what does Paul mean when he says here, the *spirit of fear*? Pneuma also has another meaning, in that pneuma can be used to describe the characteristic of something, and here Paul means the characteristic of fear. There are other verses in which pneuma is used in a similar vein. Take, for example, Eph. 2:2 *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.* Does this verse mean that disobedient children are possessed by demons? Sometimes I wonder. Of course not. The answer to this verse is that the children of disobedience have working within them all the disobedient *characteristics* of the prince of the power of the air as they walk according to the course of this world.

You also have in Rom. 8:14-15 this wonderful play on words. *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."* We don't possess the *spirit of bondage*. In other words, we don't possess the characteristics of bondage to sin because we have an actual Holy Spirit inside of us, which has freed us from that bondage to sin making us the sons of God.

The word "fear" in 1 Tim. 1:7 is also an interesting study. Paul speaks a couple times of fearing God in his epistles. For example, Paul would say in 2 Cor. 7:1, *"...let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."* Or he would say in Eph. 5:21, *"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."* Or to the persecuted Philippians, he'd write in Phil. 2:12 to *"work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."* In all these other verses, Paul uses different Greek words, but I'd suggest he has in mind reverence. We happily do all these things in such reverence to God that it is like fear but is, in fact, deep reverence.

However, the *spirit of fear* in 2 Tim. 1:7 is a particular Greek word for fear that's only here and nowhere else, and this word carries with it the idea of timidity. In other words, we have no reason to hide from the world, close ourselves off from the unsaved, no reason to avoid spiritual warfare, no reason to disengage ourselves from life, because the victory is already ours in Christ, because we are more than

conquerors through Him that loved us. You might remember how Paul said in Eph. 6:5, “*Servants, be obedient to them that are **your** masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ.*” One need not be afraid every time one goes to work, but again, we have the idea of giving that master all the respect and reverence due his position regardless of whether that individual was deserving of that respect because you are ultimately serving Christ.

Even Paul himself felt fear. You may recall how he said in 1 Cor. 2:3, “*And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.*” Bullinger made the point that Paul’s sense of weakness in those circumstances produced fear which resulted in trembling. It’s perfectly natural to feel fear in the flesh, particularly during times of a *present distress*, times of deep persecution, but the point is that God Himself has not given us a spirit of fear. He’s given us power and love and peace of mind to carry us through any fearful times in our lives. His program of grace is all victory all the time by Christ, in Christ, through Christ, and for Christ’s sake. The power that gives us the strength to face the most fearful times in our lives is the power of God working through us by His Word and His Spirit. 2 Cor. 4:7 tells us, “*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*”

I’d like to suggest that verse 7 does not say what most people think it says. Paul’s not saying here that God has given us power, love, and a sound mind, although God has done that. Look at the construction of the sentence. Paul says first that God has not given us *the spirit of fear*, and then he tells us what spirit God *has* given us. He’s given us *the spirit* of power, *the spirit* of love, and *the spirit* of a sound mind.

How does that work? What does that mean? Paul’s saying that God hasn’t given us the *characteristics* of fear, but He’s given us *the characteristics* of power, *the characteristics* of love, and *the characteristics* of a sound mind. This verse goes deeper than the simple fact that God has given us power, love, and a sound mind.

Paul is identifying the characteristics of the mature believer in grace. He’s saying the mature believer is one who exhibits the characteristics of God’s power in his daily walk because he not only has God’s power in him but he has also through his studies learned how to appropriate that power in his life. It’s true that God’s given us power, but this verse primarily means that the mature believer has learned how to walk in that power, which means he exhibits the characteristics of God’s power. All the time spent in His Word has made him powerful in his spiritual life. He walks in that power, and he exhibit those characteristics of God’s power in his life.

The same principle is true for love. The mature believer is one who exhibits all the characteristics of God’s love in him because he not only has God’s love shed abroad in his heart but he has also through his studies learned what love truly is (1 Cor. 13) and he exhibits all those characteristics in his life. The mature believer has love. He knows how love truly behaves, and he exhibits all those characteristics of God’s love openly in his walk. The disposition of his heart is inclined to act in love toward everyone because he has yielded to the teaching of the Spirit in His Word.

And the mature believer is one who exhibits a sound mind because he has through his studies fully embraced the mind of Christ such that he's made Christ's thinking his own thinking, which has given him a sound mind. We don't automatically possess any of these qualities after we get saved, which is why Paul speaks here of *the spirit of power, love, and a sound mind*, because it's *the mature believer* who through his studies and meditation upon God's Word and prayer, exhibits these characteristics.

