

Casting Down Imaginations

The battle in your mind

By

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Casting Down Imaginations

Have you as a Christian recognized the battle in your mind?

Every person has a “thought life” that has a bearing on their well being and way of living. I sometimes find myself thinking thoughts I know I ought not to be thinking. I know this because my heart is sometimes convicted.

I’ve also learned over the years that if I persist in those thoughts, I will bear the weight of my wrong thinking in my soul. If I persist in toying with these thoughts it means I’ve chosen to turn away from the Lord within me. I then become weighed down and somewhat in darkness. The light and buoyancy of the Lord in my life is then diminished or lost for a time, even though Christ will never leave me and He is still living within my spirit. Thankfully, the Lord even then will never fail us or leave us helpless. He is present to support us as we turn our heart to Him again.

*Hebrews 13:5 (Amplified Bible) Let your character or moral disposition be free from love of money [including greed, avarice, lust, and craving for earthly possessions] and be satisfied with your present [circumstances and with what you have]; for **HE [GOD] HIMSELF HAS SAID, I WILL NOT IN ANY WAY FAIL YOU NOR GIVE YOU UP NOR LEAVE YOU WITHOUT SUPPORT. [I will] not, [I will] not, [I WILL] NOT IN ANY DEGREE LEAVE YOU HELPLESS NOR FORSAKE NOR LET [YOU] DOWN (RELAX MY HOLD ON YOU)! [ASSUREDLY NOT!]***

The fact is that we have an enemy whose immediate purpose is to destroy our union with the Lord that yields rest and peace to our souls. The Devil’s devices are used to place a *wedge* between us and the Lord. That *wedge* is the self-condemnation that could come when he causes unknowing believers to fail. This battle or war is not of our initiating. The enemy of our soul is the very same “*spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience*” (Eph 2:1). That evil Sin-spirit tempts us by shooting his “*fiery darts*” of temptation into our minds in the form of Sinful thoughts. He may also by now have established a seeming a “*stronghold*” in our mind. We’ll discuss this further as we go on in this series.

Though the Sin-nature is seated as “*Sin in the flesh*” (Rom 8:3b), Paul here below describes the nature of our “*warfare*” or battle as not being a matter of “*the flesh*” alone.

*“for though we walk in the flesh (body), we do **NOT WAR** after (in the manner of) the flesh:⁴ (for the weapons of our **WARFARE** are **NOT carnal (fleshly)**, ⁴**but** (our weapons are) **mighty through God** (who is “Spirit”) to the **PULLING DOWN** (Gk., *kathairesis*, destruction) of **STRONG HOLDS**; ⁵**CASTING DOWN IMAGINATIONS**, and **every high thing that exalteth itself against the KNOWLEDGE of God**, and **BRINGING INTO CAPTIVITY EVERYTHOUGHT** to the obedience of (attentively harkening to) Christ.”” (2Corinthians 10:3-5).*

The words “*imaginations...thought*” and “*knowledge*” in verse 5 (above) tell us the battleground of our “*war*” is located within our minds where we think and imagine. Every *sinful tempting thought* is an attack upon what we as knowledgeable believers ought to know of the Lord and our relationship with Him.

There are times when we Christians still find ourselves occupied by wrong *thinking*, about things that are unseemly and we know these thoughts are contrary to our desire for living a righteous life. It is not just the thoughts of the obviously gross acts of sin such as murder and adultery that are sins. Some thoughts are sinful for us even though they may seem innocuous or harmless, such as dwelling on the *unpleasant* happenings of our past life events. These thoughts are sinful because they draw us away from the truth of the NOW in which we live, our present solid position in the Lord, This can become destructive to our peace and rest in the Lord.

We need to note that Paul defines “*sin*” as “***whatsoever is not of faith is sin***” (*Rom 14:23b*). Any manifestation of a lack of *faith* and trust in the Lord as our all is called an act of “*sin*.” This then includes such thoughts as dwelling in fearfulness, anxiousness, or any self-seeking thoughts. Why are these considered sins? It’s because these thoughts are evidence of us not really trusting the Lord as our life, our all, and our satisfaction. Then of course there are the hateful, covetous, unforgiving, resentful, retaliatory, selfish, self-seeking, or jealous thoughts toward other people.

Being one who is prone to anxiety, I know that anxious thoughts are temptations in the “*imagination*” that can become what I call “*awfulizing*.” We can conjuring up and think about what might go wrong or happen, or might be out of our control and so we become anxious. In running my business I did this often and it led to a stress induced heart attack. Such thoughts can become what Paul calls a “*stronghold*” that must be recognized and “*pulled down*.” I’ve learned that our foolish thoughts of “*control*” are really only an illusion of control that we’ve never really had, but that’s another subject. ***Matthew 6:27 (AMP) And who of you by worrying and being anxious can add one unit of measure (cubit) to his stature or to the span of his life?***

We all are prone to be tempted with thoughts, whether of anxiety or disgusting sinful thoughts. In this life we will be plagued in these or similar ways until we do as Paul commends us to do. Concerning our vain “*imaginations*,” Paul says we need to “*cast down imaginations*” and take every thought “*captive*” to set it aside.

CASTING DOWN IMAGINATIONS, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and BRINGING INTO CAPTIVITY EVERY THOUGHT to the obedience of (attentively harkening to Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Then of course there are thoughts of our sexual *imaginations* that sometimes just seem to appear in our mind, without any seeming provocation. Haven’t you had the

experience of simply been going about your daily business, perhaps at the super market or the office and all of a sudden a most foul unprovoked thought may come into your mind? Yes, we were created as sexual beings for procreation. Thus, it's easy for the Devil to tempt us. He makes us think, "It's just me" or "There's something wrong with me as a failing Christian." But, as we will see in the next installment, this is not true.

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The Process of Temptation

Most Christians don't realize it but the spiritual realm is the real and eternal realm. Our battle is spiritual and in the spiritual realm, against a Sin-spirit.

"... we wrestle NOT against flesh and blood, BUT against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS in high places." (Eph 6:12)

The enemy of our soul, the Devil, tempts us with "evil thoughts" and then we wrongly think that thought was of our own initiative. When we recognize the thought as sinful or that it's a damaging thought of some past failing or unhappy experience, we might say to ourselves "That's just me," or "I just can't let go of the past," or "There's something wrong with me as a failing or defective Christian." But actually, often our thoughts are not "just us." The devil is called "the accuser of the brethren." Referring to the devil's demise we read in "for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." (Rev 12:10b). He also accuses us, trying to condemn us for our awful thoughts.

