



NEW CREATION 2022

New Creation 2022

23rd Nov 7 pm to 26th Nov 1 pm

<i>Day 1 – 23rd November – Wednesday</i>	
<i>Time</i>	<i>Session Title</i>
7:00 PM -8:30 PM	Introduction 01- Die to be born again
8:30 PM	Dinner

<i>Day 2 – 24th November – Thursday</i>	
6:00 AM - 7:00 AM	Morning Devotion 02 –Slave to Heir
7:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Session 03 -New thinking
11:20 AM - 1:00 PM	Session 04- Walking in love
1:00 PM - 4:30 PM	Lunch and Break
4:30 PM - 6:00 PM	Tea and Interactive session 05 – Resolving Conflicts
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM	Session 06- Walk in Light
8:00 PM	Dinner
<i>Day 3 – 25th November – Friday</i>	
6:00 AM - 7:00 AM	Morning Devotion 07 – New Family
7:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Session 08- Walk in Wisdom- Part 01
11:20 AM - 1:00 PM	Session 09- Walk in Wisdom- Part 02
1:00 PM - 4:30 PM	Lunch and Break
4:30 PM - 6:00 PM	Tea & QA
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM	Session 10- Christian Home
8:00 PM	Dinner

Day 4 - 26th November - Saturday

6:00 AM - 7:00 AM	Morning Devotion 11- New Priorities
7:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM - 12:00 AM	Session 12- Walk in Unity
12.00 – 1:00 PM	Prayer and departure

Table of Contents

1. New Creation - Die to be Born	1
Butterfly	1
New Perspective.....	4
New Person	5
New Purpose	7
The Cost of Newness.....	9
2. Slave to Heir	11
What is grace?	12
What does God own?	15
3. New Thinking	21
When did you die?	27
Responsibility.....	30
Resource.....	33
Reason.....	34
Revelation.....	36
4. Walk in Love	39
5. Resolving Conflicts	55
How do we deal with conflicts?.....	56
Resolving Conflicts	59
6. Walk in Light.....	63
1. The contrast.....	68
2. The characteristics.....	73
3. The command	77
4. The commission.....	78
7. Morning Devotion- New Family	83
8. Walk in Wisdom - 01	93
Who do they worship?.....	94
What happens to a fool?.....	95
What can we do about it?.....	96

9. Walk in Wisdom- 02.....	107
Limited privileges.....	109
Urgency is necessary!.....	113
Lord’s purposes.....	118
10. Christian Home.....	123
11. New Priorities.....	125
Word of Reconciliation.....	126
1. Reconciliation is by the will of God.....	127
2. Reconciliation is by the forgiveness of God.....	132
3. Reconciliation is by the obedience of faith.....	134
4. Reconciliation by the work of substitution.....	135
12. Walk in Unity.....	139
What is unity?.....	142
1. Encouragement in Christ.....	142
2. Consolation of love.....	144
3. Fellowship of the Holy Spirit.....	145
The marks of unity.....	148
Means of Unity.....	153

1. New Creation - Die to be Born

2 Corinthians 5:17, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

It is important to understand what we are as Christians.

- Not merely what we ought to be.
- Nor, what we will be.
- But what we are as Christians now.

Every Christian is - "a new creature."

Many so-called professing Christians still behave like how they used to before they were saved.

They are all up for a surprise on the judgment day.

Matthew 7:21-23,

If you have trusted Christ to be your only hope when you appear before God, for this life and the next, then you are "new".

There is a part of you labelled as "old", that is gone. It has "passed away" because something new has come.

Butterfly

The butterfly develops through a process called **metamorphosis**. This is a Greek word that means **transformation or change in shape**.

Insects have two common types of metamorphosis. Grasshoppers, crickets, dragonflies, and cockroaches have **incomplete metamorphosis**. The young (called a nymph) usually looks like a small adult but without wings.

Butterflies, moths, beetles, flies and bees have **complete metamorphosis**. The young (called a larva instead of a nymph) is very different from the adult. It also usually eats different types of food.

There are four stages in the metamorphosis of butterflies: egg, larva, pupa, and adult.

1. New Creation - Die to be Born

Egg

Eggs are laid on plants by the adult female butterfly. These plants will then become the food for the hatching caterpillars.

Eggs can be laid from spring, summer or fall. This depends on the species of butterfly. Females lay a lot of eggs at once so that at least some of them survive.

Butterfly eggs can be very small.



Caterpillar: The Feeding Stage



The next stage is the larva. This is also called a caterpillar if the insect is a butterfly or a moth.

The job of the caterpillar is to eat and eat and eat. As the caterpillar grows it splits its skin and sheds it about 4 or 5 times. Food eaten at this time is stored and used later as an adult.

Caterpillars can grow 100 times their size during this stage. For example, a monarch butterfly egg is the size of a pinhead and the caterpillar that hatches from this tiny egg isn't much bigger. But it will grow up to 2 inches long in several weeks.

Pupa: The Transition Stage

When the caterpillar is full grown and stops eating, it becomes a pupa. The pupa of butterflies is also called a chrysalis.

Depending on the species, the pupa may be suspended under a branch, hidden in leaves or buried underground.

This stage can last from a few weeks, a month or even longer. Some species have a pupal stage that lasts for two years.

It may look like nothing is going on but big changes are happening inside. Special cells that were present in the larva are now growing rapidly. They will become the legs, wings, eyes



1. New Creation - Die to be Born

and other parts of the adult butterfly. Many of the original larva cells will provide energy for these growing adult cells.

Adult: The Reproductive Stage

The adult stage is what most people think of when they think of butterflies. They look very different from the larva. The caterpillar has a few tiny eyes, stubby legs and very short antennae. The adults have long legs, long antennae, and compound eyes. They can also fly by using their large and colourful wings. The one thing they can't do is grow.



The caterpillar's job was to eat. The adult's job is to mate and lay eggs. Some species of adult butterflies get energy by feeding on nectar from flowers, but many species don't feed at all.

Flying comes in handy. The adult female can easily fly from place to place to find the right plant for its eggs. This is important because caterpillars can't travel far.

Most adult butterflies live only one or two weeks, but some species hibernate during the winter and may live several months.

What exactly does it mean to be new?

Am I taller, smarter, faster, richer?

Do I have a new driver's license with a new name?

Do I have a new family and new job?

What exactly is "new" if I am "in Christ" by grace, through faith?

2 Corinthians 4:6, For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

What is Paul connecting here?

He is connecting the God of Genesis 1 to the God of the gospel.

Paul is connecting the work of the Creator God to the work of the saving God.

Creation came into existence by the powerful word of God.

1. New Creation - Die to be Born

Similarly, a new creation has come into existence through the powerful word that God speaks through the gospel into our hearts.

A 'new creation' is not simply a replacement of your old self. McDonald's may replace your old Big Mac that fell on the floor.

You are a "new creation" in the sense that you are part of THE "new creation" that God is ushering in, through Jesus, for the transformation of all things.

But again, what does it mean to be part of this new creation as a new creation?

New Perspective.

2 Corinthians 5:16, Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

Here Paul is not primarily talking about being a "new creation" so that you will think differently about yourself.

That is part of it, and a legitimate application of what Paul is saying. But the context here is not self-discovery. The context is seeing those around us with new eyes.

This is why Paul is talking about how we see others "from now on".

We no longer consider one another from a fleshly perspective or worldly perspective.

To be even more specific, since Paul is trying to combat lies, accusations, and caricatures regarding himself and his ministry, Paul wants to remind them to see with new eyes.

What does it mean to "regard one another according to the flesh"?

Consider what Paul's critics in Corinth were saying about him.

2 Corinthians 10:10, "For his letters," they say, "are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."

So, there were teachers who were slandering Paul because he didn't measure up to what some considered the standard for an impressive leader in that day and age.

But the fact that Paul was not handsome or tall or physically impressive, and that he was not a classically trained or charismatic or crowd-pleasing orator, none of that actually mattered.

It mattered from a fleshly or worldly perspective.

But not from the new perspective that God gives.

1. New Creation - Die to be Born

2 Corinthians 5:12, For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have an answer for those who boast in appearance and not in heart.

Paul describes this contrast when he talks about those who look at the “outward appearance”, but not what matters most, which is “the heart”.

So, to be a “new creation” is to see others, and even us, with a new sense of what truly matters.

You should see others and yourself in accordance with the truth.

How much of our struggle in this life is because we fail to see our friend, our spouse, our child, our boss, or brother or sister in light of the truth?

And instead look at them through the lens of the world or our own standards of how they should be.

How much of your struggle in this life flows from judging yourself according to the flesh and not the love, acceptance, and grace of God?

Seeing yourself as He sees you, and not who you think you need to be according to your parents, spouse, friends, or even the media.

But notice how Paul reminds them that though Jesus came in the flesh, now we do not regard Him according to the flesh. (2 Corinthians 5:16)

At one time, we weren't impressed by Jesus.

At one time, Jesus was an option, not a necessity.

At one time, according to the flesh, Jesus was not Lord.

I was my lord.

But wonderfully, thankfully, all that's changed.

New Person

2 Corinthians 5:14-15, For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; ¹⁵ and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

You are not simply a new person in Jesus, but there is a new person for whom you now live.

Paul couldn't be any clear.

1. New Creation - Die to be Born

When Jesus died for His people, or to use Jesus' words, when the Good Shepherd laid down His life for His flock, He did so to accomplish 'regime change' in our heart.

Because of the truth of the gospel, our whole world can be turned gloriously upside-down.

When Jesus died on the cross, we died with Him (one has died for all, therefore all have died). That is, as in verse 17 - the "old" passing away. This is how Paul expressed these ideas to the church in Rome.

Romans 6:3-4, Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

But when it comes to the "new" or "newness of life", the new isn't about you. This is so critical. It is very easy and very common for people, including some Christians, to want newness, to want a second chance and a fresh start, to want a do-over, but they are still living for themselves.

What you do with your time?

What do you read?

Where does your money go?

What kind of words come out of your mouth?

Who do you spend time with?

How do you dress?

What do you listen to?



All of this might be "new" in comparison to how you used to live.

But the newness of the "new creation" is not just about any of those things. Because your life can be new in all those ways and yet, you can still be living for yourself.

The true evidence that you are truly a "new creation" is that you live your life for Jesus Christ and not for yourself.

Notice I didn't say "perfectly".

In this life, you will always be tempted to live for yourself.

Sometimes you will give in to that temptation, sometimes you will resist.

1. New Creation - Die to be Born

But your anchor of hope is to please God through Jesus. Your boat can drift. Your boat can be tossed. But it will always come back to where God anchored it.

2 Corinthians 5:9, Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

The new perspective of the new creation reveals that we have a new Purpose.

New Purpose

What are some examples of a purpose in life?

There are a lot of commonly known purposes in life, like:

- Providing for your family
- Living a successful life
- Making positive connections with others and enjoying with those around you
- Traveling the world
- Fighting the declining condition of our planet

But what is your purpose?

Answers are usually a variation or combination of the following:

- Success
- Feeling loved
- Having a positive impact on the lives of others
- To be happy

The Bible is very clear as to what our purpose in life should be. Men in both the Old and New Testaments sought for and discovered life's purpose. Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, discovered the futility of life when we live only for this world. He gives these concluding remarks in the book of Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. ¹⁴For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

King David looked for His satisfaction in the time to come.

Psalms 17:15, As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.

To David, full satisfaction would come on the day when he awoke (in the next life) both beholding God's face (fellowship with Him) and being like Him.

1. New Creation - Die to be Born

1 John 3:2, Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

The largest portion of this section is devoted to Paul explaining his ministry and countering the lies that were being told about him.

Living for a new person, with that new perspective, manifests itself in a life of ministry, specifically, the “ministry of reconciliation”.

Let us expand our focus on the immediate context.

2 Corinthians 5:11-13, Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

¹² For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have an answer for those who boast in appearance and not in heart. ¹³ For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; or if we are of sound mind, it is for you.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

The New Testament calls us Christians to live the kind of godly lifestyle that inspires questions, generates conversations, and opens doors for the gospel.

When that happens, God calls you to be prepared to give defence to anyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.

1 Peter 3:15, But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

In general terms, for every single one of us, this is what it means to be part of the “ministry of reconciliation”

In 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Paul states that Christ died so that we might live for Him.

We have been reconciled to God so that we might help others be reconciled to God.

A critical part of the new purpose is One Mission- the ministry of reconciliation.

Just look at those words and let God use them to stir your heart!

Entrust (the message has been entrusted to us),

1. New Creation - Die to be Born

Ambassadors (representing Jesus' kingdom here),

Appeal (appealing to the hearts of the lost).

What does it mean to be “new”?

Planting one seed at a time in the desert land story.

The Cost of Newness

Are you longing for the “new creation”?

If anyone is in Christ by grace, through faith, then that isn't just a vision.

It is a new God-forged and God-formed reality.



Maybe, this reminder that you are “a new creation” is just what is needed to spur you on. Maybe, you are feeling stuck in what feels like the “old”.

Maybe you feel like the “old” is still clutching your neck or has shackled around your ankle like a ball and chain.

Maybe you are worn out from the fight against your own efforts to live LIKE you're “new”.

If that's where you are, then be encouraged.

God's word to you is this: if ANYONE is in Christ, he IS a new creation. The old HAS passed away; behold, the new HAS come.

Paul told us about the motivation to walk in this reality, to live OUT this newness.

2 Corinthians 5:14, For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;

Living as a new creation always begins by embracing the love of Christ for you. It comes as you, soak every day, in the truth about God's concern for you and the price He paid to transfer you from your “old” to His “new”.

That price, that cost, is spelled out!

2 Corinthians 5:21, For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

On the cross, Jesus embodied your sin-infested “old” in order that you might now, in newness, embody His God-centred righteousness.

1. New Creation - Die to be Born

Let's pray that God would help us see that, with renewed eyes, that the love of Christ would control us as new creations.

2. Slave to Heir

2. Slave to Heir

Paul challenged the Galatians to not go back to being slaves and being trapped in the bondage of sin but instead become and heir of God and be free from sin by the Spirit.



Introduction

You have discovered that faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to get into Heaven.

Human effort driven by a works religious mindset will not get you into Heaven.

Instead, it will put you into bondage and steal away your joy.

Paul has been confronting the false teaching of the Judaizers and re-convincing the Galatian Churches to return to the true Gospel. He has stressed that it is more important to please God rather than to please others.

He has told them if you quit serving God and pleasing Him then the sacrifice of Jesus means nothing. He challenges them about their actions by asking, "Do you really want to negate Christ's death and resurrection?"

Paul frequently has referred to his former way of life when he too was trapped into a works related religious mindset.

Paul discovered that his religious mindset and works driven religious mindset put him in opposition to the Lord. The deceived mindset of the religious does not draw them closer to the Lord but further away and in opposition to His message of "grace."

2. Slave to Heir

Jesus told us to not forget about His sacrifice and why He instructed us to continue to practice Communion. He wanted us to allow the experience of communion and remembering to take root in our hearts.

He also reminded the Galatian church that Abraham became saved and a friend of God not because he followed the Law but because he believed by faith. He uses Abraham as an example to show that the law had a purpose for a short time but once Jesus "The Seed" came he brought in the fulfilment of the law.

Therefore, Jesus in Paul's own words did the following according to

Galatians 3:25, But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

He stressed in chapter three that the law was not opposed to the promises of God but taught about those promises and taught us about how life really is birthed.

Life is birthed through faith in the Promised One.

The law showed that we are all prisoners to sin, and we cannot get to heaven by human effort therefore we needed the Promised One to set us free.

Therefore, Jesus came fulfilling the prophetic words of the OT and fulfilling the covenant of faith promised to Abraham.

As a result of the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ and our willingness to accept Christ by faith we then get the awesome privilege of becoming "The Sons and Daughters of God."

Since Jesus came and ushered in this new era of faith and grace there is now no more distinction between Jew or Greek, slave, or free man, male or female but we are all one in Christ Jesus.

We are all on the same plain equal in the eyes of the Lord Yes, we are all equal in that we all belong to Him.

What is grace?

Majority of people have no idea what grace is!

Paul himself had a hard time convincing people that salvation is really a grace thing not a works thing.

Paul had the same problem in his era because grace just seems too easy for most of us to believe. Instead of listening to the message of Jesus we instead think "There has to be human effort in this somewhere!" You may ask "Why do we think this?"



grace

2. Slave to Heir

I believe because all the religions of the world have said “You can only be saved if you work at it!” But faith and grace are the tickets to becoming not only saved but they also lead to us becoming children of God.

Galatians 3: 26-29, For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Paul winds up Chapter 3 telling us that we are the sons and daughters of God because of Jesus Christ and his willingness to offer himself as the ultimate sacrifice. His ultimate sacrifice then ushered in the new era of faith and grace.

What does it mean to be a slave?

Dictionary:

A human being owned as property by another and is absolutely subject to his will.

Bondservant divested of all freedom and personal rights.

A person who is completely dominated by some influence, habit, or person.

Paul tells us if we live without faith and refuse to experience grace then we are slaves of sin.

What does it mean to be a son or daughter of “Abba” Father?

Definition of an Heir:

A person who inherits or is legally entitled to inherit, through the natural action of the law, another's property or title upon the other's death.

Anyone who receives property of a deceased person either by will or by law.

The Word tells us that we become the children of God when we by faith believe. We place our trust and put our lives into the control of Jesus.

How do we become children by divine adoption?

At one point in our life, we were not God's people because we were owned by sin.

Romans 9:26, “And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ There they shall be called sons of the living God.”



2. Slave to Heir

But because we have believed on Jesus.

John 1:12, But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

Because we have experienced His divine act of love.

1 John 3:1-2, Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Rooted in genuine faith.

Galatians 3:26-27, For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

The willingness on our part to testify to this divine miracle through water baptism we then become changed and transformed.

Galatians 4:4-7, But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born^[a] of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" ⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

God adopts us into His family.

Romans 8:14-15, For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

The blessing of being adopted causes us to no longer be slaves to sin but free in the Spirit.

Galatians 4:26, 28, ²⁶ but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

²⁸ Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.

This freedom is linked to the promise of Abraham our spiritual predecessor to God and a spiritual example of how to have a relationship with the Father.

Galatians 3:28, There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

2. Slave to Heir

We therefore receive the title as God's children through this sacrificial act of faith and surrender to Jesus. His death made this all possible.

Since we do this, we get to receive the rights and the property of God Himself.

What does God own?

The Bible tells us He owns everything! In Revelation we are told that He holds the world in his hands.

He not only owns everything on the earth but also everything in Heaven.

When we become the heirs, or the children of God we then receive not only all that belongs to God, but we also become recipients of all the promises from the Father.

In a nutshell, we get to reap the benefits of all the Promises of God to His family.

What can be said about God's promises to us?

The answer He will keep them and fulfil them.

God has promised His children that He will supply their needs.

He has promised to supply every need we have.

Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus".

He says we will take care of us just like a good father takes care of his children.

He will release some of his resources when we are in need of them.

God has promised His children that His grace is sufficient for them. In other words it's enough to get us into Heaven.

2 Corinthians 12:9, And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Grace is enough!

Truth is you will not come up short from getting into Heaven.

The promise is Grace is all you need to get your ticket into Heaven.

On the other hand, this promise says human effort will not get you into Heaven.

God has made provision for our salvation by His grace through faith.

2. Slave to Heir

***Ephesians 2:8-10**, For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

It is through an obedient faith that we have access into the grace of God.

***Romans 5:1-2**, Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

God has promised that His children will not be overloaded with temptation. He will never give us more than we cannot handle.

Instead, He assures us that a way of escape will be provided.

***1 Corinthians 10:13**, No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

***Jude 1:24**, "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy"*

God has promised His children victory over death.

He first resurrected Jesus by way of assuring our resurrection.

***Acts 2:32**, "God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact."*

***1 Corinthians 15:3-4**, For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,*

***1 Corinthians 15:57**, But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

God has promised His children that all things work together for good to those who love and serve Him.

***Romans 8:28**, And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

It may be difficult for us to see and understand how this is accomplished at certain times in our lives, but God has promised it, and He will deliver on His promises.

2. Slave to Heir

God has promised His children that those who believe in Jesus and are baptized for the forgiveness of sins will be saved.

Mark 16:16, He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

Acts 2:38, Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.



God has promised His children **eternal life**.

John 10:27-28, My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸ And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

God's faithfulness is found also in these promises.

The promise of God to His children here is **it will happen**.

1 Thessalonians 5:24, He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

The promise from the Father here is that **He will have compassion on us**.

Isaiah 54:9-10, "For this is like the waters of Noah to Me; For as I have sworn That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth, So have I sworn That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. ¹⁰ For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed," Says the Lord, who has mercy on you.

The promise here is that **God would never destroy the earth by flood again**.

Genesis 9:16, The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."

The promise from the Father here is that **He will not abandon us like many of our earthy fathers**.

Genesis 28:15, Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."

The promise of the Father here is that **He will keep His covenant to us and remain faithful to us**.

Deuteronomy 7:8-9, but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and

2. Slave to Heir

redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. ⁹ “Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;

The promise here is the **Father has never failed to keep His word.**

***Joshua 23:14**, “Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed.*

The promise here is **He will give His children rest.**

***1 Kings 8:56**, “Blessed be the Lord, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses.*

The promise from the Father is he will not let you slip and fall because He never sleeps.