"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

(2 Tim. 2:1)

Let's conclude this book with some spiritual body building. How is one *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*? That sounds all great and Pauline, but what does he mean by that exactly? How do you explain that? As a member of our church often asks me, "What does that look like?" How do we become strong in His grace?

I couldn't help but notice that three times in Paul's letters, he says to "Be strong *in*" something. And every time Paul says to "Be strong *in*" something it's always connected to spiritual warfare. The "Be strong" expressions are all distinct and yet they're all connected, too. So let's look at the other two "Be strong in" expressions first, and then we'll come back to being *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*.

BE STRONG IN THE LORD

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

(Eph. 6:10)

In this one verse, we have two powerful "be strong" exhortations. Be strong *in the Lord* and be strong *in the power of His might*.

What's the difference between being *strong in the Lord* vs. being strong *in the power of His might*? These exhortations precede the section in this chapter about putting on the whole armor of God. The spiritual warfare we face cannot be waged in anything less than *His* strength. Notice that Paul doesn't speak of being strong *BY* the Lord or being strong *FROM* the Lord but it's being strong *IN the Lord*. Strength isn't something we have to beg to get from God, but that strength is always ours *IN* the Lord. We can, and we're commanded, to always be strong *in Him*.

We have been given more than a position *in Christ* but a new spiritual reality through the baptism of the Spirit. We are to find our strength in what God has made us and in the spiritual blessings God has already given us. Our strength is in who God has made us *in Christ*; we are to "*stand fast in the Lord*." "*Be strong in the Lord*." God always sees us in the spiritual accomplishments of His Son. This is His view of us. We

are standing in the victory won at Calvary and the finished work of Christ. Our strength is in who God has made us *in Christ*. We stand strong IN who we are in the Lord.

The whole idea of the armor of God is that truth is power. Spiritual warfare requires spiritual strength and His spiritual truth becomes our spiritual empowerment in that warfare. Take, for example, our salvation. Let's say you just got saved. You studied Romans 3-5 backwards and forwards and you can cite any number of verses to explain how you got saved by grace through faith in the finished work of the cross as an atonement for all your sins. What have you gained from fully understanding that truth? You've gained yourself a helmet. The helmet of your salvation, which is designed to protect the mind from the fiery darts of the wicked designed to rob you of your assurance of your eternal security and everything Christ accomplished on your behalf. And now, nothing and no one is going to rob you of the peace *of* God because you know you have peace *with* God through the blood of His cross. And do you know what you've gained from that truth? You've gained really good shoes, because now, your *feet* are *shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*. This perfect peace we have is our preparation for warfare. Knowing this peace, knowing we are God's possession, knowing that we are in Christ and Christ is in us, we are Christ's and Christ is God's, knowing that all things are ours, that all things work for the good, we can withstand firmly all the wiles of the devil and confidently share His gospel.

Let's say you study Romans 6, and you've wrapped your head around your identity in Christ, what God has made you in Christ, the death of the old man, and our freedom from sin's dominion. You've studied the dispensational truths of Romans 9-11, and you understand that we're in an interruption of the prophetic program in this age of grace. Do you know what you've gained from all that truth? You've gained yourself a girdle. Your *loins* are now *girt about with truth*. In the Roman army, every piece of the armor was attached to the girdle, just as our spiritual life is attached to the truth of the word rightly divided, understanding that Paul is our apostle, and more importantly, what God has made us in Christ being dead, buried, and risen with Christ.

So you study the rest of Paul's letters and you come to understand His righteousness, the righteousness in all His ways, the rightness of His ways in all of the circumstances of life, and you yield to that righteousness, taught in the Word, guided by the Spirit, and what have you gained from all that truth? You've gained yourself a breastplate to protect the heart so you may serve Christ in singleness of heart and mind regardless of the circumstances of life. By accepting all of these truths in Paul's epistles by faith, you've also gained a mighty shield that cannot be broken. Through His Word, you've now become strong in the Lord and now His Sword in your hands is the most powerful weapon that can be wielded in this spiritual warfare.

Our strength in the Lord is deeply connected to a renewed mind because truth is power. His truth becomes your armor and your weapon in this spiritual warfare. His truth protects you from the wiles of Satan, from the doctrines of devils, and from a world that tells you spiritual lies because they have no spiritual eyes. Studying His Word, abiding in His truth, walking in the Spirit, we shall all become strong -- strong in

faith and love in all purity giving glory to God, strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus, strong in the Lord, and strong in the power of His might.