Know this, we as believers are never condemned by God. "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). We should know that our salvation was never based upon how good we could be or how good we can be now – it was and is based upon our "saving faith" in the finished work of Christ's cross; "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8)." Our salvation is not performance based. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹**NOT OF WORKS**, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9). We are safe and secure in Christ, never to be lost; we are sealed by His Spirit unto the day of our final redemption to glory. "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Ephesians 4:30)

The devil is able, without our planned forethought, to inject into our minds distracting and tempting thoughts. It's obvious that with TV programming and advertisements, our culture of sexuality; and women's dress (or

“undress” is more accurate) there’s plenty of provocation to temptation in our thoughts. But some thoughts simply seem to come out of the blue. Knowledgeable and alert Christians should know what these thoughts are and from whence they come. Peter writes

*“Be well balanced (temperate, sober of mind), **be vigilant and cautious at all times; for that enemy of yours, the devil, roams around like a lion roaring [in fierce hunger], seeking someone to seize upon and devour.**” (1 Peter 5:8 (AMP))*

These thoughts and accusations are the “fiery darts” (KJV) or “flaming missiles” (AMP) of the enemy of our soul – the devil. The “Apostle to the Gentile’s,” Paul says the members of “the body of Christ” are equipped to deal with these “fiery darts.” We can quench or snuff out the “fire” of temptation.

Ephesians 6:16 (AMP) Lift up over all the [covering] SHIELD OF SAVING FAITH, upon which YOU (the believers) CAN QUENCH ALL THE FLAMING MISSILES of the wicked [one].

These lustful, self-seeking, hateful, unbelieving, and ungodly thoughts can get stuck in our consciousness. Sometimes it may seem that we cannot get away from these thoughts, but we can. These are what Paul calls “strongholds.” These “strongholds” may have been established to have a home in our mind by the repeated promptings of the Sin-nature that has established them over the years before and even perhaps after our salvation. Our wrong thinking can become habitual, through being *tempted* over and over.

Solomon wrote, *Proverbs 23:7 ... as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...* I once heard that Norman Grubb said something similar; “*What you take hold of will take hold of you.*” E.g., if you take hold of a chair by sitting in it, it will take hold of you by supporting you, and that’s good. But conversely, if you take hold of evil, fearful, jealous, grievous or anxious thoughts, entertaining the “*imagination*” that appear in your mind; then they may take hold of you as all consuming, ultimately prompting you to act on those thoughts. Our “*imagination*” are “*temptations*” can turn us away from the truth of the ever-present saving Lord.

We can “*pull down*” and “*take captive*” evil thoughts by learning to *turn away from the thought, to turn our heart to the Lord within us*. This is a single motion – *turning to the Lord is simultaneously a turning away*. He alone is able to save us from those thoughts in that moment. He desires to live His righteous Christian life through us. We will discuss this further in the next installments.

James clearly outlines the progression and consequence of falling to *temptation toward sin*.

*“Blessed is the man that **endureth** (stays true in) **temptation**: for **when he is tried (tempted)**, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him (Christ).¹⁴ But **EVERY MAN ISTEMPTED, when he is DRAWN AWAY OF HIS OWN LUST, and ENTICED.**¹⁵ Then **WHEN LUST** (GK., *epithymia, forbidden desire*) **HATH CONCEIVED, IT BRINGETH FORTH SIN: and SIN, WHEN IT IS FINISHED, BRINGETH FORTH DEATH.** (James 1:12, 14-15).*

Summarizing; 1) First the “*temptation*” appears. 2) Being “*tempted*,” we may be “*drawn away*” due the “*lust*” of the Sin-nature within our “*flesh*.” 3) When “*lust*” is conceived it will usually culminate in an act of “*sinning*.” (1 Cor 15:56a). 4) The consequence of “*Sin*” is “*death*.” Hebrews 11:25b tells us there are “*pleasures of sin for a season*,” but Paul tells us “***The sting of death is sin***...”

“Lust” here is defined as “strong desire for what is forbidden”; it includes but is not limited to sexual sin. All manner of “*sins of the flesh*” (Col 2:11) are manifested as result of a person *going along with* or *giving into* whatever the temptation of “*the flesh*” happens to be. James reveals this four-step sequence of temptation toward sinning.

Sin brings death? All are destined to die physically because “*sin bringeth forth death*” (1Cor 15:56b). All of us are born alive but spiritually “*dead in trespasses and sins*” (Eph 2:1), *spiritually dead toward God*. In 1Cor 15:56 Paul is writing to the believers at Corinth who have eternal life within them as their new life, so the “*death*” here refers to *a believer’s loss of life-flow with the Lord*. This death may be defined as a “*cessation of open communication with the Lord*.” Though Christ never leaves us, we as believers, in the course of our sinning, chose to separate our self from the Lord and to live by our own *desires*.

The sequence of *temptation* that James outlines applies universally, being common to all mankind, both the saved and unsaved. It is imperative that the Christians know how to recognize and respond to *the very first step* in the progression toward sinning, which is the initial “*temptation*.” Sin impacts our life and often the lives of others. Sin has far reaching affects; consider DUI accidents, and sin that can prompt divorce, or loss of a job, tearing apart families, and relationships, the hurt of guilt and unforgiveness, etc.

There are practical steps that may be employed to prevent some temptations, such as the simple concept of “*don’t go there*.” By this I mean if you’re tempted to drunkenness then you *don’t go* to places or to be with people that will tempt you with alcohol. You may need to block certain TV stations from your TV to keep the “*eye gates*” – of your “*mind’s eye*” and your “*physical eyes*” protected, so you don’t stir up what you should not be “*think*,” “*imagine*” or “*fanaticize*” in your mind. “[*Under the influence of wine*] ***your eyes will behold strange things [and loose women]***”

and your mind will utter things turned the wrong way [untrue, incorrect, and petulant]. (Proverbs 23:33 (AMP))

Jesus of Nazareth was tempted and never sinned, so there is no sin in the temptation itself. *Hebrews 4:15* For we have not an high priest (Jesus) which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but **WAS IN ALL POINTS TEMPTED LIKE AS WE ARE, YET WITHOUT SIN** (sinning). Jesus always ended temptation by declaring His dependence upon the “*the Father*” (John 5:30, Mat 4:4). Jesus did in fact have a *body of human flesh just like ours*. Recall that God the Father was Jesus of Nazareth’s real Father (not Joseph)... but Mary, as a human, was Jesus’ human mother. The Father gave Jesus His “*Spirit of life*” and Mary gave Jesus His physicality, His body of flesh. Jesus’ body was like ours because it is clear that His human lineage goes back “*Adam*” (Luke 3:23-38). It was by Adam that “*Sin (as a nature) entered the world (of humanity)*” (Rom 5:12). Thus, Jesus could actually be “*tempted like as we are*”... yet Jesus never acted upon His flesh body’s promptings with any act of sinning. Jesus was sinless in that He never sinned!