***Psalms 121:3-4**, He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. ⁴ Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep.*

The promise from the Father is He will be patient with us.

***2 Peter 3:9**, The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

The promise from the Father is He will always be faithful even when we are not, but he will always know His children.

***2 Timothy 2:13**, If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*

***2 Timothy 2:19**, Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”*

Now that we are free and no longer slaves to sin, we need to stay that way.

Paul tells them “Don’t go back to being slaves!”

We were once slaves to those of the world but when we found Jesus, we became free! Paul addressed this Christian group in our text and in essence says, “But I am amazed how you Christians want to return to being slaves.”

2. Slave to Heir

God has not just faced this situation with the Galatian Christians, but He has faced it with the nation of Israel as well. Just read the Old Testament and you see it repeated over and over.

Conclusion

Galatians 4:4-5, But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Galatians 4 tells us to stay rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the way of faith which then bestows grace on our lives. Once we have received this gift of grace and holiness and the freedom that comes with it we must hold on to it.

We risk losing our position in the family of God if we choose to go back to the way of slavery.

The way of slavery is the idea that "I can save myself" if I work hard enough.

If we become deceived by this religious mind set, we will only be robbed of our joy and once again be locked in the cell of bondage and sin.

2. Slave to Heir

3. New Thinking

3. New Thinking

Colossians 3:1-4, If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

The only way to reach the world is to be without the world and to bring to the world a divine dimension.

John 8:23, And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

Jesus, even though He came into the world, reached the world from the vantage point above the world.

John 18:36, Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

Jesus reached the world from a vantage point beyond the world.

Apostle Paul says that we are also going to reach the world when we are no longer of the world.

Romans 12:1-2, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Galatians 1:4, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

Jesus' kingdom is not of this world.

He reached the world from beyond the world.

Paul says that if you are going to reach the world then it must be from beyond the world.

You know, it's an interesting set of thoughts to think about, but



3. New Thinking

This paradox runs all through the conversations that Jesus had with His disciples and elsewhere in the New Testament.

For example, Jesus said, in His prayer to the Father

John 17:15, I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

Matthew 28:19, Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Titus 2:12, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

1 John 4:17, Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.

We have all those statements about being in the world, reaching the world, living as Christ in the world, living righteously in the world, and you have that whole other dimension of having to reach the world from out of the world.

How are you going to resolve the paradox?

How can I say that you must reach the world from beyond the world when Jesus says go into the world?

When John says be Christ in the world?

How can these two be brought together?

- Your inside lives in heaven, and
- Your outside lives here.

One those who know and love Christ and know His work.

Until a Christian, in his heart and his soul and his mind, has learned to live his spiritual life in the heavenlies, he will never be able to touch the earth with the truth of God.

It won't happen.

Jesus did that every night. Jesus would retreat to the Mount of Olives because that was His real world.

That is where He communed with the Father.

That is the place He had come from, and the place to which He would go when His work was done.

3. New Thinking

It was there that He lived and communed with God. From that vantage point, He went into the world.

- As long as we are earthbound and preoccupied with the world system and
- As long as we are caught up with money, fame, prestige, popularity, fashion, education or whatever and you will not reach the world with the Gospel the way God would want.

We must have an objective look.

We must have a very uninvolved eye so that we can at least begin to see

- *the real poverty of soul,*
- *the real destitution of spirit,*
- *the real hopelessness,*
- *the real helplessness,*
- *the real loneliness of a world*

without Christ.

I have had many experiences when I visit the mission fields. When I visit Bihar, India, South Africa, and other mission field. I am moved with tears, and it pounds my heart for the lost.

But then I am back in London, United Kingdom and the church and the people slowly it comes to routine. All those emotional moving spiritual tears just vanishes away slowly!

I wish I could see the world the way Jesus sees it.

I am still in the process of having my transformation by the renewing of my mind.

2 Corinthians 6:17-18, Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty."

Paul wasn't talking about personal holiness but evangelism.

There is no way we are going to touch the world until you get out of it and see its need genuinely, honestly, and realistically.

In Ephesians, the apostle Paul tells us to leave the world. He tells us to take our hearts, hopes, thoughts, and get them out of here.

Telling us that everything we really want is up there anyway.

You have been blessed in heavenlies.



3. New Thinking

Ephesians 1:3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

Angels are in heaven.

Ephesians 3:10, to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,

Christ is in heaven.

Ephesians 1:20, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

We are seated in the heavenlies.

Ephesians 2:6, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

The blessings are there,

The angels are there,

The Lord is there,

Your seat is there.

What are you doing down here?

That is the message of Colossians chapter 3.

Colossians 3:1-4, If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Get out of the system.

Divorce yourself from the world in terms of your spiritual attitudes, in terms of your inner man.

Paul has closed out the doctrinal section of the book of Colossians at the end of chapter 2.

Having stated sound doctrine, he makes some practical implications.

Doctrine always has practical implications.

The first great, practical principle that he wants to tell us is get out of the system.



3. New Thinking

The only way we will ever reach the world is to ascend beyond the world into the presence of God.

Ephesians 2:6, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

In the Greek, this is a past tense, and something that already happened.

Whenever a Greek wanted to say something that was already done and absolutely irrevocable and couldn't be changed, he said it in the past.

The moment you came to Christ, when you were dead in sins, and you were made alive together with Christ. When you were saved by grace, you were instantaneously raised up and given a place in the heavenlies in Christ.

Spiritually speaking, you ascended.

Your conscious mind is occupied with Christ.

You entered into the holy of holies.

The veil was ripped, and you walked into the presence of God.

Philippians 3:20, For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ,

We are not there yet.

Though our bodies aren't there, that is to be the occupation of our mind.

The heavenlies.

2 Peter 1:3-4, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

When you were saved positionally, you were taken out of the world.

1 John 5:5, Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

When you put your faith in Christ, you overcame the world.

When you received the divine power that came in salvation, the great and precious promises, when you were made a partaker of the divine nature, you escaped the corruption that is in the world.

3. New Thinking

- You were transformed.
- You transcended the world.
- Your conversation, your manner of life is in the heavenlies.

A great reality.

So, every one of us, as believers, has entered into a genuine, spiritual relationship with the God of the universe, the Christ at His right hand, the Holy Spirit, in the heavenlies.

The moment you were saved, God granted to you the capacity to enter and to live consciously in His presence.

Spirituality is then a heavenly kind of life.

V 1, If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

- It is a preoccupation with the divine.
- It is the upward look.
- It is where you continually gaze on the glory of the Lord

We transformed by the Holy Spirit into His image.

2 Corinthians 3:18, But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as [b]y the Spirit of the Lord.

How can you gaze on the glory of the Lord unless you have got your mind in heaven?

Unless you are thinking about God?

Unless you are thinking about Christ?

Unless you are thinking about the Spirit of God.

This little section here that begins it is a call to true spirituality.

True spirituality is setting your affections on things above and not on things on the earth.

It is getting divorced from the system so that you can step away from the world. You can see the world, and you can reach the world from the vantage point of divine enablement.

- ❖ The key thing in missions is not knowing all the Bible verses and what they mean.

3. New Thinking

- ❖ The key thing in missions is not finding a place to go.
- ❖ The key thing in missions is to be dwelling in the heavenlies so that you can come back to the world wherever it is from the vantage point of divine power and make an impact.

V 1, If then you were raised with Christ,

It should probably be translated “since,” because it’s already an accomplished fact.

Since you have been risen with Christ already accomplished reality.

You have already died.

Galatians and in Romans very clearly explained.

You died.

When did you die?

At salvation.

You were crucified with Christ.

So, you died when you were saved.

You died to the world.

Romans chapter 7, you died to that former husband. After that you rose from the dead, and you took on Eternal life.

Eternal life is heavenly life.

So, when you came alive in Christ, at the moment of your salvation, you came alive to the dimension of God’s heaven.

Your mind was open to God.

What God desires, and what God wills for your life.

You died with Christ, and you rose with Christ.

From the moment of your salvation, you entered into a new dimension of life.

- ✓ You are not living plain old biological life.
- ✓ You are not living zoo.
- ✓ You are living eternal life, which is a quality and a dimension of life that only God can give.
- ✓ The moment you became a believer, you were risen with Christ.

3. New Thinking

- ✓ You live His resurrection life.

Philippians 3:20, For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ,

If your mind is stuck in the things of the world, then you are not living up to your position in Christ!

The Christian life is basically becoming what you are!

I better live up to my position. Our position is in Christ.

In Christ we have eternal life.

Having eternal life takes us into the presence of God, and we live His kind of life. We breathe His kind of air.

Notice the first four verses:

V 1, "With Christ"

V 1, "Where Christ"

V 3, "With Christ"

V 4, "When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

- With Christ,
- Where Christ,
- With Christ,
- With Christ.

The emphasis is very clear.

Having Christ is having everything.

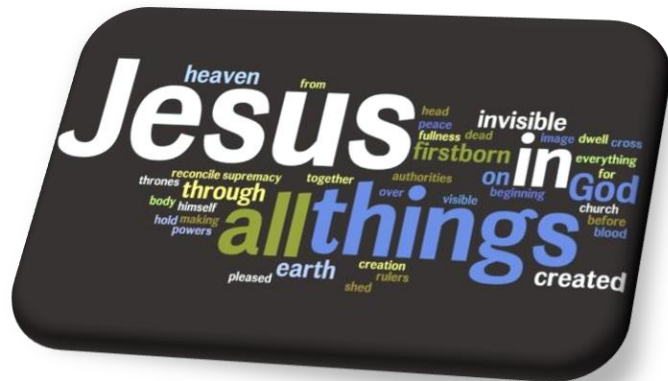
He is the centre of our resurrection life.

The conscious preoccupation of the believer is to be on Christ.

"Seek the things that are above."

Get your preoccupation on Christ.

Christ is the centre of your life.



3. New Thinking

Colossians chapter 2.

- *Don't let anybody come along and intimidate you with human philosophy.*

Christ is all.

- *Don't let anybody come along and intimidate you with human rules and ritual and legalism.*

Christ is all.

- *Don't let anybody come along and intimidate you with their angels and their ecstatic experiences.*

Christ is sufficient.

- *Don't let anybody come along and intimidate you with their acts of self-styled fleshly self-indulgence.*

Christ is all.

Colossians 2:10, and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

You have everything in having Christ.

You don't need any of the world's systems of religion.

You don't need to say

- Christ plus human philosophy,
- Christ plus legalism,
- Christ plus mysticism,
- Christ plus asceticism.

All you need is Christ.

Christians get intimidation begins when they don't spend enough time with Christ to find out that He is all they need.

Live a Christ conscious life.

You have been risen with Christ.

The old life is gone. You are living the new eternal life.

3. New Thinking

As long as you are there positionally, just remember where your position is and start operating to get toward that in reality. Don't forget who you are.

Responsibility

V 1, If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

Seek those things which are above.

Literally continually be seeking those things which are above.

Make it the pattern of your life to be preoccupied with heaven.

Paul is not offering or inviting us to be spaced out spiritually.

The Spirit of God is not telling us to do something weird and strange.

Paul is simply saying, "Let your preoccupation with heaven govern your earthly responses."

Do you know what it means to think on heavenly things?

You got to think about who is there in heaven.

Paul is not saying, "Just imagine yourself strolling down the golden streets, and turning right, and etc..."

No!

The idea is not a preoccupation with to think heavenly thoughts, is to be preoccupied with the one who reigns in the city the Lord Jesus Christ.

We entered in the heavenlies when we were saved.

But do you know what happens?

It happens to all of us.

We just have a hard time putting our hearts up there!

We get preoccupied with how much money we have got. Preoccupied with what our house looks like, what our clothes look like, whether we are keeping up with the society around us, preoccupied with all the mundane stuff in our world.

We are not able to offer to the world anything about a heavenly dimension, because we are not too sure what it is yet.

The verb here is to be constantly seeking.

3. New Thinking

Matthew 6:33, But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

This is not a new principle.

You can look in the Old Testament.

1 Chronicles 22:19, Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God. Therefore arise and build the sanctuary of the Lord God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord and the holy articles of God into the house that is to be built for the name of the Lord."

V 1, If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

"Seek the things which are above"?

What are they?

The spiritual values that are embedded in the heart of the glorified Christ.

Realities like tenderness, kindness, loveliness, meekness, longsuffering, patience, wisdom, forgiveness, most of all love.

Those are the bounties of heaven.

Those are the things that fill the heart of Jesus, and those are the things that if you spend enough time with Him are going to fill your heart.

An obvious thought to find out what Jesus wants.

How are you going to do that?

Spend some time with Him.

So, Paul carries us to the heights in the heavenlies.

He takes us to the other side of the grave, puts us in the Beulah land of the spirit.

Where the Christian has

- *new ideals,*
- *new desires,*
- *new resources, and*
- *all heavenly.*

It makes us feel like a skylark who flies higher and higher.



3. New Thinking

All the time singing.

When a Christian begins to live in the heavenlies, when he begins to live in the “Jerusalem from above,” as Paul calls it in Galatians. When he begins to find that city that really is the true home of God, and the true resting place of the believer, then he begins to bring down to this world something this world desperately needs, and that’s a heavenly set of values.

V 2, “Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.”

V 1, “seek,”

V 2, “keep on thinking the things above.”

You not only seek heaven, but you think heaven.

Your mind ought to be on heaven.

How are you going to seek heaven?

How are you going to seek the things above?

By thinking on the things above.

Couldn’t be any simpler. “Seek” from one Greek verb ***zēteō***, and “set your mind on” from another one ***phroneō***.

If you are to really seek the things above, you must program your mind to think on those things.

These two terms are important in Paul’s vocabulary. They had the idea kind of a chosen orientation, like the needle of a compass seeks to find the pull, and then follows that pull, so the believer in his life seeks to fall in line with the pull of God toward the heavenlies.

Maybe the second term is the most important. To seek is one thing, but how to seek? Set your mind.

Set your mind.

This is the intellect, the mind.

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

We need to understand the thing that God feels, thinks, and wills by knowing the revelation that He has given us.

How do you get into the heavenlies?

Dwell in the heavenlies when your mind is preoccupied with the Scripture.

3. New Thinking

Because scripture is the only thing that we know about God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

The only thing we know of their character and their values is what we read.

God becomes real to our conscious mind.

The values of God are then translated into my action.

Until we leave the world, we have nothing to offer it.

An experience of spending time with the mind of God plants His thoughts in our mind, and we have a heavenly message to bring in an earthly vessel.

It's simple but profound.

The Christian who is risen with Christ has a new focus.

He has a new focal point.

He has a new direction, just like the compass needle is drawn to the north, so his spirit is drawn to the heavenlies to be occupied with Jesus Christ.

V 2, "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth."

The preoccupation is with Christ.

Resource

V 1, "Seek the things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God."

- ✓ *He is there,*
- ✓ *He is seen in a sitting position, and*
- ✓ *He is waiting in majesty and honour for us to enter His presence and claim His power.*

This is the resource!

The truth of Christ's coronation, the truth of his exaltation. At the Father's right hand means that He is the fountain of blessing for His children.

- ✓ Because He is there,
- ✓ Because He is exalted,
- ✓ Because He is at the Father's right hand.

The Father has said,

3. New Thinking

- *You are honoured.*
- *You are praised,*
- *You are glorified,*
- *I give you everything I have.*

We go into His presence to receive it.

When we seek to obtain the things above, we are not chasing phantoms.

We are not like the Gnostics who tried, by a superior knowledge, to get a superior spiritual experience and never got anything.

Christian everything you seek is there because He's there.

When you needed something, you went there, and it was there.

In our new life what do we have?

You have already been placed in the heavenlies positionally.

A responsibility.

Get your practical life up there and seek the things that are there by setting your mind on those things.

Resource. Have the confidence to know that what you seek is there.

Reason

V 3, For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Dead to what?

Galatians 6:14, But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

- ❖ You are dead to the system.
- ❖ You are dead to the world.
- ❖ Your life is hidden with Christ in God.

The reason that you should follow this admonition is because that's where you are alive.

You have an entirely new life and a new consciousness.

"Your life is hidden with Christ in God."

3. New Thinking

What does it mean to have your life hidden with Christ in God?

1. You are all wrapped up with God in Jesus Christ.

Your life is tangled up with their life.

You are joined to the Lord with one spirit.

The Father, and the Son, and you. We are all in this thing together.

When I go you up there, they won't ask you show your credentials rather they would ask, where have you been? We have been waiting for you. This is home, you know.

Our life is all wrapped up with Jesus Christ.

God doesn't see you apart from Christ, and God doesn't see Him apart from You.

God looks at Jesus Christ and sees Abraham.

That is what it means that my life is hidden with Christ in God.

2. Your life is concealed from the world.

They don't know it.

They think you are just like everybody else.

They don't know what you know!

The natural man does not understand the things of God.

Do you think they know you from anybody else?

Do they know that you are a citizen of heaven, living in a heavenly?

They haven't got any idea.

This was concealed from their deluded minds.

3. Everlasting security

If my life is hidden with Christ in God, that's secure.

Read **Romans 8**, you will be filled with this rich truth!

You have a new life all wrapped up with Him.

It is concealed from the world,

3. New Thinking

It is secure with Him.

Live in the heavenlies.

Somebody may try to intimidate you into thinking you are not going to get the higher knowledge, deeper life, second blessing, true humility or whatever, but you are there.

Revelation

V 4, When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

They may not recognize us now.

They may not know that we live in the heavenlies, but someday they are going to know.

Because when He appears at His second coming (**Revelation 19**) we will appear with Him also. He comes back with the white robe, riding a white horse with all those other white horses and the armies out of heaven.

We come along with the angels.

The verdict of eternity is going to reverse the verdicts of time.

People are going to see who it was that really attained to God's presence.

When He appears at His second coming, we will be manifest with Him in glory.

The veil which now shrouds your higher life from others will then be withdrawn. The world which persecutes, despises, ignores now will then be blinded with the dazzling glory of your Revelation.

What is the centre of your life?

If the centre of your life is to set your mind on Christ, you are going to live in the heavenlies.

From that vantage point, you have a set of values and a power to give to the world.

You can go out and reach people for Christ.

You can touch lives in a way that matters.

Ptolemy taught that the centre of the solar system was the earth. Everything revolved around the earth.

For 1,300 years that theory went on until it was finally proved to be an illusion.

Copernicus said, "The sun is the centre, and everything goes around that."

3. New Thinking

Some Christians who are still living under a Ptolemaic illusion. They think the world is the centre of their universe, but it isn't.

The Son is.

Christ is everything.

I hope He is the centre of your life.

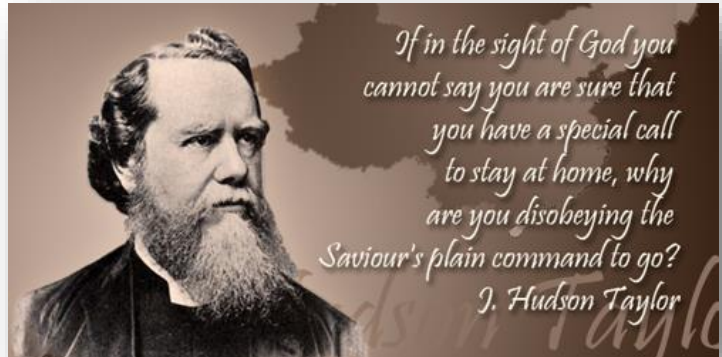
I hope you are living in the heavenlies.

Hudson Taylor.

He was so burdened with China.

What burdened him with China?

His biographers tell us that he lived so much in the presence of Jesus Christ, that he began to feel the great heartbeat of Jesus for the lost souls. He himself says that ***"The burden of Christ became my burden."*** He lived in the heavenlies so much that he began to feel like Jesus felt.



He found the self-satisfying, hymn singing congregation in Brighton, England. He looked around him, pew upon pew of prosperous, bearded merchants, shopkeepers, visitors, demure wives in bonnets and crinolines, scrubbed children trained to hide their impatience.

The atmosphere of smug piety sickened him. He seized his hat and left and later said, 'Unable to bear the sight of a congregation of a thousand and more Christian people rejoicing in their own security while millions were perishing for lack of knowledge, I wandered out on the sands alone in great spiritual agony.'

There on the beach, he prayed for God to give him 24 laborers to go to China.

Are you sitting in your security with self-righteous piety, and that the centre of our universe is the earth and not the Son of righteousness.

Hudson Taylor felt the way he felt because he lived with Jesus so long that the heart of Jesus became his heart.

So, he left the world and dwelt with the Saviour so long, that he could come back to the world from a divine vantage point.

Let God renew your mind!

3. New Thinking

4. Walk in Love

4. Walk in Love

***Ephesians 5:1-7**, Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. ² And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. ³ But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; ⁴ neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. ⁵ For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore do not be partakers with them.*



If you are a believer in Christ, you had a former life.

***Ephesians 4:22-24**, that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*

This is the very main thrust of this wonderful epistle.

***Ephesians 2:10**, For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

4. Walk in Love

The book of Ephesians portrays to us that salvation is a total transformation.

It is complete change.

It is going 180 degrees in the opposite direction.

It is ceasing to be under the authority and power of Satan.

Ephesians 3:19, to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Instead of walking in the power of Satan we ought to be walking in the Spirit of God.

Ephesians 2:2, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

That's how dramatic the transformation is.

How do I know I am a true Christian?

We are called to something.