BE STRONG IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT

What's the difference between being strong *in the Lord* vs. being strong *in the power of His might*? To be strong *in the Lord* is to be strong in what God has made you in Christ but being strong *in the power of His might* is a deep dive into the strengthening of the inner man. We cannot fight the Lord's battles if the flesh is at work. We must rely on His strength working through us to achieve any sort of victory on the spiritual battlefield. And in Eph. 3:16-21, we have the great prayer request for spiritual strength. Paul writes, *"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; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."*

We mentioned earlier in this chapter the connection between knowledge of His will and being filled with all the fullness of God. If we are rooted and grounded in love and if we can somewhat *comprehend* together in our studies *with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge*, then we all can *be filled with all the fulness of God*. Being filled with all the fulness of God means we will be wholly under the influence of the entire Godhead, glorifying the Father by having His Son's life live out in us through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We also pointed out that God's love for us isn't just expressed in His death. His love for us is also expressed to us in the entire package of His gift of grace. His love is also expressed in everything He made us in Christ. His love is expressed in having the beauty of His holiness live out in us. His love is also expressed in everything He has given us, all the spiritual blessings of Heaven in this life and as co-inheritors with Christ, all of Heaven and Earth in the life to come.

Notice that Paul also mentions that we may be *"strengthened with might by His spirit."* How are we strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man? Through His Word. 1 Thess. 2:13 tells us, *"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."* You see how the Word of God effectually and continually works in us who believe? Why? Because the Word of God is living. His Word is the power that energizes the believer through the Holy Spirit, who is the *Spirit of life* in Christ Jesus.

When we take in His Word, the Holy Spirit energizes that Word inside of us, makes His Word effectual, powerful in us - renewing our minds, energizing our hearts,

and transforming our lives. In short, we become strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. Paul said in 1 Cor. 2:12, *“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God...”* Why? So *“that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”* The instrumentality that God the Holy Spirit uses to give us strength and empowerment is His Word, and His Word reveals not only the means of salvation by His grace but also all the spiritual blessings He’s freely given to us, all the grace that has abounded toward us, which empowers us, so that we have all sufficiency in all things, and we’re made able to serve Him *with power*.

God wants us to know through His Word all the things He’s freely given to us, because He empowers us when we gain that spiritual knowledge. The Holy Spirit energizes us with those truths, and those grace truths become a practical reality in our lives. We build up that edifice of grace doctrines in our souls. When grace is understood, His grace works in us, takes root in us, builds us up in Him, establishes us in the faith, and transforms us into the image of Christ. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit that produces holiness in us. He writes Christ onto our hearts. He produces life inside of us, a never-ending newness of life, the life of Christ Jesus built-up in our souls. He produces peace in our hearts and holiness in our walks. This is a genuine relationship with a living, holy, loving God through the study of His Word, through prayer, and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. We have God’s spiritual life growing within us and flowing out of us so that the lost may see in us the love we see in Christ.

I loved how Paul said in Rom. 15:13, *“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the **power** of the Holy Ghost.”* When we feel peace and joy, abounding in hope, that’s the power of the Spirit at work inside of us. You can feel that power at work inside of you.

We also know from Paul’s example that should the day come that we are ever put on trial for our faith, be incarcerated, be persecuted beyond measure, whatever, the Spirit gives us a strength to help us endure to the end. When Paul stood on trial before Nero and everyone abandoned him, he said in 2 Tim. 4:17, *“Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known...”* I believe we can experience a spiritual strengthening during great persecution, which is only possible if you have first renewed your mind in His Word. And I think there is a process through the study of His Word when you renew your mind in which there is a shift in thinking in which you suddenly let go of any notions of ability in yourself and you embrace your abilities in the Lord because of what He has made you in Christ, because of how He has strengthened your inner man through His Word by the Spirit, and now you’re relying on the strength of His grace made perfect in your weakness, which is to rely on His mind, His Word, His Spirit to carry you through any trials of life, and through that, you can feel spiritual strength.