Part 3 of 10

The Sin-Nature Within Man’s Flesh Body

We today as believers are in fact the members of “*the body of Christ*” right now on earth. We have Him, His life and His guidance that flows to us from Him as “*the Head*” of “*the body*” (Eph 5:23). Just as The Lord’s “*Spirit of life*” dwelled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, so today the Lord’s “*Spirit of life*” dwells in every member of the “*body of Christ.*” We each are well equipped by His resurrected “*Spirit of life,*” which is precisely located within “*our (human) spirit*” (John 3:6, 1Cor 6:17, Col 1:27, Gal 2:20), which is located in “*the midst of my (our) body*” (Daniel 7:15).

The Lord is presently seated at “*the right hand of the Father,*” withholding His wrath and judgment yet to come to the earth. Thus His manifestation is personally absent from the earth today. Yet at this time He has us as the members of “*the church, which is His body*” (Eph 1:22b-23a) on earth. Christ desires to utilize our soul’s *mind*, to lead our *emotion and will*; to flow His life and love through us to others. The only mind Christ has on earth is the minds of the members of “*the body of Christ.* He lives in us and desires to flow His love and the good news of His “*gospel of the grace of God*” to others... through us.

But none of us are born with a *mindset* that is in agreement with God’s nature or His eternal purpose and plan. When we are first converted we still have the same twisted fallen *mindset* of Adam, but then we also now possess

Christ's "Spirit of life" with His *mind* resident within our spirit. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But **we have the mind** (nous, intellect) **of Christ.**" (1 Corinthians 2:16), but we need to permit His mind to flow through our mind.

So long as we walk in accord with the Lord within, yielding our mind to His mind and will, we are walking in the presence and "*mind of Christ.*" The key to living in accord with God's eternal purpose is that we gain a **renewed mindset or attitude of mind**, which is one of submission to His spontaneous prompting or limiting that we sense within us to guide us.

Romans 12:2 *And be not conformed to this world (Gk aion, age): but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Ephesians 4:22-23* *That ye put off concerning the former conversation (behavior), the old man, which is corrupt (defiled) according to the deceitful lusts (of the flesh); ²³ **And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;***

Acts of sinning are always the result of the promptings of the Sin-nature that indwells the flesh body of all men since Adam's fall. Paul writes the Ephesian believers, describing this Sin-nature as the "**SPIRIT that now WORKETH IN THE CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE,**" by which men suffer the sinful "**DESIRES OF THE FLESH AND OF THE MIND.**"

Ephesians 2:1-3 *And you (believers) hath he quickened (made alive), who WERE DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS; ² Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR, the SPIRIT that now worketh in the CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE. ³ Among whom also we all had our conversation (manner of living) in times past IN THE LUSTS OF OUR FLESH, fulfilling THE DESIRES OF THE FLESH AND OF THE MIND; and were BY NATURE THE CHILDREN OF WRATH, even as others.*

All of us, as Adam's progeny, were conceived in this "Sin." *Psalms 51:5* *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.* Thus, Sin is part of our innate human condition at birth and so long as we live in our physical body. "Sin" in the flesh of man is the original Sin "*nature*" that we were born with.

Paul here lists the "*works of the flesh,*" which are the acts of the "Sin" in "*the flesh.*"

Galatians 5:19-21a *Now the WORKS OF THE FLESH are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, ²⁰ Idolatry, ²¹ Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like...*

The word "*flesh*" in the Greek is "*sarx,*" meaning the "meat," or "*flesh body*" but "*the works of the flesh*" are the acts of the Sin-nature, extending from "*the flesh*" to also pollute "*the mind.*" This list of the "*works*" or sins "*of the flesh*" (above) includes both "body sins" such as adultery and fornication, and also "sins of the mind" such as "*envyings*" and "*idolatry.*" Sinful men are those that choose to live by

yielding their polluted soul's mind of the "the flesh." Thus they live by their "carnal (fleshly) mind" (Rom 8:7). In this way we may be the "servants" of "Sin." Paul below instructs us concerning which we will serve, either to Sin or righteousness.

Romans 6:19 *I speak after the manner of men because of the INFIRMITY (INABILITY) OF YOUR FLESH: for as YE HAVE YIELDED YOUR MEMBERS SERVANTS TO UNCLEANNESS AND TO INIQUITY (SIN) unto iniquity (sinning); even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*

All believers, "have the mind (nous, intelligence) of Christ" always available and operative within our spirit (Rom 8:8-9) to guide our minds (1Cor 2:16), but they also are free to choose to yield their body members to the impulses of the flesh or serve the Lord within them.

God is a lover of others; He is other-centered, and He streams His love and gifts out to others. "For God so loved the world He GAVE His only begotten Son..." (John 3:16). Being made in God's "image," man was made to be a lover of others, but we see that man is basically self-loving and self-serving (perhaps offering occasional random acts of kindness). How did man, who was made in God's image, become so different? We know that through the fall of Adam mankind became *defiled* and *twisted*. Mankind thereby also acquired a *false mindset* of the "Sin nature" that usurped fallen mankind. "...the carnal (fleshly) mind (Gk. *phroneo*, *MINDSET*) is enmity against (in opposition to) God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:7).

Paul commends us to a *renewed mindset* to replace the self-serving *mindset of the flesh*. We can adopt the actual *mindset* which of Jesus of Nazareth maintained when He lived on earth. He with His mind lives in the believer's spirit. **Philippians 2:5** *Let this mind (Gk. phroneo, MINDSET) be in you (in your soul's mind), which was also in Christ Jesus: Jesus had the humbled mindset to only do the will of "the Father."*

Most honest believers will admit that we as all men are first born as self-lovers; our *thoughts* concern our own self. Our thoughts are self-based most of our waking hours. No doubt this is why Paul wrote this to the new believers at Rome. **Romans 12:3** *For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, NOT to think of himself more highly than he OUGHT to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.* Only as our faith and trust in the Lord grows in the knowledge of His love, sovereign grace and care toward us, can we become secure and more other-centered as the Lord is. Our thinking then begins to change.