V 1, Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. ² And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us,



FOLLOW THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS

Following the teaching of Jesus is, first and foremost, **about loving others.** According to Christ himself, this is the mark of a true Christian.

Since we are His loved children,

Since He loved us enough to make us His children,

Since we have become partakers of the divine nature,

We have the capacity now to imitate God and walking in love.

4. Walk in Love

We will look at about walking in love.

This is the highpoint of the Christian's calling.

Ephesians 4:1-3, I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ²with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We don't get very far into the worthy walk until we run into this idea of loving people with a love that can be defined as tolerance.

But it's defined even more directly here in this section.

So now we understand love as more than just tolerance.

We understand love as sacrifice. It doesn't even stop there.

Ephesians 4:32, And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

This is the foundational truth.

You can imitate God in the sense that your love is, at its highest point, a forgiving love.

I want you to connect that love with the reality of forgiveness.

If you are going to be like God, you are going to have to be forgiving.

If you are going to be like God, you are going to have to be comprehensively forgiving, full of mercy, full of grace, full of compassion, full of forgiveness.

At first it might seem like it's asking way too much for us to be like God.

But the Bible doesn't back down with that at all.

When we are told to be imitators of God, we are immediately drawn to what Peter said.

1 Peter 1:15-16, but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

You think the standard is high in terms of loving.

It is high also in terms of holiness.

4. Walk in Love

Where is that written?

Leviticus 11:44-45, For I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. ⁴⁵ For I am the Lord who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

We are called on to be like God.

This is the unattainable and yet necessary standard for the Christian life.

But to capture exactly what Paul is driving at

- Doesn't expect us to be like God in creative power.
- Doesn't expect us to be like God in immutability.
- Doesn't expect us to be like God in omnipresence.
- Doesn't expect us to be like God in omnipotence.
- Doesn't expect us to be like God as omniscient.

But what he is saying here is that we are to be like God, manifestly His beloved children, by loving the way God loved.

The foundation of God's love is forgiveness.

You never will receive any of the gifts of God's love unless you have first received His forgiveness. That forgiveness is available to us in Christ.

John 3:16, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

So, God's love.

God's love takes us to the cross and to Christ, faith in Him and salvation.

Then God's love lavishes on us total and complete comprehensive and everlasting forgiveness for all our sins.

Ephesians 4:32, And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

"Just as God in Christ" forgave you, forgiving others.

In that sense you are to be an imitator of God.

4. Walk in Love

In the sense that you love as Christ loved, who gave Himself up as an offering and a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins.

So, in this sense we can follow God as our example.

The word “imitators” is translated from the Greek word *mimētai* ‘we get the word “mimics.”

We can’t mimic God in those incommunicable attributes that belong only to Him as the eternally existent One.

But we are called here to mimic God, to pattern our lives after God in the realm of sacrificial forgiveness.

God is love, and that love foundationally is brought to us in the matter of forgiveness.

All other expressions of His love proceed out of that forgiveness.

When you think about all that is ours because God has forgiven us.

The first three chapters emphasized all of this.

What did God give us when He forgave us?

What did He give us when we were saved by grace through faith?

- He gave us a new standing before Himself.
- We are declared righteous, and His righteousness is credited to us.
- He declared that we have new life.
- We have regeneration.
- We have been born again.
- We are new creations.
- We have a new righteousness in terms of our conduct.
- We have been converted.
- We aren’t what we used to be. Old things pass away, new things come.
- We have a new father, no longer the devil, but God Himself.
- We have a new inheritance, no longer the wrath of God, but the eternal blessing of God.
- We have a new citizenship, no longer citizens of the kingdom of darkness, but citizens of the kingdom of light, the kingdom of heaven.
- We have a new master.
- We have a new freedom from condemnation and sin’s dominating power.
- We have a new security.
- We are kept safe by the granting of eternal life to us, which is secured by the ever-present Holy Spirit.
- We have a new peace that is everlasting.

4. Walk in Love

- We have a new union with Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and every other believer.
- We are part of a new fellowship, the redeemed church.
- We have a new heavenly joy.
- We have a new spirit in us.
- We have a new heart.
- We have new spiritual power.
- We have new ability to serve God.
- We have a new high and holy calling.
- We have a new purpose, and
- We have a new love.

Love is the pinnacle of all that is ours in Christ.

All that is ours because we are God's, and God is ours.

1 John 4:7-10, Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

The love of God is most magnanimously, extensively manifests to humanity in the love that forgives sinners. We have been forgiven of all our sins!

Forgiveness is an expression of God's love.

It is not something we earned.

It is something He gives freely to those who come to Him.

That is where your relationship with God started.

It started in the delivery of heavenly blessings with forgiveness.

That's where it all really began.

Ephesians 2:4-7, But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

God forgives us so that He can lavish us with His love everlastingly.

4. Walk in Love

When the apostle Paul said, “Be imitators of God, as beloved children and walk in love,” he is telling us that our lives need to be marked by forgiveness.

1 Timothy 1:5, Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith,

The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart.

You may speak with the tongues of men and angels, but if you don't have love, you are nothing but a sounding gong and a clanging cymbal, **1 Corinthians 13**.

Love is everything.

1 Corinthians 13:13, And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Love that is basically defined by its eagerness and its willingness to forgive.

If you want the greatest expression of love, then listen to the words of Jesus.

John 15:13, “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

The greatest act of love possible is complete self-sacrifice, even giving your life, if necessary, in death for someone else. Now none of us have done that.

This is an extreme kind of love that reaches out to someone who is not perfect and not deserving.

Romans 5:8, But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

V 32, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

1 John 2:12, I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.

Although you are a beneficiary of the forgiveness, yet it is for the fame of God.

It is for the glory of God.

God forgives sin to put

- ✓ His grace on display,
- ✓ His mercy on display,
- ✓ His compassion on display,
- ✓ His love on display, and
- ✓ it on display everlastingly throughout all eternity.

4. Walk in Love

In the new heavens and the new earth along with the redeemed of all the ages and the holy angels, praise God endlessly and eternally for His forgiveness!

You can't love like God unless you are marked by forgiveness.

If you want to be like God, you act toward people who offend you the way God acts toward people who offended Him.

Luke 6:36, Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

This is the characteristic of God that Paul is driving at. This kind of love is so extensive.

Ephesians 3:17-21, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— ¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, ²¹ to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Paul prays for the believers to be rooted and grounded in love. This is the foundation of everything in your Christian life.

Paul prays that believers would understand the entire range of divine love, which is beyond comprehension.

How can we know something that's incomprehensible to know?

We can to the degree that the Spirit of God instructs us.

So, if you are going to be an imitator of God, then you need to be characterized by that which is most definitive of God, and that is His love that forgives. If you have that same love and understand it in its fullness, you can be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Do you want to be like God?

You want to be as a beloved child, who can bear the name of the Lord and demonstrate that you belong to that Lord by manifest part of His essential nature of love the way He loved.

If you love the way He loved, then you are experiencing the fullness of God.

1 Peter 4:8, And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."

4. Walk in Love

“Fervent,” in Greek *ektenēs* it is used of a muscle that is completely stretched to its maximum limit, reaches far as you possibly can to love one another!

This love we are talking about is the kind of love that covers sin.

It is the kind of love that forgives.

Peter is borrowing language from **Proverbs 10:12**, “*Love covers all sins.*”

This is practical because we are all going to be offended.

We are all going to be treated unkindly, unfairly.

We may be slandered.

We may be abused.

What should be our response?

Vengeance, retaliation, anger, and hostility?

No!

Those things were laid out for us as things to be avoided.

Ephesians 4:31, Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

Put it all away, and give back kindness and tender-heartedness and forgiveness, the same way God in Christ forgave you.

If you are in Christ, God doesn’t hold your sin against you.

He completely forgives it.

This is so evidently missing in our world.

Everybody wants to destroy everybody else. It finds its way into the church, which then becomes self-destructive. Our Lord gives us completely different direction.

I want you to love each other the way I love you.

How do I love you?

I forgive you all your trespasses constantly, every day.

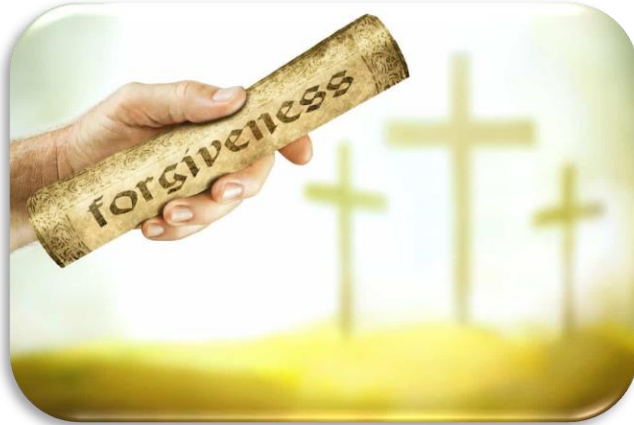
Matthew 18:21-22, Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”²² Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

4. Walk in Love

Forgiveness is what defines our love.

It's not about being sentimental, or emotional attachment, but loving your enemies.

Matthew 5:43-48, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? ⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.



Jesus, in Matthew 18, told that familiar story about the man who owed the unpayable debt. Jesus developed that parable in a hyperbole so that the debt was ridiculous.

It never could have been paid by anyone. But the man came and plead with his authority, and he was given complete forgiveness. Then he went out and found a guy who owed him a minor amount and strangled him and threw him in prison. The anger of the friends of that man reached a point where they brought him in for such hypocrisy. He would receive such comprehensive love and couldn't give lesser love to someone else.

God's beloved children are to be like Him, imitating Him.

Imitating Him in forgiveness, self-sacrifice.

If you want to imitate God, then you must be forgiving.

Whatever the offense, slander, maligning attack on you, whatever inequity and unfairness, whatever abuse may have come your way you leave the results to God.

Vengeance is His.

He will repay.

God takes care of all those accounts, and you offer what He gave you. Complete forgiveness.

4. Walk in Love

This is a hard message for our culture today, 2000s years Christianity has had a moral influence on the world.

For the most part over those 2000 years, homosexuality in the Western part of the world has been seen as a destructive, dangerous, and deadly kind of sin. Culture after culture in the Western world have dealt with it as a destructive sin.

We who were a few years ago in a post-Christian society, suddenly arrived at 2015, and the Supreme Court allowed homosexual marriage. At that point, that was the final nail in the coffin, and that was the death of Western culture. It had given up all its Christian morality, and with that went a whole lot of virtue.

Not only was evil unleashed it's manifesting itself in the bizarre transgender aspects of homosexuality. But hate has been unleashed in the world at a level that we have never seen it in our society. 2000 years have gone by. We are not in a post Christian world. We are in a neo-paganistic world. We are back to living like the Romans and the Greeks, who tolerated all those kinds of sins that Christianity had a positive impact in eliminating.

The kind of pagan world that we are now living in was the very same world that the New Testament Christians were living in, and they needed to be in the midst of a hating, vicious, wicked world.

You might think that trying to be like God is impossible, and there are aspects of it that are impossible.

An illustration

Job chapter 11. We hear Zophar speaking.

He asks some good questions.

Job 11:7-8, "Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?"⁸ They are higher than heaven—what can you do? Deeper than Sheol—what can you know?

Job 21:14-15, Yet they say to God, 'Depart from us, For we do not desire the knowledge of Your ways.¹⁵ Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? And what profit do we have if we pray to Him?'

You can't know God, and you have no interest in knowing God.

Job 26:7-14, He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing.⁸ He binds up the water in His thick clouds, Yet the clouds are not broken under it.⁹ He covers the face of His throne, And spreads His cloud over it.¹⁰ He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters, At the boundary of light and darkness.¹¹ The pillars of heaven tremble, And

4. Walk in Love

are astonished at His rebuke. ¹² He stirs up the sea with His power, And by His understanding He breaks up the storm. ¹³ By His Spirit He adorned the heavens; His hand pierced the fleeing serpent. ¹⁴ Indeed these are the mere edges of His ways, And how small a whisper we hear of Him! But the thunder of His power who can understand?"

Even when we look unto the creation, the massive realities of creation, we are only talking about "the fringes of His ways."

So how can we grasp God?

Job answers the Lord.

***Job 42:2-6**, "I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. ³ You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ⁴ Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.' ⁵ "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. ⁶ Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."*

What Job saw there was the love of God, the mercy of God, the compassion of God, the lavish grace of God, and that took Job from saying, "I heard about You and now I see You."

God becomes clear in His mercy.

God becomes clear in His lavish grace.

God becomes clear in the expressions of His vast, incomprehensible love.

There is a paradox in this, because you feel like if you are coming into the presence of God, you should maybe act like Peter did when he was in the presence of the Creator.

***Luke 5:8**, When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"*

***Revelation 1:17**, And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.*

***Isaiah 6:5**, So I 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 my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts."*

There is that reality that we are in awe of God, and that the fear of God is necessary.

But at the same time, we are in awe of His holiness, we can mimic His love.

Job is saying, "For the first time I see it. You are so forgiving. You are so lavish in Your generosity."

4. Walk in Love

So much mercy. That is where you see the love of God and you have seen it.

You have seen it if you are a believer. You have seen it. He loved us, and because He loved us, He forgave us, and that forgiveness is eternal.

To seal that forgiveness, He placed in us the Holy Spirit, the seal of promise.

- ✓ The Spirit took up residence in us.
- ✓ The Son took up residence in us.
- ✓ The Father takes up residence in us.

We have been singing about the triune God.

Every true believer is in union with the triune God.

So, we come into His presence as knowing we are broken, come with contrite hearts, and come mourning over our sinfulness, come meekly, come humbly, coming for grace, but at the same time, knowing that He will forgive all our transgressions.

We have offended Him over and over.

Not a day goes by that there is not some offense against God that He willingly, lovingly, graciously forgives. This is what calls us to love.

It is divine forgiveness.

“Walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”

That’s walking in love that is sacrificial.

1 Corinthians 16:13, “Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.”

Very strong language.

“Be on the alert,” that’s watching for any attack, any assault on the truth, on the people of God, on the Lord Himself.

“Stand firm in the faith,” unwavering in your convictions in sound doctrine.

“Act like men,” that means fortitude, courage, fight the battle.

“Be strong.”

But immediately in the next verse, the Holy Spirit says.

1 Corinthians 16:14, Let all that you do be done with love.

There are plenty of people who get the thirteenth verse.

4. Walk in Love

They want to stand firm in the faith.

Everything must be tempered.

Even the battle for the truth must be tempered with love.

We do everything that we do in love.

Our love calls for us to be forgiving!

Romans 13:10, Love does no harm to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.

- If you love God, you won't have other gods.
- If you love God, you won't make an idol.
- If you love God, you won't take His name in vain.
- If you love God, you won't disobey Him.
- If you love God, you will worship Him.

The second half of the Ten Commandments have to do with man.

If you love others, you are not going to harm them.

Paul makes it very clear it's this simple. Listen to his language in

Romans 13:8-9, Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

You don't harm people that you love, you do the opposite.

You sacrifice for them.

You forgive them.

Love fulfils everything.

"Walk in love"

With forgiveness and eager self-sacrifice.

V 2, And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

When Christ went to the cross and He was being a sacrifice, the Lamb of God, this was not something that displeased God, this was not something that was toxic to God.

4. Walk in Love

But in the sacrifice of Christ as an offering and a sacrifice to God in the place of sinners, this gave “a fragrant aroma.”

It is really coming from the book of Leviticus.

The book of Leviticus the sacrifices are laid out in the first five chapters.

Three sacrifices in Leviticus 1 to 3.

1. The burnt offering,
2. The meal offering, and
3. The peace offering.

Those three offerings were basically put on the altar, and they gave a fragrance.

The burnt offering pictured Christ in His complete devotion to God. The burnt offering demonstrated the willingness of the Lamb of God in complete devotion to God to give up His entire life. That was a sweet-smelling fragrance to God. That is the very essence of love.

Love at its highest point is not only willing to forgive, but also to sacrifice itself to effect that forgiveness. Complete devotion to God is seen in that burnt offering.

In the meal offering, you see Christ’s perfection, a perfection of His character, which also is a fragrance to God, who is holy, harmless, undefiled. He was the Lamb of God without sin.

In the peace offering, which also sent forth an aroma that pleased God, He is making peace between sinners and God.

So, in the burnt offering and the meal offering and the peace offering, there’s a sweet aroma.

So even in those offerings in Leviticus, you see that there were aspects of the death of Christ they were a fragrance to God. His devotion, the perfection of His character, and His making peace.

Those are the things that we can follow. We will never be somebody’s sin offering.

We will never be somebody’s trespass offering.

But we can be, as Christ was, so devoted to God, so committed in our character to Christlikeness, that we are the ones who make peace with sinners. This is what it means to love. It’s really all about forgiveness.

How has the church managed to absorb the loveless attitudes of the world?

Tragic.

We must be the children of God in the world.

4. Walk in Love

We must adorn the doctrine of God.

We must be like our Father, and no one is more like God than when he or she forgives.

The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart.

How do we know that love?

We know it because it is lavishing, unending forgiving.

So, when we talk about this kind of love, we are talking about expressions of forgiveness that define us. That's the love that the world needs to see.

They are not seeing it in the professing church of Christ.

May they see it in us.

We can only reach as far as we can reach.

But we can be known by that kind of love.

May it be so.

5. Resolving Conflicts



A large statue of Christ was erected high in the Andes on the border between **Argentina and Chile**. Called "**Christ of the Andes**," the statue symbolizes a pledge between the two countries that as long as the statue stands, there will be peace between Chile and Argentina.

But shortly after the statue was erected, the Chileans began to protest that they had been slighted for the statue had its back turned to Chile.

Just when tempers were at their highest, a Chilean newspaperman saved the day. In an editorial that not only satisfied the people but also made them laugh, he simply said, "***The people of Argentina need more watching over than those in Chile.***"

Acts 15:36-41, Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing." ³⁷ Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. ³⁸ But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. ³⁹ Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; ⁴⁰ but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. ⁴¹ And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

One way or another, in your Christian walk conflicts will arise.

5. Resolving Conflicts

We are already in a conflict with darkness, so that's a given.

However, there will be conflicts with other believers.

How do you resolve it?

Paul and Barnabas had a conflict. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark on the journey, but Paul refused. The contention was so sharp between them that they went their separate ways.

Barnabas went to Cyprus with John Mark, but Paul departed with Silas.

After the separation, we did not hear much about Barnabas, he was replaced with Silas

May conflict does not separate you from those that your destiny is connected with!

We can't avoid conflict, unless we are a "yes" man.

How do we deal with conflicts?

Conflicts will happen, it is only a matter of time!

Paul and Peter

Galatians 2:11-14, Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; ¹²for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. ¹³And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. ¹⁴But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"

Jesus and Peter

Matthew 16:21-23, From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

²² Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ^[i]"Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"

²³ But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are ^[i]an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

5. Resolving Conflicts

Abraham and Lot

Genesis 13:5-13, ⁵ Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. ⁶ Now the land was not able to [support](#) them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. ⁷ And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.

⁸ So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. ⁹ Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left."

¹⁰ And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. ¹¹ Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. ¹² Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. ¹³ But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.

Martha and Mary

Luke 10:38-42, Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. ³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."



⁴¹ And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. ⁴² But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Conflicts can be resolved, and it should not become an outright war against another believer.

However, you will not always resolve every conflict, you will have to figure out how to live with it. At peace.

There are believers that you will not get along with, no matter how hard you try.

5. Resolving Conflicts

It is because you are of a different tribe.

There are 12 tribes of Israel, there are more in the body of Christ. Just as all 12 are children of God, all of us in the body of Christ are children of God. The 12 did not always get along, all of us will not always get along.

Four Thousand Deaths Over a Bucket Story

From the late Middle Ages until the Renaissance, northern Italy divided into factions who supported rival political powers, which further intensified their border disputes. According to legend, in **1325**, a huge conflict erupted when soldiers from the town of **Modena** stole an oak bucket from the nearby rival town of **Bologna**. The thieves mockingly displayed the bucket for all to see.

Outraged, the Bolognese army marched to Modena to recover their bucket and pride. When the Modenese refused their demand, the Bolognese declared war. This event became known as the War for the Oaken Bucket. Bologna summoned a mighty army from the Guelph cities. Thirty thousand men-at-arms, two thousand knights, and Pope John XXII himself joined the chase of reclaiming the bucket.

The Modenese by contrast, only gathered five thousand men-at-arms and two thousand knights. The two armies clashed on the afternoon of **November 15, 1325**.

Despite being outnumbered nearly five to one, the Modenese managed to rout the Bolognese in just two hours of battle. The Modenese pursued the Bolognese all the way to the walls of Bologna, where they flaunted their victory before their humiliated enemy.

A total of four thousand men died that day.

All because of a bucket.

For some believers, you connect with the Holy Spirit in them immediately

For other believers, for some reason you don't. That doesn't make them the enemy.

Be at peace with them and accept them for who they are.

They are still children of God.

They are carriers of the Holy Spirit.

They are running a race to heaven as well

So, they are not your enemy, just because you do not get along.

God did not call us to get along with every believer, He called us to be at peace with every believer.

5. Resolving Conflicts

1 Thessalonians 5:23, Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A man/woman is a spirit, lives in a body, and have a soul!

Any conflict you have with that person is not with the body of the person, nor is it with the spirit of the person, provided the spirit is born again. The conflict is most likely with the soul.