For many boxers, conditioning isn’t about acquiring more strength. Conditioning is about how well you perform when you are weak. Such is also the grace life. The renewing of our minds is the strengthening of our inner man, which conditions us to perform well when we are weak, because it’s by the sufficiency of His

grace that His strength is made perfect in our weakness, because it's *when I am weak, then am I strong*. We look to the Lord for everything, trust in Him about everything, see Him in everything, and lean on Him concerning everything. The true grace life is living a life of faith upon the Son of God, abiding in all that He has accomplished for us, in us, and through us, having all our resources in Him alone. Then, like a boxer, our conditioning by His truth will carry us through in our weakness until the match is over.

Pastor Kevin Sadler wrote in the May, 2011, issue of the Berean Searchlight that "Being strong in the Lord and in the power of His might has to do with living by faith in the resurrection life and power which resides in every believer through Christ. The same power that raised Christ from the dead is the same power we're to use to stand in this spiritual battle... To be instructed to be 'strong in the Lord and in the power of His might' tells us that *our* might is not strong enough for us to be able to stand in this spiritual battle, and it tells us that we face an enemy much stronger than we are apart from Christ. Therefore we need the infinite power of our Lord in this spiritual battle, and we appropriate that strength by yielding to the indwelling Spirit, through prayer and dependence on God, and by knowledge of, faith in, and obedience to His Word, rightly divided (cf. Eph. 6:17,18)."³⁵

BE STRONG IN HIS GRACE

This brings us back to where we started in 2 Tim. 2:1, "*Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*" To be strong in the Lord is to be strong in what God has made you in Christ. To be strong in the power of His might is to be strengthened in your inner man by the Spirit through the study of His Word. So what does Paul mean when he says to be *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*?

Notice how he first says, *Thou therefore, my son...* This is a concluding thought to what came before it previously. So what came before it? Is Paul referring back to the story of Onesiphorus at the end of the previous chapter? Yes. Or, wait. Is he referring back to that verse about all of Asia turning on him? Yes. Or maybe he's referring back to his own imprisonment or maybe stirring up the gift? Yes and yes. I'd suggest that everything in chapter 1 has led up to this great concluding thought, be *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*. Everything in chapter 1 was one thought building upon another thought building upon another thought until you reach the most powerful thought of them all, be *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*.

Everything in chapter 1 was about motivating Timothy to step up as spiritual leader, to be unshakeable from the sound doctrines of grace, and to engage in this spiritual warfare no matter the cost. Remember your grandmother, Timothy. Remember your mother. Stir up the gift, Timothy. *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*. Do not be ashamed, Timothy. Remember, Timothy, that God *hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given*

³⁵ Sadler, Kevin, "Be Strong in the Lord," [Berean Searchlight](#), May 2011, 25-26

us in Christ Jesus before the world began. Don't forget, Timothy, that Christ has *abolished death* for us. Christ *hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*, and it's for this reason only that I am in prison. Follow my example, Timothy. I am not ashamed. *For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* Do not abandon the truth. Fight for the truth. Look at the example of Onesiphorus, how he gave up his life because he was not ashamed of the gospel or of the Lord or of me his prisoner. Therefore, Timothy, you must *be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*

What exactly did Paul mean when he said THE grace that is in Christ Jesus? I submit to you that this isn't about learning doctrines like the other two "Be Strong" exhortations, because Timothy already knew all the doctrines of grace. He spent some 15 years under Paul's tutorship before he became pastor at Ephesus. That young kid knew the sound doctrines of grace better than perhaps all of us. Paul gave him his seal of approval in his first letter to Timothy. He told him he had been *nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.* Timothy didn't just know all the doctrine. He walked the walk. Paul telling Timothy to *be strong in the grace that is in Christ* is an exhortation meant for someone who already knows all the sound doctrines of grace. Paul telling Timothy to *be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus* is a whole other sphere of spirituality than the other two exhortations.

When Paul says to *be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*, I'd suggest that he's talking about that specific divine attribute of God Himself, His grace, which has become our grace, which is to become the predominant characteristic of our spiritual lives, once it has been *nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine*, just like Timothy. We know, just as Timothy knew, that the God of all grace made His only begotten Son the *source*, the *channel* through which His grace has been showered upon us, and we know that the *ministry* of His grace to our souls is through His written Word by the *power* of the Holy Spirit. We know His grace reigns today, and that it's by His Son that His grace has become our grace. We know that we are called by His grace. We are saved by His grace. We are made whole, complete in Him, by His grace. We know that we have a sure standing in His grace before God, and that we are under the administration of His grace vs. the administration of the law.