You can be assured to know this, that throughout our lives, through both our failures and successes, we are in a process of "learning Christ" (Eph 4:20),

learning *to think* and *live* righteously in and by “*the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*” as our new life. We’re being trained for glory, to live and reign in righteousness.

So yes, we may fail at times, but be assured that we live under God’s grace, that new paradigm wherein there is “***NOW no condemnation***” for those “*in Christ*” (*Rom 8:1*). Just as we would never condemn a small child who is learning to be potty trained or learning to walk but has moments of failing, so the Lord never condemns His children. He picks us up and says “let’s keep walking.”

By all our experiences, good or bad, God our Father is at work using every situation for us to grow up into who we in fact are “*in Christ.*” ***Philippians 2:13*** *For it is God which worketh IN YOU both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* He is using our circumstances and situation of life to reveal His love to us and to thereby motivate us, teaching us how to live righteously by relying upon “*the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*” who now is our only legitimate “*life*” (*Col 3:4a, Gal 2:20*).

We have somewhat answered the question of identifying the real source of these *sinful thoughts* of our mind and how can we deal with them. But the Apostle Paul offers us more insight.

The fact is that though we as believers are saved from judgment and we possess Christ alive within our spirit, we still live within a Sin-laden flesh body that Paul calls the “*body of Sin*” (*Rom 6:6*), also called the “*body of this death*” (*Rom 7:24*). It is this Sin-infected “*body of flesh,*” which contains our individual soul’s self-being and spirit. That “*flesh*” makes us prone temptation, provoking us to acts of sin.

Yet, the fact of the Pauline “*gospel of the grace of God*” is this. The good news of the Pauline mystery gospel is that **we have been freed from the power of the Sin-nature (Rom 6:6-7)**. How can this be? The answer is that **we have been crucified with Christ and the Sin-nature, still resident in our flesh, has no power over us because WE IN FACT DIED with Christ (Gal 2:20)**. Though we are tempted by the impulses of “*the flesh*” toward whatever kind of sin, we as Christians no longer have to follow the dictates of that sinful nature that Paul calls “*the flesh.*”

The fact is that there is a new nature within the believer’s spirit. We can say there is “something good” in man, but only because it was put there by God to renew man. That “something good” is the **resurrected sinless “*Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.*” His life bears the sinless nature of Christ, which has been imparted to every believer.**

Part 4 of 10

God has “**Condemned Sin in the Flesh**”

We as Christians are in fact spirit beings at our core. As a regenerated spirit-being, we still live in the presence of our own Sin-laden physical body every day we live on earth. “Sin” is like a debilitating and deadly virus in man’s flesh body, separate from our spirit. In Romans 8:3 below, Paul defines his term “*the flesh*” as “*Sinful flesh*” and as the inherent “*nature of man.*” He also precisely locates “*Sin*” as being “*in the flesh*” body of the Roman believers to whom he is writing; the flesh body is *Sin’s consigned dwelling place.*

“God has done what **THE LAW COULD NOT DO**, [its power] being **weakened by THE FLESH** [which is the **ENTIRE NATURE OF MAN** without the Holy Spirit]. (God) **Sending His own Son in the LIKENESS of SINFUL FLESH** and as an offering for sin, [God] **CONDEMNED SIN IN THE FLESH** [subdued, overcame, **DEPRIVED IT** (Sin) **OF ITS POWER** over all who accept that sacrifice of Christ for (man’s) sin]” (Rom 8:3 (AMP))

Notice in the verse above that “*the flesh*” is called “**SINFUL FLESH**,” describing the character and “**NATURE OF MAN.**” The Sin-nature in man has **NOT** been removed from the flesh body of Christians as some that I know have supposed, but rather, “*Sin*” has been sentenced, confined and “**CONDEMNED in the flesh,**” (Rom 8:3b), awaiting the final disposition of the body.

Note also in Romans 8:3 that Paul tells us the answer to “*Sinful flesh*” is the “*sacrifice of Christ for (man’s acts of) sin.*” Thus God has taken away “*the Law*” (Rom 6:14) that empowered Sin and made an effective way for man of to overcome his “*Sinful flesh.*”

“Sin” is a personality; it’s the purposeful evil “*nature*” of the Devil in “*the flesh*” of all men; E.g. “*Sin deceived me*” (Rom 7:11). John writes of the Devil as “**THE SINNER** from the beginning,” that beginning refers to is the Devil’s first estate in heaven (Jude 1:16) the highest Cherubim serving at the throne of God.

“[But] he who commits sin [who practices evil] is of **THE DEVIL** [takes his character from the evil one], for **THE DEVIL HAS SINNED** (violated the divine law) **FROM THE (very) BEGINNING.** The **REASON THE SON OF GOD WAS MADE MANIFEST** (incarnated) **was to UNDO** (destroy, loosen, and dissolve) **THE WORKS THE DEVIL [has done].**” (1 John 3:8 (AMP))

“Sin,” as noted Romans 7:11 is the fallen nature that “*deceives*” men. The Devil’s nature is expressed as “*Sin*” in man’s flesh (Rom 7:17b), but now he has been “*condemned*” and *limited to “the flesh”* of believers. So “*Sin*” still remains close at hand to the believer, **but** “*Sin*” no longer has power to impose his desire or lust upon believers. Now, the Sin-nature in the flesh can only *tempt* man’s mind. Thus, Sin’s temptations can still be heard in man’s mind.

Let me now better explain the status of “*Sin in the flesh*” of believers by this metaphorical story.

The believer can be likened to a crew member on a sailing ship toward eternity under the authority of the “(Jesus) captain of our salvation” (Heb

2:10). For believers, “Sin” within the believer’s flesh body is like an evil sea captain who has been sentenced and **“condemned or confined to the ships brig,”** but still onboard the ship. Christ is our new “captain.” Thus Sin, like the evil sea captain, remains close at hand to tempt us. We may still hear evil sea captain’s voice barking out orders, **but** he no longer has power or authority over us. The good news for believers is that we are no longer caught in Sin’s grasp and we are free to live in union with Christ our Captain, to enjoy the riches of our salvation.

Although we are still living in our flesh “*body of sin,*” we also have Christ’s “*Spirit of life*” within our human spirit where He and we are “*one spirit*” (1Cor 6:17). With the Spirit of the eternal God of the universe within us as our new life, we have the power of the indwelling resurrected “*Spirit of life in Christ*” as our new life, making us able to overcome “Sin,” able to walk circumspectly, and not follow after the worldliness.