The soul is where the consciousness of the person is, where the person's decision-making process has been shaped. It is shaped by where they grew up, how they grew up, the environment, their socio-economic status, etc.

However, when we get to heaven, it is the spirit that you will meet, not the soul.

Our conflict with the soul of the person therefore has no relevance!

We must learn to be at peace, even if we do not get along.

Matthew 5:9, Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.

Galatians 5:22-23, But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Hebrews 12:14, Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

Romans 12:18, If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Resolving Conflicts

Genesis 13:5-13, Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

⁶ And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

⁷ Then He said to him, "I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."

⁸ And he said, "Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit it?"

⁹ So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰ Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. ¹¹ And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

5. Resolving Conflicts

12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. 13 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.

The main goal of resolving conflict is to have your brother back!

Abraham approached Lot to resolve the conflict

Approach the person one on one.

Matthew 18:15, "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

If he doesn't hear you, take one or two matured believers with you.

Matthew 18:16, But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'

If he still doesn't hear them, go to the church.

Matthew 18:17, And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

If he still doesn't hear the church, leave him alone, but be at peace with him that you have done your best.

If he is a believer, one of those steps would have resolved the issue.

If possible, let the person have his way.

Abraham asked Lot to choose the land that he wants, and he will go the other way.

Matthew 5:40, If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.

Testing that conflict is resolved:

Can you hold the hand of that person and pray together without any ill feeling in your heart?

Can you truly pray for that person in the corner of your room?

Abraham interceded for Lot when the Lord told him that Sodom and Gomorrah will be destroyed.

5. Resolving Conflicts

Conclusion

Reasons for resolving conflicts

That your prayers and offerings unto God are not hindered.

To prevent unforgiveness from creeping in

To prevent grudges

To prevent giving the devil any room for affliction.

Practical questions

Who do you have conflict at present?

What is the reason for the conflict?

Whom have you lost the relationship?

Will you be able to restore the relationship?

If you have tried and failed to restore the relationship but failed, do you think it has another chance?

Can you think of someone whom the relationship needs to be mended?

5. Resolving Conflicts

Physical family?

Spiritual family?

If the relationship is broken and it can't be mended, then are you able to pray for them genuinely?

6. Walk in Light

6. Walk in Light

Ephesians 5:8-14, For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.¹² For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.¹³ But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.¹⁴ Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."

The book of Ephesians presents to us the pattern for Christian living.

The first three chapters - who the Christian is!

The last three, how he lives, how he acts, how he functions.

Paul in chapters 4, 5 and 6, gives us a clear, concise, and careful outline of how we are to behave as new creatures. How Christians are to live in the world.

"Walk worthy."

Let your living balance off with your identity. If you are a new creature in Christ, then walk that way.

Ephesians 5:1, "Be followers of God," or "imitators of God."

Walk worthy and imitate God.

If you are going to walk worthy of your calling, you are going to have to walk in the way that God would walk.

A light walk. If we are to imitate God, pattern our lives after Christ, and walk worthy, then we must walk as children of light.

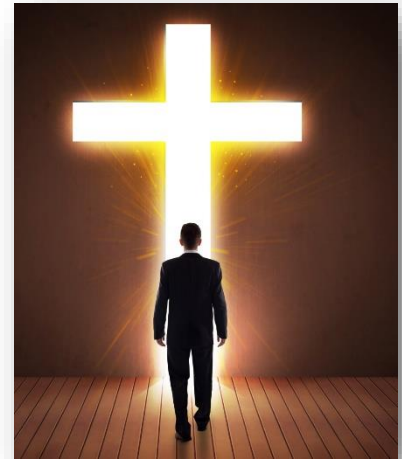
V 8, For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

If we are to live in light, we must know what light is.

Light is a symbol in the Bible.

Two aspects.

- ✓ It is used from the intellectual side,
- ✓ It is used from the moral side.



6. Walk in Light

- Intellectually, light refers to truth.
- Morally, light refers to holiness.

So, it is the intake and the output. It is the truth and the life.

Living in light means living in truth and living in holiness.

Receiving the truth and living a holy life.

Darkness too have two aspects.

- Intellectually refers to ignorance,
- Morally refers to evil.

We will find this all throughout the Scripture.

In some places He talks about light, the writer of the Bible does, and He means intellectual knowledge, and truth.

In other places he talks about light, and He means moral behaviour, and holiness.

Sometimes the Bible talks about darkness, and it means their minds are darkened. Other times He talks about darkness, and He means the deeds of darkness, and moral evil.

So light and darkness is a contrast both of truth and behaviour.

Proverbs 6:23, For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life,

He is not talking about deeds but talking about truth.

God's truth, God's Word is light, intellectual truth, knowledge.

Psalms 119:105, Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

We see light as truth, light from the intellectual side.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4, But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

V 3, Lost people

V4, Lost people blinded to the light.

- Light is knowledge,
- Darkness is being blinded to knowledge, blinded to the gospel.

6. Walk in Light

V 6, For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

- Light is knowledge.
- Darkness means ignorance, lack of knowledge, no knowledge.

Ephesians 4, where Paul says that the Gentile's mind, or the pagan mind, the unregenerate, unsaved mind, is darkened, blinded.

Romans 1:21, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

- Light, intellectually, means knowledge, and
- Darkness, intellectually, means ignorance, a lack of knowledge.

Morally, you have behaviour.

Sometimes light and darkness speak of holiness and unholiness.

Isaiah 5:20, Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

He compares good and evil with light and darkness, and here talking about behaviour. So sometimes the concept of darkness has to do with behaviour.

Romans 13:12-13, The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

So, on the one hand, you have the intellectual side of darkness, not knowing God or His truth, which results in a moral darkness, doing the deeds of that darkness.

On the other hand, light is knowing the truth, and it results in living it out.

Now, as Christians, people, we walk in the light.

If you are a Christian, you walk in the light.

1 John 1:5, This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

God is light and in Him is no darkness. If you are a son of God, you are a son of light, and if you are a son of light, there is in you no darkness at all.

When you were redeemed, you were fully redeemed. There is no residual darkness. I do not believe that Christians walk in the darkness.

6. Walk in Light

1 John 1:7, But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Put the verse in reverse.

If we are the ones whom the blood of Christ is cleansing from all sin, then we are the ones having fellowship one with another, then we are the ones walking in light.

The ones being forgiven are the ones in the light.

God is light, light produces light, God's children are light.

Matthew 5:14, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

We are called sons of light repeatedly in the New Testament.

1 Thessalonians 5:4, But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

If God is light, He gives birth to us, we become light. Jesus says that we are the light of the world.

We walk in the light.

We are the ones having fellowship.

We are the ones being cleansed.

A Christian is somebody in the light. We don't walk in darkness.

We have been translated.

Colossians 1:13, He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

John 8:12, Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

There is no middle ground.

When you were saved you were taken out of darkness into light.

What about when we sin?

When you sin, you do the deeds of darkness, but you do them in the light.

Ephesians 5:8, we are to walk as children of light.

➤ *If we are the children of light,*

6. Walk in Light

- *If we are the sons of light,*
- *If we are the sons of the day,*
- *If God is our Father, and He is light,*

Then we are the light of the world, we are to live that way.

We are the light of the world. I don't believe a Christian can walk in darkness.

You can do the deeds of the darkness, but you are going to do them in broad light.

God know, and everything is going to be exposed.

Light and darkness are absolute opposites, just like conversion is an absolute opposite.

The ultimate contrast - light and darkness.

We live in a world that's so dark, and so desperately in need of the light that we give, and so Paul says, "Walk as children of light."

***Ephesians 4:18**, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;*

It's a dark world. Strange miscarriage of justice. The constant compulsion to do evil. The bitterness of separation and death. The dimness that hides truth.

Jesus came to the world and offered light.

***John 3:19-20**, And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.*

What happens is they plunge deeper and deeper into the darkness.

God has called us into the world to be light, to show light in a dark world. The only way we can be effective at it is to walk as children of light, not to fiddle around doing the deeds of darkness. We have no part with that.

***2 Corinthians 6:14-18**, Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." ¹⁷ Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says*

6. Walk in Light

the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.”¹⁸ “I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.”

We are light, let us live like light.

Imagine yourself lost in a cave. You keep trying to find your way out, but you get deeper and deeper, and the cave is a maze, and a network of tunnels, and so forth. Soon you are down in the belly of the earth somewhere, and you haven't the slightest idea where you are. You are scared, and your heart is pounding. Your eyes are wide open, but all you can see is an oppressive blackness that looks like it is liquid. In the midst of that darkness, you grope for days, and days pass into a week, and the week begins into another week.

Finally, you are feeling the cold, dirt walls, and the frenzy is mounting, and the fear is escalating, and then, way off somewhere, there is a pinpoint of light. You move toward the light, and you grope, lest you fall into a deeper pit. The light begins to crack open, and it becomes an exit, and you charge out of there with the strength that's left, and you are in the daylight, and the sun is beaming down on you. You know a freedom like no freedom you ever conceived possible before such a terrible plight.

Then not long after, you decide there are several things in the cave that you enjoyed, so you wind your way back? Foolish!

That is essentially what a Christian does when he wants to do the deeds of darkness! Makes no sense.

Paul is going to tell us five things we need to know if we are to walk as children of light.

1. The contrast.

The contrast of children of light.

V 8, For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

The Christian life is simply becoming what you are!

Living up to your identity.

Being who you are.

Live like what you are, not like what you were.

Romans 6:16, Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

This is your identity, then live it out.

6. Walk in Light

This is who you are, then act like that.

V 8, This is past tense!

Ephesians 2:1-3, And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Ephesians 2:12-13, that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

You were, now you are - so live what you are.

This could be stated as the thesis of the epistles of the New Testament.

V 8, "You were once darkness."

He didn't say you were in darkness, but Paul says you were darkness.

You are not just a victim of Satan's system.

You are a contributor.

You were darkness now you are now light.

We are that system. There is no system of evil in the world, apart from the darkness of the individuals who are that system, be they demons or men. There is no system of light in the world, apart from those who are the light of the world, be it Christ or be it Christ's.

So, we are not just victims, we are contributors.

V 8, *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*

We should walk as children of light.

We are walking in the light anyway.

We might as well act like children of light.

The darkness here is both intellectual and moral, and so is the light.

6. Walk in Light

It's not just what we know, it's what we are. Just as darkness is what we don't know and what we don't do, light is what we do know and what we do do.

Now, let me show you something, comparing these two and giving you the contrast.

Four characteristics of people who are darkness can be observed.

"You were darkness"

What were the characteristics of that life?

Look at your past, what did you used to be?

1. You did the work of Satan.

It is true of people in the darkness that they do the deeds of darkness.

You did the works of Satan.

V 11, And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

A person in darkness does deeds that are darkness.

They are ignorant, and they are unholy.

They show no knowledge of God.

They show no life of God in the heart and the soul.

They do the works of Satan.

John 8:44, You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

Luke 22:53, "the power of the darkness."

Satan is called the power of the darkness.

So, when you function in the darkness, you are empowered by Satan, you do his deeds.

It is hard for the average, nice guy on the block to realize that he is empowered and energized by Satan.

2. Ruled by Satan.

They are ruled by the prince of darkness, they are literally dominated by him.

6. Walk in Light

- If you are the child of Satan, you will do the deeds of Satan.
- If you're the child of God, you will do the deeds of God.

Colossians 1:13, He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

They not only do the thing he wants, but they literally are ruled and dominated by Satan.

Colossians 1 says that you were taken out of the kingdom of darkness.

It's a kingdom.

It has a hierarchy, and it has a ruler, and it's Satan.

Satan is the one calling the shots.

You don't give up freedom to become a Christian.

You were victimized by the rule of Satan.

Without Jesus Christ, Satan calls the shots in your life. The kingdom of darkness is ruled by the king of darkness.

3. *The penalty of God.*

The penalty of wrath.

God's penalty of wrath comes upon them.

Romans 1:18, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

The wrath of God is going to come on sin.

Romans 1:21-22, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.²² Professing to be wise, they became fools,²³ and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

John 12:35-36, Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going."³⁶ While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

Jesus gave them a message. But they didn't believe.

6. Walk in Light

John 12:37-40, *But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, ³⁸ that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" ³⁹ Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: ⁴⁰ "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them."*

Where you say to yourself, "I will not believe," God then says judicially, "You cannot believe." You come under divine judgment.

4. *The ultimate end is darkness.*

Matthew 8:12, *But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

They do the deeds of darkness, under the dominion of the prince of darkness.

It results in coming under God's judgment on darkness, which is an eternal hell, which is outer darkness.

Do you want darkness?

You can have it forever.

V 8, *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*

Paul is trying to show you the absolute contrast.

That's why he picks light and darkness.

They are the absolute opposites.

We were darkness but now we are light.

There is a big difference.

- ✓ We don't do the works of Satan.
- ✓ We do the works of God.

Ephesians 2:10, *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

- We are not under the rule of Satan, we are under the lordship of Jesus Christ.
- We are not under God's wrath; we are under the promise of being participants in the kingdom of light.
- We will not go into a place of darkness, we will go to a place of light, and

6. Walk in Light

- The Bible says there is no lamp there for the lamp is the light of it.

Those who are darkness do the works of Satan under the power of Satan, fall under the judgment of God, and end up in eternal darkness.

Those who are the light do the deeds of light under the prince of light, the Lord Jesus Christ.

They become inheritors of the kingdom of light, and finally, an eternal heaven of light.

If you are a Christian, beloved, and you are here in the kingdom of light, then live as a child of light.

What would you have to do with that whole dominion over there?

That realm is gone!

It is past!

It is over.

So, live like children of light. Not children of wrath, not children of disobedience, not children of the devil.

2. The characteristics.

V 9, (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),

Ephesians 5:9-10

⁹ (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

¹⁰ Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

“For the fruit of light,” best manuscripts say light, not the Spirit, “For the fruit of light.”

6. Walk in Light

You don't need some great Bible teacher to unscramble that mystery.

- ✓ Goodness,
- ✓ Righteousness,
- ✓ Truth

The marks of those who walk in light.

What should characterize a Christian life?

Goodness, righteousness, truth.

There were a lot of people who claim to be in the light.

Do you know what the real test is?

The children of light are made manifest by the fruit of light.

There needs to be some fruit.

Goodness

A beautiful picture of how you relate to other people.

There's a word in the Greek, ***kalos***, which means good.

It means free from defects and beautiful.

Like a good painting, or a good jar, or a good tapestry, it's free from defects, good.

There is the word ***chrstos***, which means useful.

That's good for digging a hole, good for holding that thing together, it's useful.

There is another word ***Agathos***

It means overall, moral excellence.

Lexicon says especially active in behalf of others.

It isn't just free from defects,

it isn't just useful for certain things,

it's just good, and it touches everybody in that same way, with a very positive, moral, excellent effect.

Agathos is the word he uses here.

1 Thessalonians 5:15, See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

6. Walk in Light

The first element of the fruit of light, and that is that it touches other people with goodness. Look at yourself.

If you are a child of light you are going to walk in light, and then the first thing should be goodness in terms of others.

Righteousness

That has to do with your relationship to God, never deviating from His pure path of holiness.

Truth

It means integrity, honesty, reliability, and trustworthiness.

This has to do with my own self.

- Goodness in relating to others.
- Righteousness in relating to God.
- Integrity as you view yourself.

Honesty, reliability, in contrast with the sham, and the falseness, and hypocrisy of the old life. This is God's desire for us.

If you are walking as children of light, there is to be the fruit of light toward others, God, and even within your own self.

You ought to be able to examine your own life to see if you are really in the light.

Now, there are people who claim to be in the light, but there is one good way to tell.

Matthew 7:15-19, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

All Christians bear fruit.

There's no such thing as fruitless Christian.

There's a lot of little fruits, got nothing but a few shrivelled raisins hanging on, but there's no such thing as a fruitless Christian.

If there is life, there will be product.

6. Walk in Light

if you are a child of light there will be the fruit of light.

When somebody comes along and says, “we did this and we did that”.

Matthew 7:21-23, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

No fruit, no life.

So, some claim to be walking as children of light, but there’s no fruit, and they lie.

Now, from time to time, we who are Christians who sin, and when we sin our product drops. Maybe they will look a long time in your life to find some fruit, because your life isn’t what it ought to be.

The expression of your life at this point is sinful in some ways.

The Christian who walks as a child of light will produce fruit, and as you sin, even as a Christian, fruit diminishes.

But what he is saying here is this:

If you are really walking as a child of light, there is going to be some fruit there. There will be goodness, righteousness, and truth. This will verify your life.

V 10, finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

“Proving,” or verifying, or finding“

You shouldn’t just teach what is acceptable to God, you ought to live it.

You ought to verify it in your life.

This is the joy of the Christian, to be a living example of God’s truth, to be a living verification of what is pleasing to God.

How do I know I am a Christian?

How do I know this person’s a Christian?

It is verified in the fruit.

You can prove what is acceptable to the Lord.

You should be able to verify it by looking at your life.

6. Walk in Light

It ought to be there.

If you do the deeds of the light, the light is in you. A child of God will bear some resemblance to his Father.

We can't determine that we are a Christian because of some past thing. The only way to do it is to show it up to the light and see if it stands the test.

To expose every action, decision, motive to the light of Christ and see whether it's genuine.

When you go into the airport, and you must put your suitcase through that X-ray machine. You never worry about that. You know you don't have any guns in there, or any bombs, or smuggling diamonds, nothing. You don't worry about it. I don't mind having my suitcase X-rayed.

That's the way it ought to be with Christians.

We don't mind having the light reveal what we are, because we find it will only verify the truthfulness of our identity.

We ought to be willing to bring ourselves to the light, to prove by our living, to verify in our life, that we are light.

The characteristics as a person who walk in light are goodness, and righteousness, and truth, and these will become the verification to you and everybody around you that you are a son of God.

3. *The command*

V 11, And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

There is a command.

The contrast and the characteristics lead to a command.

Just in case you need something negative, he says in verse 11: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." And you can stop right there. Just in case it isn't clear to you yet what I'm saying.

Based on the contrast, you are so different.

You are so far removed, you are over here trying to verify the life of God in you, you're over here involved with goodness, righteousness, and truth, you were that.

Now, the point is to have absolutely no fellowship with that.

Paul uses the word *sugkoinne*.

6. Walk in Light

Koinne means fellowship, you add a preposition to the front of it, it intensifies it.

Have no intimate fellowship.

Don't get involved at all in sin, the unfruitful activity of darkness.

Don't get involved in the ignorance of the world toward God.

Don't get involved in the immorality of the world.

We have no part.

Does that mean you never go near anybody?

No!

Because we have got to touch the people of the world.

We got to leave their sin alone.

The only way to witness is to not get involved. You will destroy your testimony.

1 Corinthians 5:11, But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reveller, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

Those in the world need us. Don't do what they do.

Reach out and love them, but don't do what they do!

We are to be non-participants in the world's fare.

Do not fellowship together with the unfruitful works of darkness.

Don't waste your time.

The contrast leads to the characteristics, which leads to Paul's command, and since we are to have absolutely no fellowship, we might all bail out, and so he adds this.

4. The commission.

V 11, "But rather reprove them,"

Don't do what they do, expose what they do.

We are the spiritual CIA/ FBI/MI5.

Our job is not to be involved, but to expose the crimes of darkness.

Every one of us is called by God to do that.

6. Walk in Light

2 Timothy 3:16-17, All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work

We need to reprove.

That means to expose the evil.

You have been commissioned by God by your life and your words.

Sometimes just the way you live can expose people.

Have you ever walked into a conversation that was filthy, and they know you are a Christian, and all of a sudden it gets really nice and clean.

Certain people who have lived a life of godliness in an ungodly environment, and they are such a rebuke to the system that it cannot tolerate them, and they will be fired.

Not just what you live but it is what you say.

You got to be honest.

You are commissioned by holy God to expose the evil of the world.

- To diagnose it,
- To confront it, and
- To offer the solution.

Reprove it, expose it, crack it open.

It is a cancer to be removed.

You aren't helping anybody by hiding it.

Someone might say that we just want to love everybody all the time. Sorry to say that it is not evangelism.

You got to make people feel rotten first.

Then make them feel good.

We're not only not to fellowship, but we are also to expose it.

Most Christians are barely hanging on to the edge for their own life, let alone trying to deal with somebody else.

You have got to take care of that part, and then we ought to be out there really exposing evil.

We are to speak to sinners. We are to tell them it's evil.

6. Walk in Light

Why?

V 12, For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.

It desperately needs to be reprovved.

You can't just let it go on. It's evil, vile, the things they do are unspeakably evil, and this is the heart of God talking here.

Here we are in our world, where we are drowning in a sea of media stuff that pumps into us, that there is no such thing as evil.

It is evil. It shouldn't even be talked about.

It shouldn't even be entertained in a conversation.

It is so wretched, and it needs to be dealt with and exposed.

Yet sometimes, by just turning on your television in your home, you expose your child to a tolerance of the very thing you shouldn't even talk about. The thing that you should expose as evil.

I read a book on the homosexual problem written by a Christian that talked about the problem of homosexuality in such lurid terms that it was like pornography. Now, that isn't right. You don't need to do that. You can give God's solution without portraying every evil thing that could possibly go on in that relationship. That's no necessary.

These are wretched things that the world does. They are to be reprovved. They are things too shameful to even speak of, let alone to tolerate.

You are commissioned in this world.

You ought to be beyond struggling yourself.