Knowing that we are standing in His grace as full grown sons of God, we rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and when we study His Word, we drink into our souls the precious Word of the God of all grace, which empowers us, which makes us strong, and ultimately, which produces grace in us. We also know that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us, which gives us both spiritual strength and joy, and that makes us able to walk in grace toward others. Just as His grace reigns over the world, so too, His grace reigns in our hearts and minds, which allows us to exhibit His grace in our walks, and we are to be strong in that grace.

We are to maintain the vivacity of His grace operating in our hearts. We are to keep that inspiring, transforming, attribute of God alive in us all our days on this Earth.

We allow His grace to motivate everything we do, ensuring that His grace lives out in us, and we are strong only as much as we allow the power of His grace to work in us.

This is about His attribute of grace influencing our hearts and directing our steps. This is about a faithful service to God by allowing ourselves to be influenced to the full by all the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Every good thing we have and every good thing we are and every good thing we do is because of His grace, and when we allow that particular attribute of His divine character to inspire us, to motivate us, to shine out in us, we become strong in His grace, by His grace, and through His grace. His grace gives us the ability to be conformed to the image of His Son, and His grace enables us, empowers us to live the grace life by exhibiting that attribute of His nature to the world. In other words, His grace has become our grace, from which we derive all our strength through the trials of life. We're to not only allow His grace to be our sufficiency but also our strength to carry us through all difficult circumstances of life.

Plus, when we exhibit grace to unbelievers, we're pointing the way to His grace and the means by which God saves them, which isn't through any works of their own but only by His grace. Living in strength in His grace relieves us of bitterness, hatred, and vengeance toward those who may persecute us, and we become strong in His grace in the midst of this present evil world. Just as His joy became Israel's strength (Neh. 8:10), so too, His grace can be our strength. His grace is that predominant characteristic through which we can experience all those other fruits of the Spirit, because without His grace, there can be no *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance*, and we know that the fruit of the Spirit is *in all goodness and righteousness and truth*, which was made known to us through His gift of grace as revealed to us by the Apostle Paul. This gracious attribute of His divine character was made known to the world through Jesus Christ and there is enough grace in Him for all of us. We must be strong in His grace, not in ourselves, or in our own strength, or in the grace we have already received, but in the grace that is in Him now living out in us. That is the way to be strong in His grace. When we see the way that God has acted in grace toward us, we then act in grace toward others. His grace becomes our strength particularly during difficult times.

We know that by the grace of God we can understand not only the glorious perfection of His workmanship in us, which strengthens us, but we also know that God loved us while we were yet sinners, and that God brought each of us into the most intimate relationship to Himself, as intimate as His relationship with His own Son. God also made us co-heirs with His Son, giving us the hope of sharing His glory with Him. Not only that, we know that He has provided us with all spiritual blessings so that every possible need is met on our path to glory with Christ. The more we study, the more the Word of God is brought home to our hearts, received in faith by the teaching and power of the Holy Spirit, and the more we increase in the knowledge of His will, the more the grace of God melts and molds our hearts, which directs our walks, to act in love and grace toward everyone we know. In this process of renewing our minds, we become more able to show everyone practically the characteristics of the grace of Him

who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Growing in the knowledge of our Savior Jesus Christ will also accompany growth in grace to a degree that His grace reigns in our hearts and we become strong in all the grace that is in Christ.

“But even now, while in a mortal body, and waiting for God’s Son from heaven, we know that divine grace has brought us into new relationships, and set us in a totally new and unchanging position before God. We are thus no longer looked at as children of Adam, but children of God; not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, though we often painfully feel that the flesh is in us. We *know*, on the authority of God’s word, that our old man has been crucified with Christ, that we have died with Christ; thus we have now no standing in the flesh, and our history as to the first man is forever closed by the death and judgment of the cross. We *know* also that when we were dead in sins, God, in His rich mercy, put life into our souls. We were quickened together with Christ, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places *in* Christ Jesus; and by the gift and indwelling of the Holy Spirit are united to Him forever, who is the Head of the body, the Church. Thus, we are always looked at by God, where His grace and power have set us, as in Christ, complete, or filled full, in Him in whom the fulness of the Godhead bodily dwells. What marvelous heights of blessing then we have been brought into by the grace of God in and through Christ Jesus!”³⁶