Lord knows there is temptation to evil thoughts on every hand, tempting us with “*the lusts of the flesh.*” The fact is that we are “spirit beings” living in carnal or flesh bodies, so the matter is actually a spiritual one at its core. The “Sin-nature” is in fact of the Sin-spirit that dwells in the flesh body of **all** men, both the saved and unsaved, so long as we live in these human bodies of flesh.

Paul call this spirit “***the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience***” when he writes to the Ephesian believers. Paul has precisely located the “Sin nature” in the flesh body of man. Though we as believers have a new “***nature***” (2Pet 1:4), the Sin-spirit is the fallen “***nature*** of the children of wrath” is still at hand.

“*And you hath he quickened (made alive), who were dead in trespasses and sins; ² Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to **THE PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR, the(Sin) SPIRIT THAT NOW WORKETH IN the children of disobedience:** ³ Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in **THE LUSTS OF OUR FLESH, fulfilling the DESIRES OF THE FLESH AND OF THE MIND; and were BY NATURE THE CHILDREN OF WRATH,** even as others.” (Ephesians 2:1-3)*

The “***prince of the power of the air***” is the “***spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience***” (Eph 2:1-3). This “*spirit-prince*” is none other than Satan. His Sin-Spirit indwells the flesh body of all mankind, as a sort of virus or sin-infection. That genetic mutation in man, which I call the Sin-nature, has been *passed on* to all Adam’s progeny; that’s all of us.

Carefully read Paul’s words below that describe “Sin” as a personality, not the “*acts of Sin*” that we call sins but “Sin” as the fallen nature indwelling man’s flesh. “Sin” is the contrary personality that “*lusteth,*” “*deceives,*” and “*wars,*” operating from within the flesh, against “*the Spirit*” of Christ within man.

Romans 7:15-23 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but **what I hate, that do I.** ¹⁶ If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. ¹⁷ Now then **it is no more I that do it, but SIN THAT DWELLETH IN ME.** ¹⁸ For I know that **IN ME (THAT IS, IN MY FLESH,) DWELLETH NO GOOD THING:** for to will is present with me; but **how to perform** that which is good **I find not.** ¹⁹ For the good that

I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. ²⁰ Now if I do that I would not, it is **no more I that do it, but SIN THAT DWELLETH IN ME.**

²¹ I find then a law (Gk., *nomos*, a regulating factor), that, when I would (like to) do good, **EVIL IS PRESENT WITH ME.** ²² For I delight in **THE LAW OF GOD** after the inward (soul) man: ²³ But I see **ANOTHER LAW IN MY (body) MEMBERS, WARRING against the law of my mind** (the knowledge of good and evil), and **bringing me into captivity to the LAW (regulating factor) OF SIN WHICH IS IN MY (body) MEMBERS.**

The frustration of trying to keep “the law” (v22 above) and doing “what I hate” (v15) is answered here in Galatians. The answer is based upon the new paradigm of in Romans 8; 1) “no condemnation” (Rom 8:1) and, 2) the power of the indwelling “Spirit of life in Christ” (Rom 8:2) that “hath made me free.”

Galatians 5:16-18 This I say then, **WALK IN (UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF) THE SPIRIT, and ye shall not FULFIL THE LUST OF THE FLESH.** ¹⁷ For the **FLESH LUSTETH AGAINST THE SPIRIT,** and the Spirit against the flesh: and **THESE ARE CONTRARY THE ONE TO THE OTHER:** so that ye cannot do the things that ye would (the good that want to do), ¹⁸ But **IF YE BE LED OF THE SPIRIT, YE ARE (will not be) NOT UNDER (subject to) THE LAW** (which empowers Sin).

The fact is that “Sin,” as the Sin-spirit, is the very nature of the Evil One dwelling within the flesh bodies of all mankind. Believers simultaneously have the “Spirit of Christ” in their spirit (Rom 8:10). Thus believers bear **two natures**;

1. The Sin-nature in their flesh body; and
2. Christ’s “Spirit of life” in their spirit.

This will be the case until we “**exchange these corruptible (sin-laden bodies) for incorruptible.**” (See 2Cor 15:51-54). Believers will exchange will occur at the rapture. Actually, both the saved and unsaved will be resurrected. The lost (unsaved) of all ages will be resurrected in “the 2nd resurrection” (inferred in Rev 20:6) to stand at the final Great White Throne Judgment, bearing there resurrected *sinful body*, to be judged and then experience “the second death” (Rev 21:8).

While there is still within us *that which is begotten of the flesh of Adam*, there is also *that which is begotten of the Spirit*, and just as “the flesh” is totally depraved and “cannot please God,” so the other is absolutely perfect and always pleases Him.

Adam was originally created in the image and likeness of God, but he fell into sin and later “*begat a son in his own likeness, after his image*” (Gen. 5:3). It could not be otherwise. Fallen Adam could generate and beget only fallen, sinful offspring, whom “the Law” could not change. Now note this below.

“**what the LAW could NOT do,** in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,” accomplished, “**that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit**” (Rom. 8:3,4),

As Adam was made in the likeness of God, but fell, so Christ was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, to redeem us from the fall. Christ’s “Spirit of life” comes to us by grace, and through our “faith in the operation of God”

(Col 2:12) that makes us new creation, a “new man... renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him” (Col. 3:10), a “new man, which, after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24). Referring to this “new man” in Christ, John says:

“Whosoever is BORN (monogenes, begotten) OF GOD doth not commit sin, for HIS (GOD’S) SEED (sperma, which is CHRIST) REMAINETH IN HIM: and he cannot sin, because he is born (begotten) of God” (I John 3:9).

All “acts of sin” originate from the Sin-spirit nature within the flesh of all men. **Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as BY ONE MAN (ADAM) SIN ENTERED INTO THE WORLD, AND DEATH BY SIN; AND SO DEATH PASSED UPON ALL MEN,** for that all have sinned: The good news for all believers is that the Sin nature has been overcome.

Thankfully, God has provided Jesus not only to pay the penalty for our “sins” by **His shed blood**, redeeming and justifying us. I realize I’ve been repetitive in this, but also **Jesus’ death** is in FACT our death in order to **free us from the power of the Sin nature in the “body of sin”** (Rom 6:6-7 below). We must come to **know and stand** upon the fact that we have been freed from the seeming compulsion to sin because we are **dead to Sin** (see Rom 6:2, 7, 7:4).

Romans 6:6-7 (AMP) We know that OUR OLD (unrenewed) SELF was NAILED TO THE CROSS WITH HIM (Jesus) IN ORDER THAT [our] BODY [which is the instrument] OF SIN might be made INEFFECTIVE and INACTIVE FOR EVIL (made of no effect), (so) that we might NO LONGER BE THE SLAVES OF SIN.