You can be a reprover of others, and

You can be one who exposes evil.

V 13, But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.

If the light doesn't get on, they will never be made manifest.

Anything that is manifest will be manifest by light. For whatever makes manifest is light. If you are the light and you don't make it manifest, then it won't be made manifest.

This is your commission!

6. Walk in Light

Get out there, and reprove sin, and expose sin because you are the light.

If you don't do it, it will never be exposed, because it is the light that manifests.

Light is that which manifests.

- Nobody gets saved unless they come to God, repenting of sin.
- Nobody knows what sin is unless somebody exposes it.

It is not evangelism to tolerate people, and to just love them, and never talk about their evil. It is evangelism to make them face the fact of sin.

For whatever makes manifest is light. The only hope they have is that the light would shine and make manifest.

That is why we are the lights of the world.

The contrast: Darkness and Light.

The characteristics: Walk as a child of light, goodness, righteousness, truth.

The command: Don't have anything to do with the things they do.

The commission: Expose what they do because it's shameful stuff. You are the only light there is to expose it.

Conclusion

Invitation

Paul felt there would be some people who would read Ephesians who didn't know Christ, and he wanted to throw an invitation in.

V 14, Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."

Isaiah 60:1, Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

6. Walk in Light

Of course, that looked forward to the Messiah, and this interpretation of it looks back to what Christ has done.

He puts Christ in Isaiah's words, because Christ is the fulfilment.

It's an invitation. Somebody may be sitting here right now and saying, "I guess I am in the darkness. I look at my life and I don't see goodness and righteousness and truth. I don't see Jesus Christ alive in my life. I have never known God. I am in the dark intellectually, and I see moral evil on every hand."

The invitation comes to you as it does throughout history.

We have in that one little, tiny verse, a whole picture of the gospel, a whole little Bible.

First the sinner is described as one who sleeps.

Summons is offered to awake and arise.

Saviour is presented – "Christ shall give thee light."

It shows the dilemma of sinfulness,

it gives the invitation to the sinner, and

shows who the Saviour is.

John 3:16-21, For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

¹⁸ "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹ But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

7. Morning Devotion- New Family

“Let me offer lesson number one about America: All great change in America begins at the dinner table” - said **Ronald Reagan**, the 40th U.S President, during his farewell speech.



***Ephesians 2:19**, Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,*

God chose Israel to be His special people.

***Deuteronomy 7:6**, “For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.*

But Jesus came to save Jews and Gentiles (everyone else).

We have been adopted into God’s family, through Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross.

A Christian is one who has been adopted by God - brought into the family of God, all by the Son of God.

God’s family becomes visible on earth through His church.

***Mark 3:31-35**, Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him. ³²And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.” ³³But He answered them, saying, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?” ³⁴And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him,*

7. New Family

and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers!"³⁵ For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."

The heart of Christ's ministry.

Jesus Christ came to start a brand-new family. He came to see men and women, boys and girls, grandmas and grandpas born a second time.

This time from God and this time into His new family.

You may feel more deeply for your family. However, you need to be closer to the Lord Jesus Christ who gave you a new family and the purpose to live.

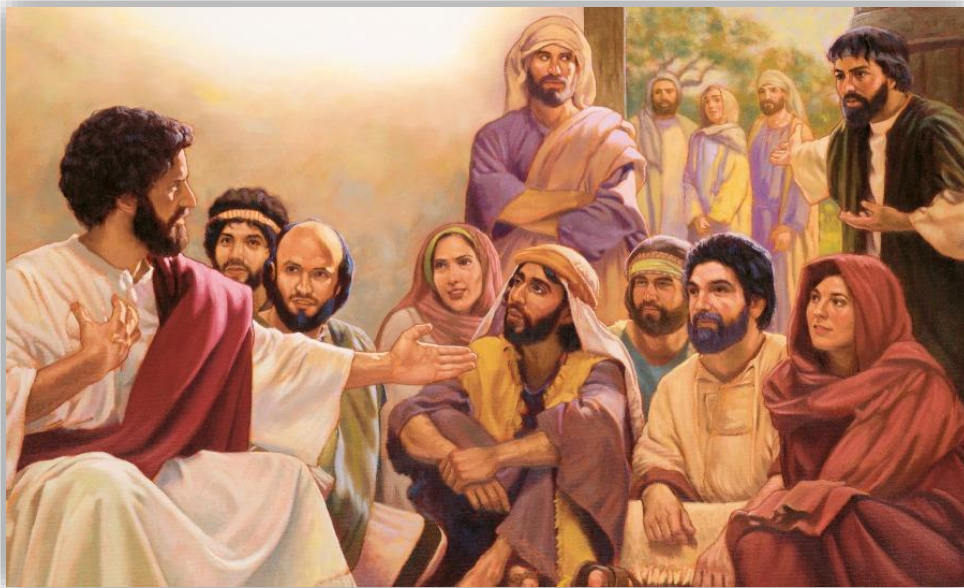
If you are feeling

- old and useless, or
- young and hopeless, or
- middle aged and trapped,

Christ has a new family and if you are in it, you are special.

His Mother and Brothers Come

While Christ taught about His new family, His old family came to Him. They thought they were rescuing Him from His "lost senses".



Mark 3:21, *But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."*

7. New Family

They did not believe in Him.

John 7:1-5, After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. ² Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. ³ His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. ⁴ For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." ⁵ For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

In fact, this is the second time Mary appears in the ministry of Christ (Cana, John 2, Feast) and she was disregarded. She and the rest thought God's family had something to do with race, religion, blood ties. That might matter on earth, not heaven though!

Wealth and poverty can mean something to the family but not to God!

Christ looked around (v.34) and said no, there's a new higher relationship that has come!

Of course, it cost something.

Jesus was accused, mocked, rejected, by His own.

So, you will also be.

Matthew 5:11-12, Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

1 Peter 4:14, If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

Beware, if you aren't paying a price to be a Christian then you aren't telling others the truth about your life. If you are born again then you must be different from those who are lost.

Christ demonstrated that old family ties can't get you into His new family.

In fact, that's the heart of false religion.

Adding and subtracting from the simple new birth.

Romans 10:1-4, Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. ² For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. ⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

7. New Family

Despite their zeal for God, the Jews were lost because they would not come to God on His terms.

Suppose one claims to believe that Christ died for man's sins, but that one must add good deeds, trust Mary to intercede, suffer in purgatory, belong to a certain church, or keep certain rules or sacraments to be saved, or that Christ must be sacrificed again in the Mass. Is that man really saved?

The Bible says no.

To believe that anything else is necessary for salvation is to deny that Christ paid the penalty in full, and thus is to reject the gospel.

If you are trusting a church for your salvation, then how could you say that you are trusting Christ and His finished work?

Or those who agree to accept some church's interpretation of God's Word how can it be said that they personally know God and are believing Him?

Many who claim to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" have attached their own meaning to the seemingly Biblical words they use.

Thus, are manufactured the many false gospels, which usually include false concepts of "Christ."

There are new family ties which are not based on the Old.

Jesus looked around at the twelve men who were with Him.

Think about what He saw.

All the subsequent stories will reveal it.

He saw one man who was mastered by fear.

He saw one man who would swear in the darkness of the night that he did not know anything about Him.

He saw ten others who in the ultimate hours of His agony would run away.

But Jesus saw these men as those who were consecrated to God, deep in their heart.

He saw all the possibilities of failure but knew how they would all work out.



7. New Family

But Jesus found that central fact, the motive.

He invaded that realm which none other could invade, and He said,

- Behold My brethren, born for My adversity.
- Behold My sisters, born for all sweet confidences and sympathy.
- Behold My mother, born for all comfort and solace.

“For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

The New Family that Christ loves is based on Truth.

There is but one condition for admission to this position of peculiar intimacy with Christ, that we must know and participate, as He did, in the will of God.

An important part of the Father’s will is found in (**Leviticus 23:1–41**).

God gives the yearly calendar of His Holy/ Feast days for His family.

When we tally all these days, we realize that the Father wants to spend a lot of time with His children!

52 weekly Sabbaths each year.

18 days for annual Sabbaths and Festivals.

Total of 70 days.

The entire 70 days is for feasting, studying, learning, singing, and fellowship with other brethren in God’s family, which is also fellowship with the Father and Christ.

1 John 1:3, that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

One of the most important lessons Jesus has taught us.

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Jesus knew that we all lack faith.

If we obey God’s will, He will fulfil His promises.

God will recompense the losses incurred for the time (70 days) that you spend with Him.

In every Sabbath and every Feast that we keep, God can see what our priorities are.

God’s calendar of appointments for His people leads us in the Way of the Father’s will.

7. New Family

If we backslide or forget or cease to spend time with God, we cannot do His will. We would join the worship service for a couple of hours once a week whenever it is convenient to us.

It is a constant New Testament stress that mere knowledge of the doctrine, even with intellectual assent and appraisal of its truth, is inadequate.

Such knowledge in fact only condemns us. Such intellectual assent ultimately leads to our self-deception and downfall, as seen in the illustration of the two houses, one built upon the rock and one built upon the sand.

Luke 6:47-49, Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. ⁴⁹ But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great."

Luke 8:21, But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."

The two steps are quite plain.

It is those who listen to the word of God and carry it out who receive this blessing.

This is the difference between intellectual assent and true faith.

The distinction is made by asking whether knowledge is accompanied by obedience or not.

James 2:21-24, Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? ²² Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? ²³ And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

Knowledge of God is not abstract and intellectual.

It is personal, moral, and empirical.

It is not static but dynamic since He is the living God.

It is thus not an intellectual discovery, as other knowledge is, but a transforming and life-giving spiritual experience, brought to us. To Peter by the illumination of the Spirit of God.

Matthew 16:17, Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

7. New Family

Jesus after His resurrection the first person to meet with Him was Mary Magdalene.

Jesus reveals to her the new relationship He is forging with His disciples.

John 20:17, Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"

- ✓ My Father
- ✓ Your Father.

- ✓ My God
- ✓ Your God.

Matthew 28:10, Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

Hebrews 2:11, For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,

Jesus does not ashamed to call His disciples or any Christians as His siblings.

Conclusion

Have you left the old?

Luke 14:26, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."

Certainly, it is God's will that we care for our families and provide for them.

1 Timothy 5:8, But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

But we must not permit even our dearest loved ones to influence us away from the will of God.

When you consider the importance of the family in the Jewish society, you can imagine how radical Christ's words must have sounded to those who heard them.

How does one enter the family of God?

By means of a new birth, a spiritual birth from above.

7. New Family

John 3:1-7, *There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ² This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” ³ Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” ⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵ Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’*

1 Peter 1:22-25, *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, ²³ having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, ²⁴ because “All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, ²⁵ But the word of the Lord endures forever.” Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.*

When the sinner trusts Jesus Christ as Saviour, he experiences this new birth and enters into God’s family.

He shares God’s divine nature!

2 Peter 1:3-4, *as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

Call God “Father”

Romans 8:14-17, *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

This spiritual birth is not something that we accomplish for ourselves, nor can others do it for us.

It is God’s work of grace and all we can do is believe and receive it.

Ephesians 2:8-9, *that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,*

7. New Family

Titus 2:7-8, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, ⁸ sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

One of the greatest needs in the church today is for training in sound apologetics, not only to counter atheism, which is the real “faith” of very few, but false religions, which have ensnared so many more.

Do you feel more deeply your new family ties to God than Christ?

Does that fill you with meaning, purpose and worth?

If not, we want to show you how to enter the family.

Do you believe more strongly the simple truths of the new birth?

Are you paying the price of being identified with Christ?

Are you ready to do whatever your Father and Heaven wants?

Then if so, you understand Christ’s new family!

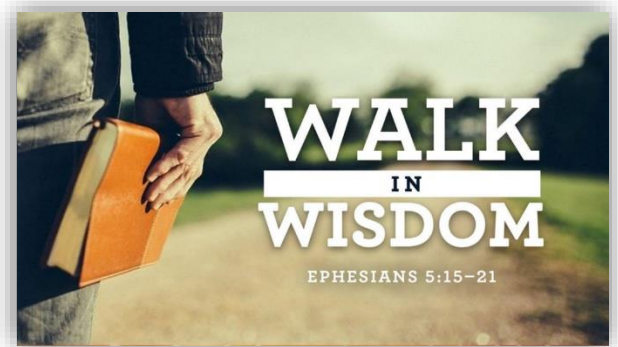
7. New Family

8. Walk in Wisdom - 01

Ephesians 5:15-21, See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹submitting to one another in the fear of God.

We live in a fool's world.

In fact, everyone born into this world comes in with a terminal state of congenital foolishness, otherwise known as the sin nature.



Proverbs 22:15, Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him.

Man is born in a state of foolishness.

What does that mean?

When we think of a fool, we think of someone who does irresponsible acts or who speaks irresponsible words.

But the Bible defines a fool as one who exists apart from God.

A fool is one who exists apart from God.

A wise man is one who lives in accord with God's divine principles.

Man is born separated from God. He is born in a situation where God's wisdom is absent.

The book of Proverbs deals with the fool.

Psalms 14:1, The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good.

Even though the fool may know in his mind intellectually there is a God, he lives as if there is not and that's why they are corrupt. They have done abominable works.

Atheism results in corruption.

8. Walk in Wisdom - 01

The first thing that is characteristic of a fool is that he lives a life which by its function denies God. It is an anti-God way of living and that is the way it is with people.

They cannot know the things of God.

1 Corinthians 2:14, But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

To a fool foolishness is wisdom and wisdom is foolishness.

The first characteristic of a fool is that he practically denies God.

God has no binding force on him.

The law of God does not bind the conscience of a fool.

He is pragmatically atheistic.

He lives apart from God.

Who do they worship?

Everybody bows somewhere.

If there is no true God, man will inevitably substitute a false god.

In all cases will tend to be a god of his own creation.

Proverbs 12:15, The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel is wise.

Fool becomes the one who articulates for his own way of living right and wrong.

As a result of denying God, because of setting himself up as God, he will inevitably mock sin.

Proverbs 14:9, Fools mock at sin, But among the upright there is favour.

Fools makes his own rules, and he wants to justify his own behaviour.

He wants to make sure he's going to be all right in the end, so he eliminates sin with its consequences.

A fool then begins by practically living as if there were no God substituting himself as God and suggesting his own style of life, and then denying that there is such a thing as sin because he cannot tolerate guilt.

Fool has a dramatic effect on other people, because when he talks he always talks about his own opinions.

Proverbs 15:2, The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.

8. Walk in Wisdom - 01

You got a bitter fountain you are going to get bitter water.

You got a rotten tree you are going to get rotten fruit.

When a fool opens his mouth, you are not going to get wisdom, but foolishness.

- He denies God.
- He becomes his own God.
- He mocks sin.
- He speaks on his own authority.
- He generates his own opinions.

The world is full of the opinion of fools.

Proverbs 16:22, Understanding is a wellspring of life to him who has it. But the correction of fools is folly.

The instruction of fools is folly. Here you have the picture of the unregenerate man as he is described as a fool.

He contaminates the rest of society with the same foolishness which damns his own soul.

- He leaves it as a legacy to his own children.
- He leaves it as a legacy to his friends.
- He leaves it as a legacy to the classes of people that he teaches.
- He leaves it as a legacy to all those who fall under of the influence of his folly.

Now summing this up I think there is a good word in

Proverbs 1:7, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Wisdom in Proverbs means living by divine standards.

Wisdom implies that accept divine truth and live by it.

What happens to a fool?

What happens to one who denies God?

Proverbs 1:20-23, Wisdom calls aloud outside; She raises her voice in the open squares. ²¹ She cries out in the chief concourses, At the openings of the gates in the city She speaks her words: ²² "How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorers delight in their scorning, And fools hate knowledge. ²³ Turn at my rebuke; Surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you.

8. Walk in Wisdom - 01

A great invitation.

Here is God in the Old Testament, here is Christ in the New Testament – in the streets of the city of Jerusalem crying out of wisdom, crying out of an invitation to the fools and the simpletons and the scoffers.

Proverbs 1:24-32, Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded, ²⁵ Because you disdained all my counsel, And would have none of my rebuke, ²⁶ I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes, ²⁷ When your terror comes like a storm, And your destruction comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you. ²⁸ “Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. ²⁹ Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the Lord, ³⁰ They would have none of my counsel And despised my every rebuke. ³¹ Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, And be filled to the full with their own fancies. ³² For the turning away of the simple will slay them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them;

That is the end of it all. That is to die a fool.

Proverbs 10:21, The lips of the righteous feed many, But fools die for lack of wisdom.

We could hear more at grave after grave, funeral after funeral after funeral, the words of David over dead Abner.

2 Samuel 3:33, And the king sang a lament over Abner and said: “Should Abner die as a fool dies?

Men die as fools.

They live and die as fools, terminal foolishness.

What can we do about it?

In Proverbs 1, wisdom cries out for people to turn.

There is available wisdom.

Proverbs 9:1, Wisdom has built her house, She has hewn out her seven pillars;

The wise are in the hand of God. All generations and to every generation God reach out His hand and offers to take men out of a kingdom of fools into a kingdom of the wise. Salvation is the only thing that can change this.

2 Timothy 3:15, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

8. Walk in Wisdom - 01

The Apostle Paul was reminding Timothy of his heritage.

Wisdom is found in the knowledge of scriptural truth, which brings salvation.

It is the saving act that brings wisdom. The only thing that can cause an individual to cease being a fool and become wise is salvation.

When you became a Christian, you became wise.

When you became a Christian, you stopped being a fool and you became one of God's wise children.

Wisdom is not just head knowledge. The Greeks thought of wisdom as sophistries, *sophos*, just spinning off theories that had no relation to life, that had no practical implication. Wise people were people who could spin off theories. They were intellectuals, philosophers. But that's Greek.

The Hebrew mind never conceived of wisdom in theory. It only conceived of wisdom in behaviour.

When you become a Christian, it's not just a change in theory. It is a change in what you know, but more it is a change in how you live.

- You did not know God.
 - You denied God.
 - You put yourself up as God.
 - You mocked sin.
 - You spilled out your own opinion and you corrupted society.
-
- You become a Christian, immediately you do know God.
 - You take yourself off the throne and worship only Him.
 - You confess sin.
 - You don't mock it.
 - When you speak you speak the oracles of God.
 - When you instruct others, it is the divine truth that you speak.

Big difference.

You live a wise life.

Apostle Paul is saying in this text, if you used to be a fool, but you have been made wise in Christ. Then for Christ's sake walk as wise.

If this is who you are, then this is how you live.

8. Walk in Wisdom - 01

When you became a Christian, you came out of foolishness into wisdom. It's another element of the worthy walk.

The world cannot walk humbly. It's a mad fight for everybody's rights. They don't know the meaning of humility. The world cannot walk in unity.

It celebrates its differences.

It exalts its disparities.

It makes an entire structure based on difference, divergence, and differing opinions.

The world can't love because it doesn't have the life of God; and God is love.

Apart from Him there is no real love. The world can't know light because it is in itself a system of self-damning darkness.

The world can't know wisdom because the wisdom of God is hidden from the mind of man.

2 Timothy 3:7, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth

It's incredible.

We know a lot, but we don't know God's wisdom. The wisdom of God is unattainable to a fool.

But we as Christians we can be humble.

We can walk in unity.

We can walk different.

We can walk in love.

We can walk in light, and

We can walk in wisdom.

Paul is making sure that these things so live it out.

He is calling for us to be different, and we have been crushed into the whole world, so we can hardly call ourselves distinct in this generation unless we get back to some of these basics.

A believer who walks in wisdom knows three things.

1. *Life's principles,*
2. *Limited privileges,*
3. *Lord's purposes.*

To put it another way,

He knows what the rules are for his life. He knows what God has laid out.

He knows he has a limited time to fulfil it.

He knows specifically what God wants him to do.

V 15, See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,

The wise person knows the principles that God has given for living.

The first two words here are, "See then," and that takes us backwards.

That's just like, "Therefore."

V 14, Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."

An invitation to get saved.

Now Paul is saying that if you are those who have come alive from the dead, if you are those who have come awake from sleep, if you are those who are now in the light, not the darkness, then walk wisely.

In other words, it's based on what salvation did for you.

Because you are saved you are to walk in wisdom.

Because you are saved, you are to walk in wisdom.

Somebody immediately might say, "Just being saved, you are so new, and you don't know very much. How can you walk in wisdom?"

Don't you kind of grow into that?

Aren't the wise people, the white hairs?

The old saints, the people that have been saved a long time?

Do you mean that you get enough wisdom when you are saved to be able to be responsible for your whole life?

Exactly!

The moment you are saved, there's a deposit of wisdom in you that renders you absolutely responsible for your behaviour.

8. Walk in Wisdom - 01

1 Corinthians 1:30, But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God— and righteousness and sanctification and redemption

All four of those things simultaneously became yours.

1. *Wisdom,*
2. *Righteousness,*
3. *Sanctification, and*
4. *Redemption.*

Sanctification precede redemption.

It isn't that you are redeemed and later you get wise and later you get righteous and later you get sanctified.

The moment of your salvation, are wise, righteous, set apart, because you are redeemed.

The moment you are saved the wisdom of God takes up residence in you and you become accountable.

Colossians 2:3, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Where are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge?

In Christ!

Colossians 2:10, and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

The moment you come to Christ, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, comes. It's a whole gift within salvation.

- You cannot have a salvation without wisdom.
- You cannot have a salvation without righteousness.
- You cannot have a salvation without sanctification.