So to be strong in the Lord is to reckon as true everything God has made you in Christ. To be strong in the power of His might is to have your inner man strengthened with might by His Spirit through the study of His Word. But to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus is to maintain the vivacity of His grace operating in our hearts, and we allow His attribute of grace to inspire, motivate, and be the predominant characteristic of our spiritual lives, which brings us power, peace, joy, love, and strength in Christ Jesus. We cannot be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus if our inner man hasn’t been strengthened with might by His Spirit, which the Spirit cannot accomplish if we haven’t reckoned as true everything God has made us in Christ Jesus. The question for all of us then is “How do we minister *BY* grace instead of ministering *ABOUT* grace?” As my dear brother, Mike Moriarty, often tells me, “People do not care about what you know until they know you care about them.” And how do they know you care about them? By the grace you show them. We want to be strong in grace both in word and deed. We stand in His grace, and we are to live in His grace.

HIS GRACE REIGNS

**“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace
reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus
Christ our Lord.”**

(Rom. 5:21)

³⁶ Snell, H.H., “The Power of Grace,” The Collected Writings of H.H. Snell, 277

Rejoice! God is the God of all grace (1 Pet. 5:10). We are called *by* His grace *into* His grace (Gal. 1:6,15). We are *saved* by His grace (Eph. 2:5-9). We are *empowered* by His grace (2 Cor. 12:9). His grace is a gift (Eph. 3:7-8; 4:7). His grace *abounds* in us (2 Cor. 9:8). His grace in us is *exceeding* (2 Cor. 9:14). His grace *reigns* today (Rom. 5:21). His grace transcends every sin (Rom. 5:20). We don't live under the law; we live under His grace (Rom. 6:14). His grace is His divine influence upon our hearts (Rom. 16:24). By His grace, we are all that we are in Christ (1 Cor. 15:10). The name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in us according to His grace (2 Thess. 1:12). We have good hope through His grace (2 Thess. 2:16). And we may be strong in His grace (2 Tim. 2:1). His grace is a complete victory program. In Christ, the Son of God, we may find rest, hope, and eternal victory. In Him, we may have full joy, full peace, and full victory, and we may rejoice as Paul rejoiced: "*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ...thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Cor. 15:55-57). His grace utterly reigns. His grace is supreme today. Blessed be the Lord forever, for His grace has transcended a world of sin!

God isn't making us work our way into Heaven. Why? Because His grace reigns. We're not saved by how we live. We live by how we're saved, because *His grace reigns* in us. Salvation to all the world today is by simple faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son as a payment for all our sins, *because* His grace reigns. The moment we believe, we're identified with the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection; we're spiritually transformed as Christ was literally transformed, and we're made to be risen with Him by the same power found within the glory of God the Father, which raised Christ from the dead, because His grace reigns. We're dead with Christ, we're buried with Christ, we're risen with Christ, we're one with Christ, and we are *in Christ*, because His grace reigns. We now live in Him and He lives in us; we're members of His body, bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh, because His grace reigns. The old man is crucified, the new man brought to life in us; we're new creatures blessed with all spiritual blessings, because His grace reigns. We're made free from sin and alive unto God because His grace reigns. We're made sons of God led by the Spirit, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, because His grace reigns. We are made able to know Christ intimately, experientially, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, because His grace reigns. We were chosen by God the Father before the foundation of the world that *we should be holy and without blame before him in love*, because His grace reigns. We are promised a "*glory*" that shall be "*revealed in us*" that is "*not worthy to be compared with*" the "*sufferings of this present time*," because His grace reigns. "*The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost*," because His grace reigns. We are given a "*newness of life*" that we may forever enjoy, because His grace reigns. We become utterly inseparable "*from the love of God*," because His grace reigns. We all, "*with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory*," His glory transferred to us, because His grace reigns. We become empowered by His grace, which is sufficient for us in our sufferings, in which

His strength is made perfect in our weakness, because His grace reigns. We may now appropriate the fruit of the Spirit, which *“is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness,”* and *“temperance,”* because His grace reigns. We are *“accepted in the beloved,”* graced into the beloved; we are now family, whereby we may, like Christ, cry out *“Abba, Father,”* because His grace reigns. We are *“sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” “unto the day of redemption;”* we have eternal security and everlasting peace with God, because His grace reigns. We’re seated together in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus, because His grace reigns. We may now know *“what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,”* because His grace reigns. We are *“his workmanship,”* His perfect work of art, *“created in Christ Jesus unto good works,”* given *“access by one Spirit unto the Father,” “partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel,”* and *“strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man,”* because His grace reigns. We may now *“know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge”* and be *“filled with all the fulness of God,”* because His grace reigns. We can now *“do all things through Christ which strengtheneth”* us, because His grace reigns. We are given a *“hope which is laid up”* for us *“in heaven,”* made *“us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,”* delivered *“from the power of darkness,”* and *“translated into the kingdom of his dear Son,”* because His grace reigns. We are made *“complete in him,” “forgiven all trespasses,” “hid with Christ in God,”* and made able to *“walk worthy of God,”* because His grace reigns. And we now have, and we look for, *“that blessed hope,”* the return of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, to be translated into our Heavenly bodies to be with Him forever, because His grace reigns.