⁷ For **WHEN A MAN DIES, he is FREED (loosed, delivered) FROM [the power of] SIN.**
Romans 7:4 ...YE also ARE BECOME DEAD to the law (“law of Sin,” see 8:2b) BY THE (crucified) BODY OF CHRIST...

Where at one time we were “slaves of sin,” against our will, now we are to be **willing servants** of righteousness by Christ, who lives within us.

Romans 6:17-19 But God be thanked, that ye WERE the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you (by Paul, Rom 10:13).

¹⁸ Being then **made free from sin (sin’s power), ye became the servants of righteousness.**

¹⁹ I speak after the manner of men because of the **INFIRMITY OF (Sin disease in) YOUR FLESH:** for as ye have yielded your (body) members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity (Sin) unto iniquity (sins);
even so **now YIELD YOUR (BODY) MEMBERS servants to righteousness unto holiness.**

Part 5 of 10

“The Law” Empowers the Sin Nature

I believe by now in this series we’ve established that “Sin” as a personality and nature that indwells “the flesh” body of all men SO long as they live on earth – both the saved and the unsaved.

Let's now look more closely at the response of the "Sin-nature" when we attempt to live under "the Law" during this day of the "dispensation of the grace of God." Paul plainly states below that the activating force behind "Sin in the flesh" (Rom 8:3), giving its power, is "the Law." This is the case for anyone who is trying to live under "the Law."

*1 Corinthians 15:56 ... the **STRENGTH** (dunamis, power) **OF SIN** is **THE LAW**.*

These verses here below are from Romans 7 where Paul describes the dilemma of a man trying to live righteously while living under or according to "the Law." Note the repeated linkage between "the commandment" (the Law) and the "Sin" nature; it's undeniable.

*Romans 7:8 But **SIN** taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence (illicit desires). For without the law sin was dead.*

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

*11 For **SIN**, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.*

12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

*13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But **SIN**, that it might appear sin, WORKING DEATH IN ME by that which is good; (so) that **SIN** by THE COMMANDMENT might become exceeding sinful.*

In these verses it certainly sounds like "Sin" is a personality, when we read of "**SIN** taking occasion," "deceiving," and "working" (verses 8, 11, and 13). "Sin" sounds like a personality with a consciousness that acts and reacts in the believer who weighs his self-worth by his self-effort to conform to "the Law."

In Galatians Paul explains the matter of "the Law's" impotence to contribute to genuine righteous living. Paul reveals how "the Law" is intended to make men see their absolute need to trust Christ for their righteous standing and His life for living righteously. If we live by the law we bear "the curse," which is the requirement too then keep ALL the law.

Galatians 3:10 For AS MANY AS ARE OF THE WORKS OF THE LAW (THOSE WHO DEPEND UPON THE LAW) ARE UNDER THE CURSE: for it is written, CURSED IS EVERY ONE THAT CONTINUETH NOT IN ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW TO DO THEM.

Also in Galatians 3 Paul explains how "the Law" acts as a "schoolmaster" for the unbeliever in pushing Him to Christ, and that after faith (in Christ) has come to that person then they are no longer under "the Law."

Galatians 3:22-26 But the scripture hath concluded all (men are) under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.²³ But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.²⁴ Wherefore the law

was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.²⁵ *But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*²⁶ *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

Note from verse 23 that “*before faith came, we were kept under the law,*” and in verse 24 we see that “*the Law*” was as our “*schoolmaster*” to teach us our need of Christ – to “*bring us unto Christ (in faith).*” And then, “*after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster*” (verse 25). So after the condemnation of “*the Law*” does its job – to push us to trust Christ as our only righteousness.

It’s impossible for any human, except Jesus. **Hebrews 4:15** *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but (JESUS) WAS IN ALL POINTS TEMPTED LIKE AS WE ARE, YET WITHOUT SIN.* The burden of this curse is upon those who think we are still under “*the Law.*” Our failure under “*The Law*” is intended to reveal to us our utter need of a capable righteous life, to push us to receive Christ and His righteous “*Spirit of life,*” whereby we are not under “the Law.” **Romans 6:14** *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for (because) YE ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW, BUT UNDER GRACE.*

Thankfully we were never meant to keep the external dead “*Law of Moses,*” which was fittingly written on *lifeless* stone. It has no power except to reveal our Sin to us. Now under grace, “*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*” (**Romans 10:4**). The believer’s worth and righteousness is not based on their performance, neither before nor after they are converted by *faith in Christ as their Savior.*

We as grace believers live under an entirely new paradigm in this age of “*the dispensation of the grace of God*” (**Eph 3:2**); it’s a new way of living. We are not under any external “*law*” (except man’s civil law), thus we enjoy that now we are under “*no condemnation*” (**Rom 8:1 below**).

Romans 8:1-2 *THERE IS THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION TO THEM WHICH ARE IN CHRIST JESUS,*

Nevertheless, we do have within our spirit “*the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*” to *regulate* us now *from within*. This new way of inner regulation is the living “*law of the Sprit of life in Christ Jesus.*”

² For **THE LAW** (operative regulating power) **OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS HATH MADE ME FREE FROM THE LAW** (operative regulating power) **OF SIN AND DEATH.**

As recipients of Christ’s “*Spirit of life*” are free to live spontaneously. Nevertheless, we have His permanent presence within us to guide and regulate us by either His prompting or restricting. Here we see a couple examples of the Lord’s inner *prompting* and *restricting* in the life of Paul and his co-workers.

Acts 18:5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

Acts 16:6-7⁶ Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,⁷ After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

We can learn to practice the presence of the Lord, to trusting Him to guide us. Actually, we must learn to follow the inner sense we have by His “*Spirit of life*” within us. Paul writes in *Ephesians 4:20* *But ye have not so learned Christ*; Christ will guide us in all our doings; e.g., He will lead or restrict us in what or if we should buy some particular thing that we are considering; or, He may move us to change lanes on the highway, etc. He is ever-present in us and desires to be the Lord of our life in every aspect.