Everybody get born again, and there is no real consideration of the reality of it. We just say if we can just get them to believe in Jesus and do some little deal then they're okay and later we will talk about righteousness and sanctification and wisdom.

No!

They are synonymous.

Christ has made unto us those things.

8. Walk in Wisdom - 01

Titus 2:11-12, For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

If you are saved, the salvation itself teaches you to deny ungodliness, worldly lusts, live soberly, righteously, godly in this present age. That much you get when you are saved.

If you are redeemed then you possess wisdom.

You don't have to wait until you have been saved ten years, five years, forty years. You don't have to it's yours.

The Bible tells us we have all we need and yet there's more if we desire it. We can reach out to more, further, and further.

Ephesians 1:7-8, In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ⁸which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

No Christian is irresponsible for what he does.

You are responsible. It was there granted to you.

1 John 2:20, But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.

1 John 2:27, But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

We possess wisdom in salvation by Christ.

We are no more fools.

I am not saying we shouldn't get more wisdom. We should

We should grow in grace.

We should grow in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We should be more and more conformed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We should allow the Spirit of God to transform us into His image.

There should be an increasing wisdom.

There should be an increasing godliness, but the principles are the same.

8. Walk in Wisdom - 01

The Spirit of God works in our consciences. Even though you may not know all the things in the Bible, God's Spirit resident in you from the moment of salvation will convict and convince of righteousness and sin.

Do you want more wisdom?

You want to reach out for more wisdom then it is available to you.

Proverbs 9:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

How do you get more?

James 1:5-6, If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

God will give it and He withholds none.

You can have it.

It's available.

Ask.

Colossians 1:28, Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

Study to show yourself approved under God. Gain wisdom from study.

So, Paul says, "Don't claim ignorance."

He who is wisdom is in you, therefore walk circumspectly.

Walk means daily conduct, daily pattern, daily life.

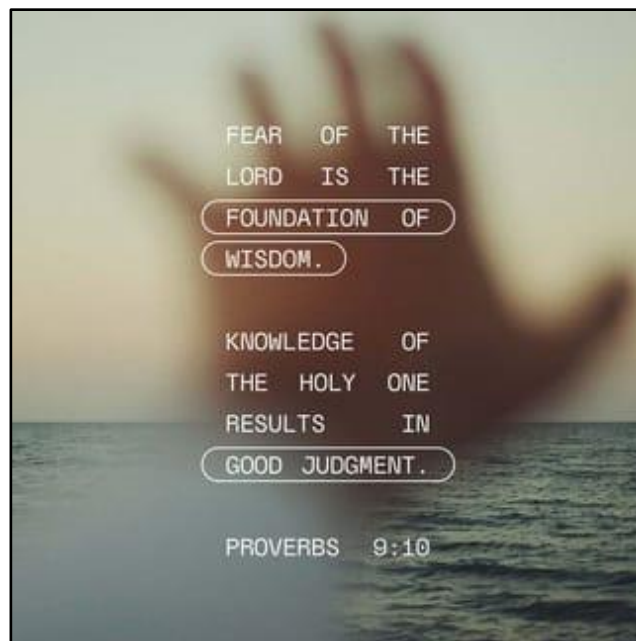
This was always the Jewish concept, behaviour, not theory.

Circumspectly.

Powerful word.

It means accurately.

Accurately, carefully, and exactly.



8. Walk in Wisdom - 01

To circumspect is to look carefully from side-to-side, to be very alert to what is going on.

You need to walk very alert. You are literally walking through a minefield in the world, and you can't just go wandering through it like you were lollygagging in a meadow full of daisies. You are walking a walk in a system in the world that demands that you walk circumspectly, carefully, exactly, and accurately.

Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.¹⁴ Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Narrow is the gate and narrow is the way. It is compressed.

You must watch where you go.

The wise Christian is a careful individual. He follows with great care, meticulously charting his course watch according to life principles designed by God. He does not fall off into the worldly system.

V 15, "Be very careful how you live." (NIV)

- *You have the wisdom.*
- *You are alive.*
- *You are arisen.*
- *You are in the light.*
- *You have God's wisdom resident.*

Now live that way.

Philippians 1:27, Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,

Your walk should match your position.

2 Peter 1:5, But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,

Walk in wisdom.

Titus 3:3, For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

Once we were and our foolishness manifested itself.

The way a fool life:

- He disobeys God.
- He is deceived about the truth.
- He serves his lusts.
- He's guided by his own desires and his pleasures.
- He lives for pleasure.
- He lives in evil.
- He is envy,
- He is hateful, and
- He hates one another.

Titus 3:4-8, But when the kindness and the love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, ⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, ⁷ that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

⁸ This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

The transformation demands that we with care live our lives.

Titus 3:9-11, But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. ¹⁰ Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, ¹¹ knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

There is no excuse for a Christian to lower himself to the level of the fool.

You are Solomon on the throne. You are the wisest of the wise.

Even hypocritical Saul, when he was faced with being caught in his own sin, cowered with his own guilt, and he cried out to David.

1 Samuel 26:21, Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Return, my son David. For I will harm you no more, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Indeed I have played the fool and erred exceedingly."

2 Samuel 24, David got to thinking he was great. Thinking that the world ought to know how great he was, so he decided he would number all the people. Count everybody and make a big impression. So, he numbered everybody, and he got his heart all puffed up.

God poured a conviction on his heart like hot oil, and it just burned.

2 Samuel 24:10, And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done; but now, I pray, O Lord, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

Moses looked out to a people Israel, who so many times had failed God.

Deuteronomy 32:6, Do you thus deal with the Lord, O foolish and unwise people? Is He not your Father, who bought you? Has He not made you and established you?

Christians play the fool.

Do you know how you can play the fool?

a) Not believing the Word of God

Two apostles on the road to Emmaus. Jesus appears beside them, and they are moaning and groaning because their Lord is dead.

Luke 24:25-27, Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

You can play the fool by not believing.

Nor believing the Word of God.

b) Disobedience

Galatians 3:1, O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?

You started out so well, and then you got into this works stuff.

So, you can play the fool by disobedience.

c) Desire for the wrong things.

1 Timothy 6:10, For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

You desire the wrong things. You play the fool.

8. Walk in Wisdom - 01

James 3:13-17, Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. ¹⁷ But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

A fool disbelieves, disobeys, desires the wrong thing, does the wrong thing.

Sad thing to see so many Christians that way. This is incredible. There are Christians who do not really take God at His word. They don't believe this book. They say that they do. They probably sign on the dotted line, but it has no implication in their life.

They don't take God at His word. There are Christians who disobey, and all Christians sometimes disobey. There are Christians who desire the things of the world. There are Christians whose life works do not manifest wisdom, and Paul is saying this makes no sense.

Why should Christians live as blind, ignorant, foolish people when we have wisdom?

John 7:17, If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.

If you really want to do God's will, you will never be in doubt.

If you really want to know God's will, you will never be in doubt.

Romans 16:19, For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil.

9. Walk in Wisdom- 02

Ephesians 5:15-21, See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹submitting to one another in the fear of God.

V 16, "Redeeming the time."

It is interesting to me how many times the Holy Spirit, when he talks about this concept of time, uses a definite article.

God has almost prescribed times in very accurate and sovereignly determined doses. So, God has given us definite time.

1 Peter 1:17, And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;

The time of your sojourning. Peter is saying you have a definite set time bounded by God's sovereign choice.

Job 14:14, If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, Till my change comes.

Job had a sense of an appointed time for living.

Acts 20:24, But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

The course that God has prescribed.

We find that God has given us a time boundary, and within that time he has defined a course.

A specific time,

A specific course,

A specific ministry.



9. Walk in Wisdom - 02

Hebrews 12:1, Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

A race set before us.

As can its beginning and an end.

There is a boundary to it.

At the end of his life, the Apostle Paul said.

2 Timothy 4:7, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

God has given us the time of our lives in sovereignty.

He knows the beginning and the end.

He has determined both.

David had this tremendous sense of time, and the urgency that time places on us, when he cried out to God.

Psalm 89:46-47, How long, Lord? Will You hide Yourself forever? Will Your wrath burn like fire? ⁴⁷ Remember how short my time is; For what futility have You created all the children of men?

In his distress, anxiety, and pain, he had felt diverted from what he ought to be doing.

He had felt distracted from what he should be doing.

1 Corinthians 7:29, But this I say, brethren, the time is short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none,

Psalm 39:4-5, "Lord, make me to know my end, And what is the measure of my days, That I may know how frail I am. ⁵ Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my age is as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor.

Lord, please tell me how much time I have, so I will know how weak I am, and I can really use the time I have.

Wisdom in verse 15 leads him to think of time in verse 16.

Why?

Because the greatest wasting of wisdom occurs in the use of time or the lack of it.

We are meditating about the worthy walk.

Walk means lifestyle, manner of living.

- *Walk in humility.*
- *Walk in unity.*
- *Walk in love.*
- *Walk in light.*
- *Walk in Wisdom.*

What does it mean to walk in wisdom but to redeem time, because that is the greatest squandering of potential?

For Christ's sake, for the sake of who you are, use your time wisely.

A wise walking Christian knows three realities.

- ❖ *Life principles,*
- ❖ *Limited privileges, and*
- ❖ *Lord's purposes.*

Very simple but very profound.

Limited privileges.

Do the privileges of Christians are limited?

Yes.

Your privileges are limited in this time.

V 16, "Redeeming the time because the days are evil."

There are limitations on our privileges, people.

If we don't walk wisely now, we don't have any other time. All we have is now, that's it.

If I lose this moment, it will never be back again.

Redeeming the time.

Paul is talking about opportunity here.

There two words used in Greek to show the time.

Chrono

Karios

Both these Chrono and Kairos is used in the following scripture as well.

1 Thessalonians 5:1, But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.

Chronos is the word from which we get chronology.

The flow of events in history or chronograph, something that keeps time.

Kairos means eras, epics, or divine opportunity. Divine appointed time.

The word he used here is not **Chronos**.

Chronos is a Greek word that means time like a clock, calendar, sequence of minutes and hours.

But the word used here is **Kairos**. We are to redeem the opportunities, the moments that can be grasped for God and for good and for glory for Him.

The Greeks had a statue and the name of the statue of "Opportunity."

In one of the ancient Greek cities the statue stood in the very centre of the city. It was carved and chiselled by a man named **Lysippos, Greek sculpture 4 B.C.** It had wings on its feet and it had a great lock of hair in the front, and it was bald in the back, from the middle back completely bald. Underneath the statue was a great base and carved in Greek on the base was this dialogue:

"Who made thee?"

Lysippos made me.

What is thy name?

My name is Opportunity.

Why hast thou wings on thy feet?

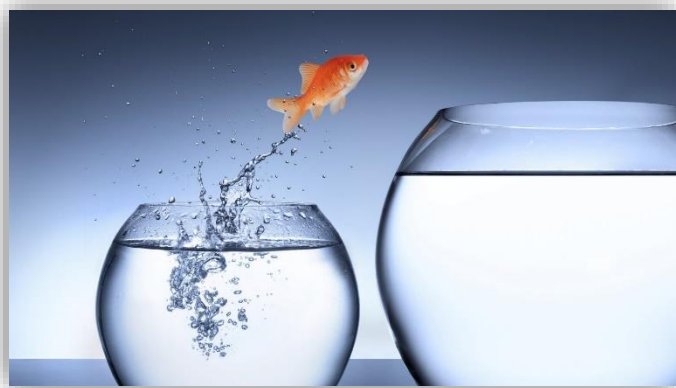
That I may fly away swiftly.

Why hast thou a forelock?

That men may seize me when I come.

Why art thou bald in back?

When I am gone by none can lay hold of me."



Opportunity

The believer who walks in wisdom knows to make the most of opportunity.

Paul says in verse 15, "Walk wisely."

Immediately in Verse 16 talks about redeeming opportunity.

Why does he connect those two?

Men plays the fool with time and opportunity more than he plays the fool in any other thing.

That is the greatest category of foolishness, the misuse of time and opportunity.

I feel this is talking to Christians here.

Psalm 90:12, So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

It is wisdom that numbers the days.

It is wisdom that accounts the limited time.

It is wisdom that buys the opportunity.

Wisdom walking down that narrow path sees an opportunity for evil and shuns it because that's the fool's act.

Wisdom sees an opportunity for good and grasps it because that's the opportunity for God.

V 16, "Because the days are evil."

These are evil days, and if we are going to make anything out of an evil day, we are going to have to buy the opportunity.

The days we live in, in general, are full of evil. The opportunities for righteousness are few. The opportunities for goodness are few. In the midst of an evil world, when they do come grab them.

When God is giving you an opportunity for glorifying Him and in return bringing blessing on you doing something for His namesake, grab that in the midst of an evil day.

Can you imagine what a heartbreak it is for God to create a world like our world and fill it up with every good thing and when it's all made and done, He says, "It's all good." Then to see the thing corrupted, immoral, and made vile as it is today, as it has been since the fall of man, as it continues to increase in its corruption?

Can you imagine how it must be for God to see the days of the world that He made so filled with evil?

To see a Christian who's given a golden opportunity after opportunity, who by passes it with never so much as a notice?

The days are evil. God gives us those times and those opportunities to make things happen that matter, to fill up at least a moment of a day, an hour of a day with something good, righteous, and something for Him.

See how God's heartbroken over the evil of a world He has made for His own glory.

If God gives me one little opportunity in the midst of an evil day to do something good, honour Him, and glorify Him, I am going to grab that opportunity.

The days are evil enough, and it seems as though goodness is so few and far between that we need to take every opportunity. It's bad enough that my life is bombarded and inundated with evil influences that when one good one comes along, I want to grab that.

Direct statement to the Christians who are reading this, who are living in an evil time.

It may be a reference to the Ephesians who were living in an evil day. Their society was a debauched society.

Ephesians 4:14, that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

There were people going around teaching false doctrine.

There were people using the dexterity of men and cunning craftiness, were trying to deceive God's people.

Satan had his false teachers.

Satan had his harbingers of evil.

Satan had the ones coming around masquerading as religionists who were propagating their lies that would damn men. Further there was evil all about.

Ephesians 4:19, who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

Ephesians 4:25, Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbour," for we are members of one another.

Ephesians 4:27, nor give place to the devil.

It's a day of stealing.

It's a day of corrupt communication.

Ephesians 5:3-4, But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;⁴ neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

Redeem the time because the days are evil. He may have been alluding to the very hour in which those people were living.

Persecution and distress were on the horizon.

Do you know it was only a hundred years or so from this time that Christians were burned at the stake and Christians were thrown to the lions. It was coming fast, and whatever they were going to do they were going to do then.

A few years before the end of that 1st century, John, the apostle, wrote to the Ephesian church and said, "You have lost your first love."

If something doesn't change, the candlestick is going to be removed, the light's going to go out, and there will never be a church in Ephesus.

Do you know what happened?

They didn't change, the candle was removed, there never was another church in that city.

Their time was shorter than they thought because of the evil of those days.

When the church at Ephesus fell under the spell of the evil, they went out of existence.

Today if you were to go to Ephesus you know what you would see nothing contemporary in existence there. It's gone.

The time was short.

The days were evil.

They fell prey to the time they lived in.

They realized persecution was coming.

They knew what Jesus had said about the fact that they would be persecuted for His sake.



Urgency is necessary!

I can't say what's going to happen to Christians in this world!

Asked God that if it's going to take something persecution oriented to bring us to the place where we get a grip on what we ought to be, then let it happen.

We don't know what's going to happen.

We don't know what the evil day brings.

- Maybe the evillest day of all is the day in which everything is so easy that we lose our priorities.
- Maybe that's the evillest of all. The church would thrive better under Idi Amin than it does under affluence, in many cases.

It's been true all through history. The blood of the martyrs becomes the seed of the church.

We don't see the evil day, because we are sucked into the system and the line is not clearly drawn.

I have a sense of urgency.

I don't know how long God's going to give me, but I will tell you one thing, I am going to give Him all the time I have got. I have a sense of urgency.

I don't know when Jesus is going to come. One of these days He's going to split the heavens with His coming, and He is going to end it all. He is going to set up His kingdom.

I want that day to come, but I know that there's a sense of urgency until He comes.

I know the world isn't getting better. It's getting worse.

2 Timothy 3:13, But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Romans chapter 1 says they invent new sins all throughout human history.

We must redeem the time.

The word redeem is in the middle voice in the Greek.

It means buy up for yourself!

Hoard your time for your benefit.

Buy up for yourself the time!

When you redeem the time, you benefit because God blesses you.

- You walk on the narrow way.,
- You walk circumspectly,
- You walk accurately,
- You make the most of your time and the opportunity, and
- God will pour out blessing to you.

You are redeeming the time for yourself. Use it up in the way that can give God glory.

Every day God gives you opportunity. Every day there's an opportunity to do a righteous thing and to shun a sin.

There's a golden jewel that God places in front of you that can be grabbed for His glory.

Some people are always going to pray, and to get down to study the Bible, and to serve the Lord. They are going to tell their neighbour about Christ. They are going to read the Bible. They just never get to it. The greatest fool in the world is the fool who wastes time, who spends opportunity without a return.

Galatians 6:10, Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

As we have opportunity, we are to grab it.

What about your personal time?

You have been telling the Lord for years that you are going to spend some time with Him.

Do you, do it?

Or have you just let opportunity after opportunity go by and never redeemed the time?

What about time with your spouse?

Do you take those precious times when you could contribute to her or to him what he needs, or she needs?

What about the children God's given you?

Not many years and they are gone.

What have you contributed?

What have you done?

What have you given?

What does the time have to say?

What about that ministry?

What about those spiritual gifts, that thing you are always going to do for the Lord?

We are lulled to sleep by our fat society.



Opportunity is in respect to time what time is in respect to eternity.

The only piece of eternity you will ever hold in your hand is the opportunity of this moment, that's it.

- You can't live in the past.
- You can't live in the future.
- It's now and that's the end of it.

We hold an opportunity in our hands.

That is the only piece of eternity we will ever hold.

That piece of opportunity is to time what time is to eternity.

I can hold eternity in my hand when I maximize this moment.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at its ebb, leads on to fortune. Omitted, all the voyage of their life is drown in the shallows and miseries of life." Shakespeare

"There is in the midst of every great battle a ten-to-fifteen-minute time period that is the crucial point. Take that period and you win the battle. Loose it and you will be defeated." Napoleon.

There are many biblical texts which stand as beacons to warn people of limited privileges and application to divine principles.

"The door was shut." Too late. When **Noah** and his family were in the Ark, **God shut the door.** Opportunity was gone.

When the **virgins** came with an unprepared lamp, the door was shut. Too late. The marriage would go on without them. The words of the Lord Jesus Christ ring down through history, *"The night comes when no man can work."*

I hear the Lord say to the people of His day, "You shall die in your sins and where I go you cannot come."

I hear the Lord say to the churches of the New Testament, *"I will remove the candlestick."*

I hear God call to **Israel** year after year, time after time, century after century, until that nation finally turned its back on God, and God called out to them through the prophet Moses and through those all the way down to Isaiah and beyond, and yet they were a stiff-necked and hard people who wouldn't hear and wouldn't listen.

God's heart was broken, and Jesus finally uttered it when He said, *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to*

gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" Lost opportunity.

Judas, the greatest case of lost opportunity in the history of the world. Judas who spent three years with the Son of God, the righteous one, the God of Glory, the King of Eternity, the judge of all the earth, the only Saviour and walked away from it and hanged himself. Judas was dashed to pieces on the rocks below. What a waste of opportunity?

The Old Testament,

1 Kings 20:38-40, Then the prophet departed and waited for the king by the road, and disguised himself with a bandage over his eyes. ³⁹ Now as the king passed by, he cried out to the king and said, "Your servant went out into the midst of the battle; and there, a man came over and brought a man to me, and said, 'Guard this man; if by any means he is missing, your life shall be for his life, or else you shall pay a talent of silver.' ⁴⁰ While your servant was busy here and there, he was gone." Then the king of Israel said to him, "So shall your judgment be; you yourself have decided it."

Story of a servant who by a king was given a commission. He said to him, "Here is a prisoner. Watch that prisoner. If you lose him, you will pay with your life."

The king went about his business in the midst of the war and this man was to care for that important prisoner. The king came back, and the man said, "While thy servant was busy here and there, the man was gone."

Here and there?

What is that?

If it was something significant it might be somewhat understandable, but to lose a man because you were busy here and there is stupid, and he paid with his life.

When are you going to finally study the Bible?

When are you going to finally teach?

When are you going to finally pray?

When are you going to finally share Christ?

When are you going to finally minister your gift?

I want to take everything that God's given me and use it for Him.

I want to make it most of every moment because it's only His grace that I am even here.

God called me to preach and teach, and I just want to make sure that I grab every time and opportunity that He gives me and redeem it to His glory in the midst of an evil day.

Romans 13:11, And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

We are getting nearer to the coming of the Lord.

Romans 13:12-14, the night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. ¹³ Let us walk ^[□]properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts.

Do you realize we only have a limited time?

We have got to live according to God's life principles with our limited privilege of time.

A man a fool who threw away jewels called fool.

I would call a man a fool who threw away money.

I would call a man a bigger fool who threw away an hour.

There is a world to be won.

There is a church to be built.

There's a God to be glorified and

There is no time for meaningless activity.