CHAPTER 7

101 Spiritual Blessings The Moment You Believe

1. We are “justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (**Rom 3:24, Tit 3:7**)
2. We are “justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” (**Rom 3:28, Rom 5:1**)
3. Our “faith is counted for righteousness.” (**Rom 4:5**)
4. We “have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (**Rom 5:1**)
5. We are given “access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” (**Rom 5:2**)
6. We are given “the glory of God.” (**Rom 5:2**)
7. “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.” (**Rom 5:5**)
8. The Holy Spirit is “given unto us” “that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” (**Rom 5:5, 1Co 2:12**)
9. We are “justified by his blood.” (**Rom 5:9**)
10. We are “saved from wrath through him.” (**Rom 5:9**)
11. We are “reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” (**Rom 5:10, 2Co 5:18, Col 1:21**)
12. We are “baptized into Jesus Christ.” (**Rom 6:3, Gal 3:27**)
13. We are “baptized into his death.” (**Rom 6:3**)
14. We are “buried with him by baptism into death.” (**Rom 6:4**)
15. We are given a “newness of life” by which we may forever enjoy. (**Rom 6:4**)
16. “We have been planted together in the likeness of his death.” (**Rom 6:5**)
17. “Our old man is crucified with *him*.” (**Rom 6:6, Eph 4:22, Col 3:9**)
18. We are “freed from sin.” (**Rom 6:2, Rom 6:7, Rom 6:8, Rom 6:18, Col 3:3**)
19. We now “liveth unto God.” (**Rom 6:10**)
20. Sin no longer has “dominion” over us. (**Rom 6:14**)
21. We are freed from the law and put under grace. (**Rom 6:14, Gal 5:18**)
22. We become “the servants of righteousness.” (**Rom 6:18**)
23. We are “in Christ.” (**Rom 8:1**)
24. We are no longer under “condemnation.” (**Rom 8:1**)
25. We are made to “walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (**Rom 8:1**)

26. We are now “led by the Spirit of God.” (**Rom 8:14, Gal 5:18**)
27. We become “the sons of God.” (**Rom 8:14**)
28. We become “heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” (**Rom 8:17, Eph 3:6**)
29. We are promised a “glory” that shall be “revealed in us” that is “not worthy *to be compared with*” the “sufferings of this present time.” (**Rom 8:18**)
30. We have a Holy Spirit inside of us who “helpeth our infirmities” and “maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” when we pray. (**Rom 8:26**)
31. We are “glorified.” (**Rom 8:30**)
32. We become utterly inseparable “from the love of God.” (**Rom 8:39**)
33. We are given the capacity to be filled with “all joy and peace in believing” and to “abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” (**Rom 15:13**)
34. We are “established” according to Paul’s gospel and “the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.” (**Rom 16:25**)
35. We are given the chance to receive rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ for our works built upon the foundation laid by Paul. (**1Co 3:10-15**)
36. We “are washed.” (**1Co 6:11**)
37. We “are sanctified.” (**1Co 6:11**)
38. We “are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” (**1Co 6:11**)
39. We are given the opportunity to run a race to “receiveth the prize.” (**1Co 9:24**)
40. We are “all baptized into one body” “by one Spirit.” (**1Co 12:13**)
41. We are “all made to drink into one Spirit.” (**1Co 12:13**)
42. We all, “with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (**2Co 3:18**)
43. God makes plans for us, that as He “which raised up the Lord Jesus,” He “shall raise up us also by Jesus.” (**2Co 4:14**)
44. God prepares for us a glorified, incorruptible body. “For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” (**2Co 5:1, Phil. 3:21**)
45. We become “a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (**2Co 5:17**)
46. We are given “the ministry of reconciliation.” (**2Co 5:18**)
47. We become “ambassadors for Christ.” (**2Co 5:20**)
48. We become empowered by His grace, which is sufficient for us in our sufferings, in which His strength is made perfect in our weakness. (**2Co 12:7-10**)
49. We are “crucified with Christ.” (**Gal 2:20**)
50. “Christ liveth” in us. (**Gal 2:20**)
51. The life we “now live in the flesh” we “live by the faith of the Son of God,” who loved us, and gave himself for us. (**Gal 2:20**)