Part 6 of 10

Confidence in The Truth

Truth is *fact* and *reality* whether we have come to enjoy it or not. The truth of Paul’s “*my gospel*” is established in us only by our faith in the fundamentals of what Paul calls “*the faith*” (*Col 2:7*). This saving gospel is succinctly summarized by these verses.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 For I (Paul) delivered unto you first (in importance) of all that which I also received, how 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:

Yet for us individually, the most helpful key to overcoming the “*Sin*” nature that remains in the believer’s “*flesh*” is to know and stand on Paul’s doctrinal teachings. These doctrines establish us in all the benefits of *Christ’s work on and by the cross... for us, “the body of Christ.”*

Note below that the complete gospel is that Christ not only shed His blood for us, that is, “for our sins,” but also that Christ died AS US. It’s *by faith* in this great truth that we find the victory over “*Sin*.” Note here that Christ’s *death, burial,* and *resurrection life* are also our *death, burial,* and *new life* because we were “*with Him*” and “*in Him*” at the cross.

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

Colossians 3:3-4 For YE ARE DEAD, AND YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD.⁴ When Christ, who is our LIFE, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory?

Our enjoying the security of these facts rests in an intelligent understanding of the truth that is derived from understanding our secure position “***IN CHRIST.***” Paul lays out solid foundational doctrinal “***IN CHRIST***” truths in Ephesians. First, we presently “***SIT together*** (with Christ) ***IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS.***” Then we note how to employ this great truth. You see, it’s by knowing we are secure “*in Christ,*” that we as believers can then ***STAND*** in the face of the temptations and accusations of “*Sin in the flesh.*” Being “***seated in heavenly places IN CHRIST JESUS***” is our elevated, fixed, and secured position. Then we can “***STAND***” upon this truth and conduct our daily “***WALK***” in confidence, as seen below.

1. We ***SIT*** - *Ephesians 2:4-6* But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵ Even when we were ***dead in sins,*** (God) ***hath quickened us*** (made us alive) ***together WITH CHRIST,*** (by grace ye are saved;) ⁶ And ***hath*** (already) ***raised us up together*** (with Christ), and made us ***SIT together IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS:***
2. Then we ***WALK*** - *Ephesians 5:8, 15* For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: ***WALK as children of light:*** ¹⁵ See then that ye ***WALK circumspectly,*** not as fools, but as wise,
3. Then we ***STAND*** – *Ephesians 6:11-13* Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to ***STAND*** against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. ¹³ Wherefore ***TAKE UNTO YOU THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD,*** that ye may be able to ***WITHSTAND in the evil day,*** and having done all, ***TO STAND.***

Paul clarifies our battleground as not being “*the flesh,*” though it is the home base of our enemy, the Sin-nature. *2 Corinthians 10:3* ...***though we walk in the flesh, we do NOT war after the flesh:*** As we’ve established previously, the battleground is ***our mind*** that is *tempted* by the “*fiery darts*” of the Sin-nature, tempting us to come down from our secure elevated position of being “***seated IN CHRIST.***” Sitting is a resting position. We can rest in the gospel truth that we know.

Knowing Paul’s doctrine, “...***(our) hearts might be comforted,*** being knit together in love, and ***unto all RICHES of the FULL ASSURANCE of UNDERSTANDING,*** to the acknowledgement of ***THE MYSTERY*** of God, and of the Father, and of Christ” (*Colossians 2:2*). This “*mystery*” is that believers are secure “*in Christ.*” Believers can enjoy the truth of “*Christ in you*” (*Col 1:27*), which “*was kept secret since the world began*” (*Rom 16:25*) until it was revealed to Paul for us (*Eph 3:1-5*).

Since the Devil could not keep us from being saved, he is now working work to hinder or destroy our enjoyment of the reality of being “*in Christ*”; that is, the fruit of our union with the Lord. Only a “***FULL ASSURANCE of UNDERSTANDING***” equips believers for *standing* and *walking* “*in Christ.*” Paul’s words give us guidance as to how it is that we may “*stand*” and “*cast down*” the “*thoughts*” and

“imagination,” that would otherwise work to condemn us or otherwise hinder the enjoyment of our union with the Lord.

The fact is that every believer is “*in Christ*” and thereby **stands** as being counted righteous before God *without* having done works or presently doing works to be counted righteous.

*Ephesians 2:8-9 For **BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED THROUGH FAITH; AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES: IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD: ⁹NOT OF WORKS,** lest any man should boast.*

Every believer is baptized, meaning *fully placed in or set into Christ* from the moment they believe, trusting Jesus as Savior. 1 Corinthians 12:13 tells us we have a dual relationship with Christ “*by one Spirit*”; 1) we’ve been baptized “*by the Spirit... into (Christ’s) one body,*” and 2) we’ve also “*been made to drink into*” His one “*Spirit of life.*”

*1 Corinthians 12:13 For **BY ONE SPIRIT** are we all baptized (dry immersed) **INTO (CHRIST’S) ONE BODY,** whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been **all made to drink into one Spirit.***

Thus we are “*in Him*” and He is “*in us.*” I we place a cloth in water the water also permeates the cloth.

We have been *immersed into Christ* and our life is now “*hid with Christ in God.*” Being “*hid*” as it were, our Heavenly Father does not see our failings; He only sees us clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We do not **stand** in our own righteousness, but Christ’s righteousness.

*2 Corinthians 5:21 For **HE (God) HATH MADE HIM (JESUS of Nazareth) TO BE SIN FOR US,** who knew no sin; (so) **THAT WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM.***

*Philippians 3:9 And be found **IN HIM, NOT HAVING MINE OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS,** which is of the law, **BUT** that (righteousness) which is **THROUGH THE FAITH OF CHRIST, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS OF GOD BY FAITH:***

Realizing this we can see how it is “*that (in Him) we should be (counted) holy and without blame*” before God. *Ephesians 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places **IN CHRIST:** ⁴According as **HE HATH CHOSEN US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, THAT (in Him) WE SHOULD BE (counted) HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME BEFORE HIM IN (His) LOVE:***

The present and eternal position of every believer in Christ is that they stand righteous “*in Christ.*”

Paul indicates that these facts of our position in Christ are entirely independent of our performance, either *before*, or *after* our salvation. We were *saved* initially “*by grace through faith*” in Christ and “*walk*” **by grace through faith** in Christ. *Colossians 2:6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord (by grace through faith), **so walk ye in him:***

Paul encourages the Colossian believers to go on. Paul says we need to be “*rooted and built up*” in these elements of the truth of the full gospel of

Christ, which Paul calls “**THE FAITH**”– we need to be taught and to “study” these truths.

*Colossians 2:7-10 (walking in Him you are) **ROOTED AND BUILT UP IN HIM, AND STABLISHED IN THE FAITH, as ye have been TAUGHT**, abounding therein with thanksgiving. ⁸Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. ⁹For in him (Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. ¹⁰And **YE ARE COMPLETE IN HIM, which is the head of all principality and power:**
2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing THE WORD OF TRUTH.*

The core facts discussed here are the keys to believers enjoying the riches of the inheritance they may enjoy “*in Christ.*” Trusting in these truths will then serve us well in all the days we walk on this earth and on into eternity. The “*armour of God*” is principally based upon our *faith* in who Christ is and in our unshakable relationship with Him; this equips us to stand against the wiles of the Devil.