Philip Melancthon, the great reformer, kept a daily record of every wasted moment, and then took it to God in a prayer of confession at the end of the day. No wonder God used him to touch the whole world.

So, the believer who walks in wisdom knows his life principles, and limited privileges.

Lord's purposes

V 17, Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Since you have to redeem the time,

Since you have to walk wisely,

Since the days are evil,

"Don't be stupid/ unwise."

Now a stupid person would just panic.

9. Walk in Wisdom - 02

A wise person will “understand what the will of the Lord is.”

It is one thing to have a sense of urgency, but you need to channel that in the channel of God’s will for your life.

You don’t just run off half-cocked doing anything.

It is critical that the use of these life principles within the limited privileges be prescribed by the Lord’s purposes.

We don’t need more activity.

We don’t need to grow more meaningless stuff, more good stuff that isn’t the best stuff.

We need to be out there teaching the Word of God and winning people to Jesus Christ.

People in a big mad hurry don’t get anything done, but people with a resolute confidence that determines to follow God’s will, will get a lot done.

Don’t be unwise.

That’s a fool.

Don’t be a fool.

A fool functions apart from God’s will.

Find out what God’s will is.

How do I know what God’s will is?

If God has a will for your life, He will tell you.

He will tell you in the most obvious place.

1 Timothy 2:4, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

God wants me to be saved.

V 17-18, “Be not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

He wants you to be saved.

He wants you to be Spirit filled.

1 Thessalonians 4:3, For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;

✓ *Saved,*

9. Walk in Wisdom - 02

- ✓ *Spirit filled,*
- ✓ *Sanctified.*

1 Peter 2:13-17, *Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. ¹⁵For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— ¹⁶as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. ¹⁷Honour all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.*

Live a submissive life.

1 Peter 4:19, *Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.*

You suffer according to the will of God.

What is the will of God for you?

- ✓ *Saved,*
- ✓ *Spirit filled,*
- ✓ *Sanctified,*
- ✓ *Submissive,*
- ✓ *Suffering!*

1 Thessalonians 5:18, *in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

If you are living a life that's

- ✓ *Saved,*
- ✓ *Spirit filled,*
- ✓ *Sanctified,*
- ✓ *Submissive,*
- ✓ *Suffering, and*
- ✓ *Saying thanks*

9. Walk in Wisdom - 02

The Bible says it. "Delight in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart."

If you are fulfilling those six things, you are delighting the Lord and He will just give you the desire in your heart.

When you know God's will, you function in God's will with a sense of time and opportunity and obedience to His life principles. You are going to find your life is going to make a difference.

You know who the perfect illustration of this is?

Jesus.

Jesus always functioned according to divine life principles.

John 5:19, Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner."

He always functioned according to limited privilege.

He constantly said, "My time has not come. or, "My time is come."

He always functioned according to the Lord's purposes.

John 6:38, For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

What a sense of principle Jesus had?

He walked that righteous path.

What a sense of timing He had?

He knew His course and He grabbed every opportunity, and yet you never see Him in a hurry.

There was a determination and yet there was an availability to the most sensitive and sensible situations.

Jesus is our pattern. If you are going to walk wise, this is how you do it.

9. Walk in Wisdom - 02

10. Christian Home

10. *Christian Home*

10. Christian Home

11. New Priorities

2 Corinthians 5:18-21, Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Life in the church and life in the ministry can become very diverse and very complex. We get ourselves involved in all kinds of endeavours.

Sometimes our priorities get a little skewed.

We tell sinners that they can be reconciled to God.

That is the only reason we're here on earth, everything else we could do better in heaven.

We could have purer fellowship there, purer worship there, purer lives there, purer everything there. The only reason we are here is because we have this ministry of reconciliation.

The Bible makes it clear that all people are sinners, and by nature they are sinners, and by action they are sinners, and thus they are alienated from Holy God.

This alienation, because of sin, prevents every sinner from fellowship with God, who is too perfectly holy to have anything to do with sinners, except to reject them and damn them and punish them eternally.

Such a series of realities proves the point that the deadliest virus in the world is not the HIV/Corona virus, it's the SIN virus.

Like the HIV virus, it kills everything it infects not just in time, but in eternity not just physically, but spiritually.

There is a cure for the SIN virus, which is far worse.

God Himself has made it possible for sinners to be cured and reconciled to Him.

The good news is that the hostility with God can end now and forever, and it's all based upon this provision of reconciliation.

The word "reconciliation" is used five times in that brief text.

Reconciliation means that man and God can get together.

11. New Priorities

God has called us to preach this message, to train our people so they can preach this message.

This is what we go into all the world to do.

This is what we preach to every creature.

This is the content of the Great Commission.

If there was anything that Satan would want to attack it would be the church's understanding of this message.

People might know that Jesus died for sin, but they wouldn't know what really that means.

Our mission is to reconcile men to God.

We do that as the ministry of reconciliation by preaching the word of reconciliation.

We discharge our ambassadorship in an alien culture.

Word of Reconciliation

This is our job.

This is our task.

This is our responsibility.

We have the truth. We live in this world for one reason, and that's to announce that God will be reconciled to sinners. The enmity between hopeless, wicked people and a holy God can end. That's our message.

From the human viewpoint, if you look at the depravity of man and the infinite and perfect holiness of God, it will seem that there would ever be a possibility of reconciliation. If any is irreconcilable it is absolute and perfect holiness, and utterly depraved and wicked men.

We really don't get any help in this dilemma either by looking at angels, because when they fell there was no reconciliation provision.

We might have concluded if that's all we knew that reconciliation with God was impossible, there was no provision made for fallen angels to ever be reconciled.

But as impossible as it is to the human mind to conceive, as inscrutable as it would be to imagine a holy God communing with wicked people and still maintaining His holiness, that is exactly the truth, and that is the word of reconciliation which we preach.

There is a way to reconciled to God.

God has given it to us to proclaim. If there is anything the church must understand it is that word of reconciliation.

We are ambassadors for Christ who have been given a very straightforward task, and that is the ministry of reconciliation.

By what means can sinners be reconciled to God?



1. Reconciliation is by the will of God.

V 18, "Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us."

V 19, "God was in Christ reconciling the world."

V 20, "God entreating through us."

All of those indicate to us that the plan comes from God, that God is the reconciler.

V 17, "makes new creations, who causes old things to pass away and new things to come."

God is the one who provided in the love of Christ the death that reconciles us.

V 14-15, ¹⁴ For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; ¹⁵ and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

The plan comes from God.

God by nature is a reconciling God.

Corinthians they lived in a polytheistic world and myriad of deities.

Typically, those pagan religions that we are familiar with have gods that if they are not appeased appropriately. For example, in the case of **Moloch**, a child is not passed through

11. New Priorities

the fire, or if certain ceremonies are not carried out, if certain sacrifices are not offered, that god is going to continue on in his fury.

As in the case of the priests of Baal and Elijah's mocking questions about whether or not their god was asleep or gone on a vacation.

The gods that are devised by seducing spirits are gods of indifference.

On the one hand and gods of outright hostility.

In contrast to that in a world of indifferent to hostile gods comes along the Christian message that our God is by nature a saving God. Never is that more clearly manifest than in the person of Jesus Christ.

From the time in **Genesis 3:8-9**, when God said to Adam and Eve, "Where are you?" God has been seeking sinners.

God seeks to be reconciled.

He is not indifferent to reconciliation.

He is not hostile to reconciliation.

It is His nature to be a saving God.

Ezekiel 34:16, "I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment."

That's God's nature, to save.

Titus 1:3, but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

Titus 2:10, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Titus 3:4, But when the kindness and the love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

It's not that God is reluctant to save, and somebody must appeal to Him to do that, He is by nature a saviour.

Utterly there is no reluctance on the part of God whatsoever in regard to salvation. He is by nature a saving God.

2 Chronicles 36:15-16, And the Lord God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and

11. New Priorities

on His dwelling place. ¹⁶But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy.

God pleads and pleads, until He has finally exhausted every possible plea.

Coming into the New Testament we find the same character of God indicated in Luke.

Jesus Christ, who is God incarnate and shows us God's saving nature.

***Luke 19:1-5**, Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. ²Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. ³And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. ⁵And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house."*

It starts out with Zacchaeus seeking Him. Zacchaeus, the best he can do is get in a tree.

Suddenly Jesus turns and starts to seek him. He hurried, came down, received him gladly.

People began to grumble.

***Luke 19:7-10**, But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner." ⁸Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." ⁹And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; ¹⁰for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."*

There is the character of God made manifest.

God appeared in order that salvation might take place.

God by nature is a seeking, saving God.

Luke 15 has three parables.

- The parable of lost sheep,
- The parable of a lost coin, and
- The parable of two lost sons.

We focus on one, but there were really two lost sons. One was profligate and the other was religious, but they were both in the same spiritual predicament in the parable.

11. New Priorities

The parable of lost sheep

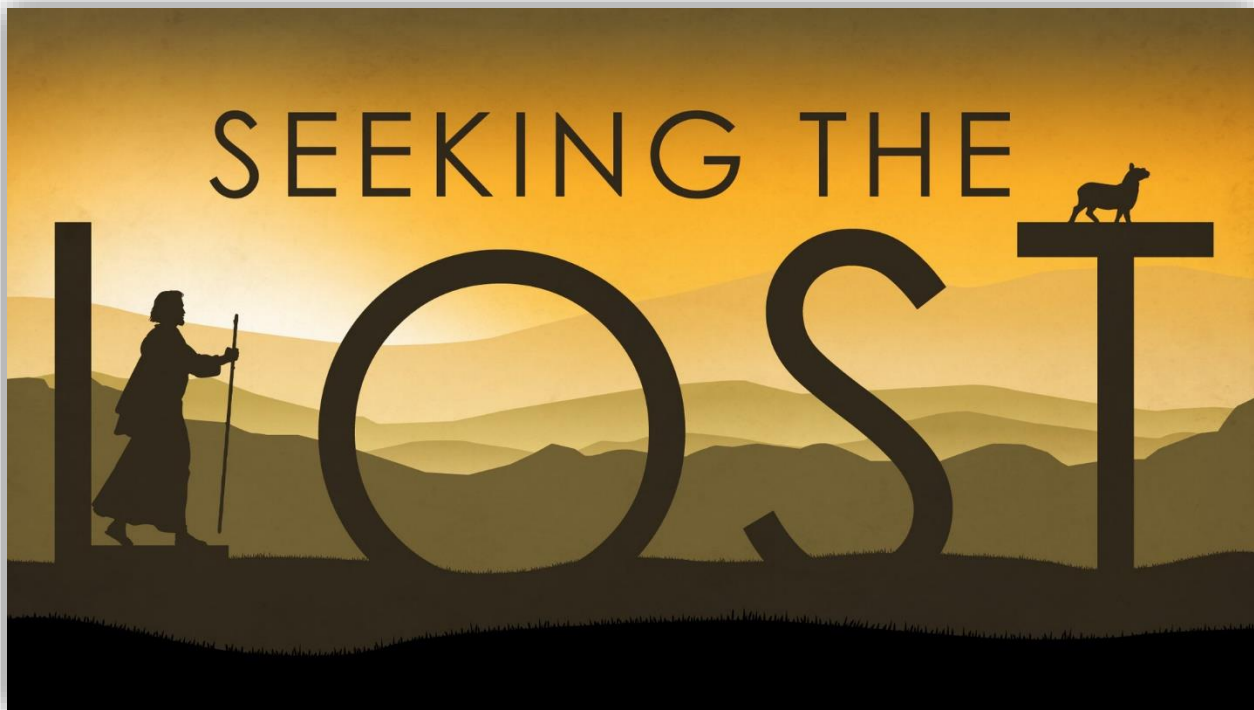
Luke 15:3-7, is about a lost sheep. The one who lost the sheep goes to find the sheep and leaves the ninety-nine. When he finds it, lays it on his shoulders rejoicing. Comes home, calls together his friends, his neighbours saying to them, "Rejoice of me, for I found my which was lost!"

V 7 "I tell you in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."

Heaven is never happier than when sinners repent.

The great exhilaration and joy in heaven occurs when sinners repent.

There was a party when the sheep was found.



The parable of a lost coin

Luke 15:8-10. The coin is lost, and the coin is found.

V10, "In the same way, I tell you, there's joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Nothing ignites the exhilarating joy of heaven more than the repentance of a sinner because they know that pleases God. The angels join in the great celebration.

11. New Priorities

The parable of two lost sons

Luke 15:11-32.

The two sons, one son wicked, outwardly vicious, uncaring, irreligious, and disregarding his gospel privilege under his father, wasting all his substance comes back and repents, is restored.

“Kill the fatted calf, put on the robe, put on the ring, start the music,”

The celebration in heaven over the sinner who repents.

On the other hand, the Pharisaical sinner, the self-righteous brother never does repent, and can't even enter into the celebration that ends the chapter in verse 32.

So, the theme of the chapter is how heaven rejoices when sinners repent.

When he got up and started to come back to his father, his father ran to meet him.

Fell on his neck and kissed him. That's showing the seeking heart of God.

1 Timothy 1:1, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Saviour and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,

1 Timothy 2:3-4, For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Why did God provide a mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave Himself a ransom for all, if He wasn't by nature a saving God?

God is a saving God. We don't need to plead with God to save sinners, we need to plead with sinners to accept the salvation God offers.

1 Timothy 4:10, For to this end we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe.

God's nature to be a Saviour.

We never can lose sight of that, and we never can lose sight of the fact that we are called to the ministry of reconciliation.

Titus 1:4, To Titus, a true son in our common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Titus 2:13, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ,

Titus 3:6, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour,

11. New Priorities

We have three mentions of God, three mentions of Christ after the salutation. Each time They are identified as to Their saving purpose.

God is the starting point of reconciliation. It is because of His nature, because of His will, and because of his plan.

Reconciliation is a divine provision by which God's holy displeasure has been appeased, the hostility removed, and sinners restored to Him.

Reconciliation with God is not something we accomplish when we decide to start rejecting Him, it is something He accomplished when He decided to stop rejecting us.

God then is the source of reconciliation.

2. Reconciliation is by the forgiveness of God.

It is by the forgiveness of sins.

There is no reconciliation without the forgiveness of sins.

V 19, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself."

How could He do that?

Only one way: by not counting their trespasses against them.

The only way that we could ever be reconciled to God is if the barrier, which is sin, is out of the way.

God is reconciling sinners to Himself, and He can only do that one way, and that is by not counting their trespasses against them.

"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself."

Did He really reconcile the world to himself?

It does not mean that God has not actually reconciled the entire world to Himself, or nobody would be in hell.

Did Christ pay the full penalty for every soul?

Did He pay for the sins of every soul that has ever lived on the cross?

If He did, then hell would be double jeopardy.



11. New Priorities

“World” here includes the sphere, the class of beings toward whom God sought His reconciliation, the world of mankind. It was His love for mankind, a love He didn’t demonstrate for angels.

Christ’s death had unlimited and infinite value because He was the infinite Son of God. His sacrifice was sufficient to pay the penalty for the sins of as many as God saves.

If God decided to save everybody, no further sacrifice would be needed.

So, when we talk about whether His atonement or whether the work on the cross was limited in its value, in its essence, and in its sufficiency, it is unlimited.

The question then is not really about the intrinsic merit of Christ’s death or its capabilities.

Atonement made for whom?

John 10:11, “The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”

Acts 20:28, “The church of God which is bought with the blood of His Son.”

Ephesians 5:25, “Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.”

John 17:20, “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who ^{will} believe in Me through their word;

No matter what you want to believe about limited or unlimited atonement, in the end it only applies to those who believe.

God can have a reconciliation with these sinners by not counting their trespasses against them.

He came into the world of men to reconcile sinners.

He came into mankind to reconcile sinners.

The only way He could do it was not counting their trespasses against them.

Romans 4:8, “Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.”

Psalms 32:2, “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity.”

The only way God can be reconciled to man is if sin is out of the picture.

God can’t dismiss it, He’s too holy for that.

He must judge it.

Sin must be dealt with.

Once it’s dealt with, reconciliation takes place.

Reconciliation is by the will the God, by the act of forgiveness.

3. Reconciliation is by the obedience of faith.

It's not without faith.

Why else would we be given the ministry of reconciliation?

Why else would we be told to preach the word of reconciliation and go out as ambassadors?

V20, "Be reconciled to God"?

If this is all God's plan and it's all God's action, why are we bothering with these people?

There is a marvellous, inscrutable component in the work of reconciliation, and that is to the obedience of faith.

So, we go out, and it's like God begging through us that sinners be reconciled to Him.

If God knows it, and it's all predetermined, and it's all settled and it's all done, why in the world are we going around begging everybody to be reconciled to God?

We go to sinners and plead with them to be reconciled.

That's our task as ambassadors.

It's as if God had sent us as His personal agents into an alien culture to beg the people to be reconciled to Him.

Acts 16:31, So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Romans 10:9-10, that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

We go out there and tell sinners to believe.

Romans 10:11-14, For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." ¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

We are the preachers. We tell them and we call them to faith.

So, reconciliation is by the will of God, by the act of forgiveness, and by the obedience of faith.

What is amazing about this is that sinners are responsible for their own rejection.

11. New Priorities

John 8:24, Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

John 8:45, But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.

4. Reconciliation by the work of substitution.

How can God do this?

How does He deal with sin?

How does He reconcile sinners?

How does He satisfy His just and holy condemnation of sin with a full and deserved punishment and still be able to show mercy to sinners who deserve no mercy?

V 21, For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

V 18, "God reconciled us to himself through Christ."

V 19, "God was in Christ."

V 20, "We are ambassadors for Christ. We beg you on behalf of Christ."

He said that Christ is the means of this reconciliation.

This is the work of substitution.

"He made,"

It was God the reconciler.

It was God who planned it.

It was God who designed it.

God, who developed the ministry of reconciliation, revealed the word of reconciliation, and sends us forth as ambassadors.

"He made Him who knew no sin."

Jesus Christ, the sinless one.

The one of whom the Father said, *"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."*

The one of whom the writer of Hebrew says, *"He is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."*

John 8:46, Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?

11. New Priorities

He chose the sinless one.

To be made sin. He made Him who knew no sin sin on our behalf.

What does that mean?

He made Him sin.

Some say that on the cross Jesus became a sinner.

This is what they teach: Jesus became a sinner, and then He went to hell to suffer the just punishment of His sin for three days. When he had suffered and expiated His sin, God released Him to be raised from the tomb.

Jesus was as pure and sinless on the cross as He ever was before in eternity or since. He was the pure and spotless Lamb, without blemish. He was not a sinner on the cross. He did not become a sinner on the cross.

There is only one way in which He can be spoken of as being made sin, and this is it and nothing more.

Christ did not become a sinner.

He did not break a law.

He did nothing in His perfection to violate that perfection.

He never failed to fulfil perfectly every holy demand and expectation.

He did no sin, but He was made a sinner in this sense.

God treated Him as if He was one, though He wasn't. That should be clear from any study of the sacrificial system. The animal on the alter didn't do anything to deserve that either, but that animal was treated as if it was the sinner, to show the sinner what the sinner deserved.

On the cross Jesus was not a sinner, He did not become a sinner, but God treated Jesus on the cross as if He had personally committed every sin ever committed by every person who would ever believe. That's the extent of the real atonement.

God treated Jesus on the cross as if He had committed every sin ever committed by every person who would ever believe.

What does that mean that God treated Him that way?

God exploded on Him the full fury of all His wrath for all the sins of all the people who would ever believe. He took the full wrath for all of it, though He was not a sinner.

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Do you have the right to go marching into the presence of God because your life is sinless?

11. New Priorities

No!

You are not righteous, but God treat's you as if you were.

That's the other side of substitution.

On the cross Jesus was not a sinner, but God treated Him as if He was.

Because of the cross you are not righteous, but He treats you as if you are. Your sins have all been punished.

They have all been dealt with.

They have all been expiated.

They have all been propitiated.

They have all covered.

The judgement has been paid.

The fury has been spent.

The wrath is over, and there is therefore now no condemnation.

That's imputation.

That's substitution.

He wasn't the sinner, and I'm not righteous.

But God covered Him with my sin and treated Him as if He had committed it all.

God treats me as if I had done only Jesus' righteous deeds.

That is the gospel!

That is the ministry of reconciliation.

Reconciliation is what we are all about. We have the wonderful privilege to go into this world of people dying of the SIN virus and tell them we know the cure.

Amen!

11. New Priorities

12. Walk in Unity

Philippians 2:1-4, Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, ² fulfil my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. ³ Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.



The Philippians had a special place in Paul's heart and he in their hearts.

Paul commends them for their obedience. They had a pattern of obedience. When he was there, they obeyed, and he wanted them to continue doing it even in his absence.

They had not gone astray in terms of theology.

They didn't need to be corrected.

There is no immorality in the congregation which is confronted in the epistle.

This is really a devoted, consistent, doctrinally true church.

But, despite all of that, there is that deadly snake of disunity, discord, and conflict, which has poisoned so many, many churches.

12. Walk in Unity

Philippian 1:27, Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,

Philippians 4:1-3, Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved. ² I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³ And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

This is a plea for unity. In fact, it is the pattern of unity given. It is the formula for spiritual unity, as we have entitled our sermon.

Paul wrote a letter to a church he brought up the issue of unity.

Romans, he brought it up at least three times:

Romans 12:10, Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another

Romans 12:16, Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

and then in **Romans, chapters 14 and 15**; the theme topic of those two chapters.