52. We "have put on Christ." (**Gal 3:27**)
53. We may now appropriate the fruits of the Spirit, which "is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness," and "temperance." (**Gal 5:22-23**)
54. We are "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ." (**Eph 1:3**)
55. We are made "holy and without blame before him in love." (**Eph 1:4**)
56. We are "accepted in the beloved." (**Eph 1:6**)
57. We "have obtained an inheritance." (**Eph 1:11**)
58. We may now be to the "praise of his glory." (**Eph 1:12**)
59. We are "sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" "unto the day of redemption." (**2Co 1:22, Eph 1:13, Eph 4:30, 2 Tim 2:19**)
60. We are given "the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," which "is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." (**2Co 1:22, Eph 1:14**)
61. We are given "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." (**Eph 1:17**)
62. We may now "know what is the hope of his calling." (**Eph 1:18**)
63. We may now know what is "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." (**Eph 1:18**)
64. We may now know "what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power." (**Eph 1:19**)
65. He "hath quickened us together with Christ." (**Eph 2:5, Col 2:13**)
66. He has "raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (**Eph. 2:6**)
67. We are "made nigh by the blood of Christ." (**Eph 2:13**)
68. We are now "his workmanship." (**Eph 2:10**)
69. We are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works." (**Eph 2:10**)
70. We are given "access by one Spirit unto the Father." (**Eph 2:18**)
71. We are "partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." (**Eph 3:6**)
72. We may now "be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." (**Eph 3:16**)
73. We may now "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." (**Eph 3:19**)
74. We can "be filled with all the fulness of God." (**Eph 3:19**)
75. We may become "a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (**Eph 4:13**)
76. We are a "new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" and "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." (**Eph 4:24, Col 3:10**)
77. We are given a spiritual armour to wear so that we "may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (**Eph 6:11-17**)
78. The Lord begins "a good work" in us and will "perform *it* until the day of Jesus

Christ.” **(Phil 1:6)**

79. We are “filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.” **(Phil 1:11)**
80. God works in us “both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.” **(Phil 2:13)**
81. The righteousness of Christ is put to our accounts. **(Phil 3:9)**
82. We may now “know him, and the power of his resurrection.” **(Phil 3:10)**
83. We may now know “the fellowship of his sufferings.” **(Phil 3:10)**
84. We are made “conformable unto his death.” **(Phil 3:10)**
85. We can now “do all things through Christ which strengtheneth” us. **(Phil 4:13)**
86. We are given a “hope which is laid up” for us “in heaven.” **(Col 1:5)**
87. God makes “us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” **(Col 1:12)**
88. We are delivered “from the power of darkness.” **(Col 1:13)**
89. We are “translated into the kingdom of his dear Son.” **(Col 1:13)**
90. We are able to be “rooted and built up in him and stablished in the faith.” **(Col 2:7)**
91. We are given every reason to abound with thanksgiving. **(Col 2:7)**
92. We are made “complete in him.” **(Col 2:10)**
93. We “are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands.” **(Col 2:11)**
94. We are not only “buried with him in baptism,” but also “risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” **(Col 2:12)**
95. We are “forgiven all trespasses.” **(Col 2:13)**
96. Our life is now “hid with Christ in God.” **(Col 3:3)**
97. We are made able to “walk worthy of God,” who hath called us “unto his kingdom and glory.” **(1Th 2:12)**
98. The “Lord of peace” may now give us “peace always by all means.” **(2Th 3:16)**
99. We are given not “the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” **(2Ti 1:7)**
100. There is now laid up for us “a crown of righteousness.” **(2Ti 4:8)**
101. We now have and we look for “that blessed hope.” **(Tit 2:13)**

CHAPTER 8

Final Note

If you found the truths in this book a blessing, you may wish to consider supporting our church's ministry financially [through our website](#) or one may also offer a donation to me personally [through PayPal](#).

Grace & Peace!

Pastor Joel Hayes

Orlando, FL

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