1 Corinthians 1:10, Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

2 Corinthians 13:11, Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Galatians, in chapters 5 and 6,

Ephesians, chapter 4.

Colossians chapter 3,

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10, But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; ¹⁰ and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more;

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4, We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each

12. Walk in Unity

other, ⁴so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,

Philippians because it is always a lurking, potential disaster in the church of Jesus Christ.

When the Bible talks about unity it is not talking about outward unity.

It is talking about an inward unity.

It is talking about something that is internally compelling, not externally controlled.

It is more heartfelt than creedal. It is not particularly verbal as much as it is emotional, spiritual. It is the union of hearts and minds and souls in common cause. It's not people just being united because they're in the same container. It's people who are literally attracted to each other because they're pulled by the same power.

Illustration

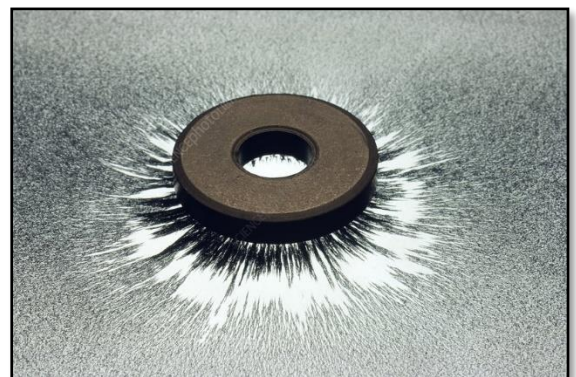


If you have a bag filled with marbles, you have a certain unity. You have one bag full of marbles, and all those marbles are pushed against each other, packed together. But that which binds them into unity is the container. It's something on the outside that holds them. As soon as you tear the bag, the marbles are everywhere because there's nothing intrinsic or internal to keep them together. It's purely the package they are in, the container.

But on the other hand, if you have a magnet and you put that magnet into some metal shavings, the shavings will all adhere to the magnet. Not because there is an external container but because there's an internal force. And they are pulled to each other because they are all pulled by the same force pulling through each other. And that's how the church is to be.

It is not a collection of marbles in the same bag. It is people who are pressed against each other because they're all magnetized by the same force, which is the power of Jesus Christ.

The internal unity of the church. We are pulled to each other because we are pulled through each other by the power that pulls, which is Christ.



12. Walk in Unity

Paul wants to see people who are drawn by the power of Christ to each other because they are drawn to Christ through each other.

1. *The motives for unity,*
2. *The marks of unity, and*
3. *The means of unity.*

What is unity?

How do we experience unity?

"Being of the same mind."

"I want you to be like-minded."

Why is it important for us to be of one mind?

Why is it important for us to maintain unity in the church?

Why is it important for us to have one spirit?

V 1, "If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if therefore there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion."

Now there are the **four motives** for spiritual unity.

"Because there is encouragement in Christ,
because there is consolation of love,
because there is fellowship of the Spirit, and
because there is affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind."

Because of all these things, these are the driving motives it should compel you.

Paul is speaking of present spiritual experiences.

This is present, spiritual experience that becomes the motive for unity.

1. Encouragement in Christ

The first one is encouragement in Christ. That should be our first motive.

The word "encouragement," *paraklsis*, means "to come alongside and help" somebody. The Holy Spirit is called the Paraclete, the One who comes alongside and helps.

12. Walk in Unity

It has the idea of coming alongside someone to encourage them, to counsel them, to help them, to exhort them.

You who are in Christ have experienced His help. He has come alongside you. You who are in Christ have benefited from the union with Christ through the intended encouragement, exhortation, counsel, and help that you have received.

Because Christ has so consistently and faithfully helped you, this is how you ought to respond, by being of the same mind.

If the great blessing, encouragement of Christ, His constant forgiveness, constant strength, wisdom, and constant benediction in your life means certainly you should respond by endeavouring to be of the same mind."

Why?

Because that was Christ's great prayer.

John 17 He said, "Father, I pray that they may be one that the world may know that You and I are one."

John 13:35 He said, "By this shall all men know that you're My disciples, if you have love one for another."

The great passion of the heart of Christ was the unity of His people.

Because you have received such continual, gentle encouragement, exhortation, counsel, and help from Christ since the moment of your salvation, does not that spur you on to give back to Christ that which is precious to His heart?

Does the influence of Christ in your life move you to obedience?

Or are you so ungrateful that you will take but never give?

When you sin you are literally violating the intimacy of a relationship between yourself and Christ.

If you have received - and you have - constant encouragement, counsel, exhortation, wisdom from Christ, is not that motive that you should give back to Him what is precious to His heart

He has constantly, by grace, given you everything precious to you. Can you not give Him back what is precious to Him?

The gracious blessing, the gentle encouragement of Christ has so generously been poured out to us.

12. Walk in Unity

His exhortations to us are so clear and compelling, including His exhortations to unity, that we should respond stimulated to pursue the harmony He desires in His church for the sake of gratitude and love, if for nothing else.

2. *Consolation of love.*

Since the loving tenderness of God in Christ has been all our experience as Christians. Since in salvation and sanctification we have known His love and the comfort of His love. We have known that comforting, loving forgiveness and mercy and grace and it has been so abundant to us.

Shouldn't we be constrained to seek that which is precious to His heart, namely the unity of His people?

The first two relate to Christ and
The second two, the Holy Spirit.

The first one mentions Christ; the second one flows out of it. The third one mentions the Holy Spirit; the fourth one flows out of that.

Lexicon translates, "gentle cheering." Some have translated it "comfort."

Basically, it has the idea of "tenderness, tender counsel."
Means to speak to someone by coming close to his side.

It's a word about friendship.
It's a word about intimate love.

The word agape has to do with the greatest love, the highest love, the supreme love.

Because you have been so constantly encouraged in your relationship to Christ.
Because you have so frequently and so often had the gentle cheering of Him coming alongside to speak words of friendship into your own ear.

Because of that intimate relationship in which He has poured His love and grace into your life, shouldn't you be compelled to give back to Him that which His heart desires?

It is not primarily a sin against the church as an organization.
It is a sin against your intimate, personal relationship to Christ/
It is the ultimate act of ingratitude to One who unceasingly has poured out both encouragement and comfort into your life since the moment you were saved.

12. Walk in Unity

Christ, I take everything You give. I want everything I need. I will take all that You supply, but do not ask anything in return. Do not ask me to give back to You that which is precious to You. It is a violation of a relationship.

And this is not just the sin of disunity; this is every sin. That's why David said in Psalm 51, when David sinned against Bathsheba. He sinned against Bathsheba.

He sinned against Uriah her husband.

He sinned against the nation Israel because he was king.

He sinned against God's revealed law.

This is the focus that every man or woman must have about sin. It is not that I have violated a code nearly so much as that I have violated a relationship.

Paul speaks in such tender words because he feels such tenderness in his heart toward these people.

He asks them to look at the love of Christ, to look at the constant, gentle, cheering encouragement of Christ in their life, the constant outpouring of grace and remember that Jesus prayed for unity, and it was the plea of His heart.

3. Fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

"If there is any fellowship of the Spirit,"

koinonia, "partnership, communion, sharing."

Because you have experienced the fellowship of the Spirit.

Paul moves to the Holy Spirit.

Do you think the Holy Spirit wants unity?

Sure.

The unity of the church is called the unity of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:13, ¹³ *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink ^[a]into one Spirit.*

We've all been made of one Spirit. We are all the temple of the Spirit of God, the habitation of the Spirit. We are one in the Spirit. The Spirit desires unity. The Spirit is the source of unity. And Paul is saying "you fellowship with the Spirit."

What do you mean by that, Paul?

You have received all that a union with the Holy Spirit could provide.

You have the indwelling Spirit.

12. Walk in Unity

You are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

You have received all His benefits.

You have been sealed by the Spirit.

He has become the guarantor of your eternal inheritance.

You are filled with the Spirit.

You are empowered and enabled for service by the Spirit.

You have been gifted by the Spirit.

You are continually being cleansed by the Spirit.

The Spirit is always praying for you "with groanings which cannot be uttered," in a language that cannot be understood by man but is the language of the Trinity in which He prays unceasingly for you "according to the will of God," which you don't know, and that's why you know not what to pray for as you ought. The Spirit therefore makes intercession for you.

The Spirit has done everything for you.

- Because the Holy Spirit has effected your regeneration,
- because the Holy Spirit is effecting your sanctification,
- because the Holy Spirit is guaranteeing your eternal glory,
- because the Holy Spirit is unceasingly praying for you with groanings that can't find human words,
- because the Holy Spirit is gifting you, filling you, producing fruit in you,
- because He is teaching you,
- because He is enabling you to resist temptation,
- because the Holy Spirit has given you the Word,
- because He is filling you with holy impulses,
- because He has given you everything pertaining to life and godliness,

will you disrupt that which is most dear to His heart, the unity of the church?

- It is a violation of a relationship.
- It is quenching the blessed Holy Spirit.
- It is a form of doing despite to the Spirit of grace.

You are saying, "I take all the Spirit gives. I give nothing back."

"Sin in the life of a Christian in its simplest definition is a tragic act of ingratitude and a violation of a relationship."

Look at your discord it is a defiance against Christ. It is a defiance against the Holy Spirit.

Everything we do that turns out to be an honour to God is the product of the Spirit.

He shows to us compassion, tenderness, mercy, sympathy, pity, tremendous care.

12. Walk in Unity

You come into the church and divide the church, and you have been terribly disloyal to a loving Christ and a loving Spirit who long for the unity of the church.

Paul's approach is different here. There's no threats. There's no rod like he wanted to pull out with the Corinthians. It's very tender. It would be like this.

A father sitting down with his son and saying,

Son, have you been loved in this family?

Have your mother and father loved you faithfully?

Have we encouraged you?

When you were down and sad have we come alongside to offer you compassion and care and sympathy?

When you were hungry have we provided food for you?

Have we clothed you?

Have we nurtured you as you grew from a little child?

Have we provided all the medical care you needed to live a healthy life?

Have we given you a warm environment in which to live?

A bed to sleep?

A room to dwell in?

Have we shown you deep affection?

Have we been gracious to you in the times when you were disobedient and rebellious, gracious to forgive you and love you and restore you?

Have we shown you sympathy?

Have we shown you mercy?

Have we been patient with you while you were learning how to do things right and often did them wrong?

Have you known our affectionate compassion?

Have you experienced our goodness to you?

Son, since all those things are true, isn't it reasonable that we ask you to live in such a way that would bring us joy?

It isn't it?

V 2, "Make my joy complete by being of the same mind."

If you can't get in touch with your intimate relationship with Christ,

If you can't quite get in touch with this idea of your intimate relationship to the Holy Spirit,

If you can't do it for Christ's sake, and

12. Walk in Unity

You can't do it for the Spirit's sake,

Then do it for my sake.

Paul is talking to them as a pastor.

"Make my joy complete."

Hebrews 13:17, Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Make your leaders happy.

Paul's appeal again is very personal, it's very relational.

They knew him; they loved him; he loved them.

They had an incredible bond.

The marks of unity

V 2, fulfil my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

They are the marks of spiritual unity. And I want you to understand them, and I want you to understand the sum of them as well as the parts, so listen carefully.

a) Being of the same mind.

The Greek verb **phrone** basically means "to think the same way."

A key to unity is thinking alike. Unanimity of thought is essential to true spiritual unity.

You have conflict when people don't think alike.

The Spirit of God is not saying, "Get your doctrine together." That's not the issue.

Philippians didn't have any doctrinal problems.

He isn't saying "get your ethical standard worked out."

They didn't have any problem with that.

There is no glaring sin in that church to which he directs any verse.

The problem was attitude.

"You have to think the same way. Your attitudes have to be in perfect harmony."

12. Walk in Unity

How can we do that?

Romans 8:4, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Introduces us to a contrast between flesh and Spirit.

Romans 8:5, For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Same word we see in Philippians 2.

Two possibilities.

You can either think with the Spirit or you can think with the flesh.

If we are to think the same, then we must all think in harmony with the Holy Spirit.

So, the first principle is that if we are to be of the same mind we must think on the things of the Spirit of God.

We must have spiritual thoughts.

We ascend beyond our own realm, our own agenda, our own flesh, our own unredeemed humanness - that which the Puritans called remaining sin that must be mortified in us.

We must realize that the conflict is between the Spirit and the flesh never the Spirit and the Spirit.

You don't have two people thinking with the mind of the Spirit in conflict. If there is conflict, somebody is thinking in the mind of the Spirit - or no one is - and someone else is thinking in the flesh.

If we are according to the Spirit, then we think the things of the Spirit. So if we are to have the same mind we must be thinking on the things of the Spirit of God.

Romans 12:3, For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

Second thing, we are to think with sound, divine judgment. That means objectivity. Where we get into trouble is when we think subjectively. We have discord at all different levels of relationships because, first, we are not thinking the things of the mind of the Spirit.

Secondly, we are not thinking objectively. It's not sound judgment.

It's subjective.

12. Walk in Unity

- We have got our own agenda.
- We have got our own priorities.
- We have got our own little enterprise.
- We have got our own personal ambition.
- We have got our own little fortress to maintain and defend.
- We have got our own pride that compels us to whatever ends its evil longings pursue.
- So, we have not objectivity. We are the victims of our subjectivity.

Romans 15:5, Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,

We have Christ in the picture.

We think the things of the Spirit.

We think the things of God, which give sound judgment.

Conflict is always a result of sinful attitude. It is the collision of the mind of the Spirit and of God and of Christ with the mind of the flesh always. We are to have the mind of Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:16, For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

- You have the mind of Christ.
- You can think the thoughts of Christ.
- You can have a Christ-like attitude.
- You can know the will of Christ, the will of God, the will of the Spirit.
- You can mind spiritual things.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3, And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. ² I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; ³ for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and ^[a]behaving like mere men?

What does that mean?

You have the mind of man,
not the mind of God,
not the mind of the Spirit,
not the mind of Christ.

You are fleshy.

12. Walk in Unity

2 Corinthians 13:11, Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Paul reflects on the fact that it's part of being mature.

He says, "be made mature and think the same thing."

It's part of spiritual maturity. If you are fleshy, spiritually immature, you are going to collide with the mind of the Trinity.

Colossians 3:2, Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Think the Spirit's thoughts, think the Father's thoughts, think the Son's thoughts, think mature thoughts, think spiritual thoughts, think heavenly thoughts.

How can we have those spiritual thoughts?

How can we think like the Spirit, think like the Father, think like the Son, make sound judgment?

How can we not be victimized by my flesh?

Colossians 3:12-16, Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. ¹⁴ But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

He didn't just say "know the Scripture."

He said "let the word of Christ richly dwell within you."

You can think the thoughts of the Spirit, and you can have the sound judgment of divine wisdom from God. You can express the mind of Christ, and you can think spiritual thoughts, and you can think heavenly thoughts if your thinking processes are energized by the dominant and richly dwelling Word of Christ.

Your instincts are spiritual, so that your involuntary reactions are right, because you are dominated by the Word of Christ.

You let the Word of Christ dominate and it becomes the controlling force in your life that pushes you ever upward and out of this earth and out of yourself.

12. Walk in Unity

When we have conflict at Church, I do not believe it is conflict over doctrine and principle. I believe it is conflict and the collision of attitudes.

There are no collisions in the Trinity.

God is not in conflict with Christ, and Christ is not in conflict with God, and Christ is not in conflict with the Spirit, and the Spirit is not in conflict with Christ.

They have one will and one design.

It is a failure to think on a divine level.

It is quick to speak, slow to think, and slower to pray, and slower to meditate, and slower to search the mind of God.

b) Maintaining the same love.

If you are of the same mind, you will maintain the same love.

It means to love everybody the same.

We are not talking about emotion because I can't emotionally be attracted to everybody.

Romans 12:10, Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another;

John 15:13, Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

1 John 3:16, By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Love acts on behalf of someone else's need.

John 3:16, For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Christ and the Spirit will be loving through you, and love for one another will be the outflow.

c) United in spirit.

V 2, fulfil my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

We are talking about desire.

We are talking about ambition.

If we all have the same passion, same desire, same ambition, we are going to be "united in spirit."

12. Walk in Unity

When somebody has a desire and a passion and a heart-felt hunger to see Jesus Christ's church united, and somebody else wants the whole world to know that they have been offended, you have collision.

They are going to spread that everywhere they can.

When you ask them what the offense was and they probably couldn't even tell you, but it's giving way to the flesh. The flesh is a liar.

The flesh will deceive you.

It will conjure in your minds things that aren't even true and destroy the unity of the church with a lot of stuff that isn't even related to reality.

If there is one driving passion for the glory of the church, then there's one driving passion for the unity of the church.

If there is one driving passion for the exaltation of Christ, there is one driving passion for unity.

If there is one driving passion for the unity of the Spirit, that's what will happen.

If there's one driving passion for the glory of God, that's exactly what'll bring about the unity of the church.

It's when somebody in the mix is driven by another agenda protectionism, possessiveness, personal ambition, envy, jealousy, pride, illegitimate offense, morbid feelings of persecution, whatever else.

"Intent on one purpose."

If we have one passion, we are going to have one purpose.

What is your purpose?

People in conflict all have their own purpose.

Starting with one mind, that one mind is released in one great love.

That one great love is wonderfully accompanied by a single passion for unity with no personal agenda, which results in one great group of people moving toward one eternal, glorious purpose.

That purpose is the glory of God and advancement of the kingdom.

Means of Unity

What is the means to unity?

How does it practically come about?

12. Walk in Unity

V 3-4, Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Five practical principles given here.

They are inter-related and inter-connected.

Three of them are negative and two of them are positive.

There are some things to exclude and some to include.

Obedience always has a negative and a positive side.

a) Do nothing from selfishness.

As soon as you become selfish you are literally at war with everybody else.

Self-seeking that leads to quarrelling, hassling, haggling, fighting, arguing, contending.

Galatians 5:20, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

It is not a work of the Spirit, but of the flesh.

It is egotism. Egotism that is intent on advancing itself.

Egotism driven by personal desire which is always destructive and disruptive.

You must start with slaying the giant of selfishness, getting rid of that consuming and destructive pride that is rooted deep in our fallen flesh that makes us want to push our own way.

1 Corinthians 1:10-12, Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. ¹¹ For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. ¹² Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."

They divided themselves into little factions.

We are the Paul group,

We are the Peter group.

We are the Apollos group.

We are the Christ group.

12. Walk in Unity

We don't know particularly what divided them up.

The flesh produces selfishness.

Certainly nothing wrong with Paul, Apollos, Peter, and Christ. The agenda may be valid. But one selfishness takes over the agenda then jealousy rises and out of jealousy comes strife and out of strife comes conflict and the loss of unity.

So, you must start with selfishness, personal ambition for your cause.

b) Not according to vain glory.

It is a state of mind that seeks personal glory.

The first word, ambition, ties a person in with an enterprise, where this is purely personal glory, being emphasized.

This seems to focus on personal glory. A person who assertively, arrogantly claims to have the right opinion, who is in fact in error, he has erroneous opinion.

He has an erroneous opinion of himself.

He is conceited without reason.

He is deluded.

He seeks self- promotion and self-glory.

He will fight to prove himself supreme. Wherever you have that kind of attitude you have discord. This is personal vanity.

c) Humility of Mind.

"But with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself."

Instead of being personally ambitious and personally vain, on the other hand, rather than being proud which both of those things reflect, maintain humility of mind. That's where unity always begins.

Unity is born out of humility

How can I think of others superior to myself?

Sometimes, you may be right, you may not.

Basically, we don't know what's in somebody's heart.

12. Walk in Unity

You know more sin about your own heart than you do about anybody else's.

So, if we are talking from the level of first-hand information, who is the worst sinner you have ever met?

Be honest it is You.

Every man knows his own heart first.

You have enough information to give yourself a low estimate of what you really are.

It shouldn't be any major issue for me to look at someone else as superior to myself.

We can assume people are superior to us spiritually if all we can see is what's on the outside.

Paul said about himself, "I am the least of all the Apostles who am not fit to be called an Apostle."

Is that false humility?

No, that's because the person he knows best is Paul.

1 Timothy 1:15, This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

V 4, "Do not merely look out for your own personal interests."

We live in a society where that's all anybody cares about, their own personal interest.

You need to be responsible for the conditions and matters of your own life, but don't merely be concerned with that.

Don't regard as your aim or goal or purpose in life to take care of only your own personal enterprises.

In the church we only own our own little piece of the pie. We don't see the big picture.

Look at the Christian community and it is tragic to see all the conflict and competition, tragic, just unbelievable.

Eliminate selfishness, that's that personal ambition that ties you into your little piece of turf. Eliminate empty conceit, that's the driving passion to see your name exalted and your person lifted up.

Don't get caught in that trap where your life is consumed with your own things. Also be concerned with the interests of others who have every right to your concern and your prayers.

12. Walk in Unity

As I said, this is a tremendously high standard. And we would expect it. Would we expect anything less? If we can live out these things, we can eliminate competition and we can eliminate collisions in the church and in the body of Christ.

Christ is our model.

Christ did nothing from selfishness.

Everything He did really was fulfilling the Father's will and the Father's will was being expressed for our sake. He did nothing for empty conceit.

12. Walk in Unity



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcfondon.com

wcfondon@gmail.com