Part 7 of 10

The “Weapons” of Our Warfare

*2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (For the **WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE** are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)
⁵Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*

Above Paul describes the purpose of “*the weapons of our warfare*”; and below, “*the whole armour of God*” in Ephesians. Actually, after listing our “*armour*” in v 17 (below), Paul mentions only this one item as a “*weapon,*” referring “*sword of the spirit, which is the WORD of GOD.*”

*Ephesians 6:11-17 Put on (enduo, be clothed in) **THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD**, that ye may be able to **STAND** against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against **SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES.** ¹³Wherefore **TAKE UNTO YOU THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD**, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴**STAND** therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; ¹⁵And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked (one). ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the **SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, which is THE WORD OF GOD:***

In the phrase “*the WORD of God*” in v17 above, the word “*Word*” is the Greek, *rhema*, meaning the *living word*. In Hebrews we read “*the word of God is quick (alive), and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged SWORD...*” (Hebrews 4:12a). This same verse goes on to say; “... *PIERCING even to the DIVIDING ASUNDER of SOUL and SPIRIT, and of the joints and marrow,*

and is a DISCERNER OF THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTS OF THE HEART. (Hebrews 4:12b).

Who is this living Word? We can see that the Word is a person, “Him” in verses 2 and 4. This speaks of Jesus Christ – “**IN HIM WAS LIFE...**” (V4)

John 1:1-4 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²The same was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

The resurrected “*Spirit of Christ*,” who indwells the believer’s *human spirit*, is “*one spirit*” (1Cor 6:17) with the believer. Christ alive as the Word within us is our “*weapon*.”

We each enjoy the inner speaking of the “*Spirit of Christ*” within our spirit as the living “*Word*.” He speaks sometimes to expose our self to us, to see our vile soulish “*imagination*” for what they are. His speaking within us divides the truth in our “*spirit*” from our soulish mind’s “*vain imaginations*,” He knows our “*thoughts and intents*.” Thus believers have a built-in living Savior, which is Christ in their spirit, alerting them as He leads and guides them in their daily walk.

Christ as “*the Word*” is the only divine and limitless life in the universe, and He is **hid** within our “*spirit*,” just as the “*marrow*” is hidden within the “*bones*” of “*the joints*” (Heb 4:12 above) Consider we know medically that “*marrow*” within the “*bone*” is the life-source of our blood, producing white and red blood cells, without which we would die. Thus the marrow is the life-source and the joints that we enjoy for healthy free movement. Christ’s life is to energize all our “*movements*,” and “*doings*.” Our *joint movement* represents our decisions concerning our *activities* that should not be independent of our *life source* (*marrow*) – which is Christ within our spirit.

Christ within us is the LIVING Word. Jesus said His “**WORDS... are SPIRIT and they are LIFE**” (John 6:63). Christ, the living Word, is in us as the living and empowering “*Spirit of life*.” He is able to expose or “*divide*” or separate out our soulish sinful thoughts, so we can identify and recognize them as *temptation*. Christ clearly speaks within our spirit to warn us by the inner sense we have of His life; we spontaneously see and “*know all things*” which are “*truth*.” 1 John 2:20 paraphrased says “**we know all things by the anointing of Him who abides within us.**” As Christ guides us from within our spirit, He exposes and pre-empts our vain “*imagination*” that would lead us to act upon the temptation at hand. He alerts us, inwardly saying **NO!** As we agree to yield to His regulating Word within us **He empowers us to turn away from the temptation at hand**. Turning away from our vain “*imagination*” is a good healthy movement that is directed by His life.

Every piece of the “*armor of God*” listed in our key text and seen below is defensive.

- The “*belt* of the *truth*” of God’s word is Christ as “*the Spirit of Truth*” in us.
- The “*breastplate* of *righteousness*” we have is of Christ, making us counted as righteous in God’s eyes, by faith.
- The *shoes* of the “*Gospel of peace*” move and direct our life as we present that fact that Gospel of Christ’s cross by which He has made peace between God and man (Col 1:20).
- The “*shield* of *faith*” is our trust in God’s revealed word and in His Sovereign love expressed in the cross of Christ.
- The “*helmet* of *salvation*,” knowing we are eternally safe and secure, is what helps us to keep our head in the midst of all of life’s difficult circumstances and even in view of our failures.

Our faith and trust is in Christ’s cross-work and His life within us. Yet we may learn so much detail from the written “*the word of truth*” concerning “*the gospel of our salvation*.” Our faith, being established based upon Paul’s “mystery” gospel (Rom 16:25), brings us not only *peace with God* but also we have the *inner peace of Christ* Himself, peace that no money can buy.

Ephesians 6:15 (AMP) And having shod your feet in preparation [to face the enemy with the firm-footed stability, the promptness, and the readiness produced by the good news] of the Gospel of peace.

Our “Gospel Shoes” protect our feet and our walk in Christ. The unshakable facts and fixed truths of “*the Gospel of the grace of God*” (Acts 20:24) give us a solid foundation to stand upon, protecting us and keeping us in our daily walk with the Lord. One such fact of Paul’s gospel is that we have *peace* with God because Christ has made all things right between us and God on our behalf. The grace gospel constrains our heart with bands of His love. We cannot help but be thankful as we dwell on “*so great a salvation*.” Being thankful to the Lord, we are then ever mindful of the lost, thirsty, and dying souls in the world around us. We cannot slumber – this knowledge of the Gospel and mankind’s eternal fate should keep us alert and going. There are many more souls that need to be added to “*the body of Christ*” before the “*times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*” (Rom 11:25b) at the time the rapture occurs.

Our thankfulness and our *faith* and trust in the Lord’s cross-work and His ongoing work in our lives keeps us going with *rest and peace* in our hearts. Just like a *shield* or buckler, our knowledge of and *faith* in these truths repels arrows, spears, and sword thrusts. Our faith shields us from the

Devil's fiery darts that tempt us with worldly lusts or condemnation. Faith in the gospel truths for "*the body of Christ*" is our shield.

Concerning the accusations of the Devil and the thoughts he projects to us, consider this metaphor. We may not be able to keep birds from flying over our head but we can keep them from making a nest in our hair. The parallel spiritual truth is that we may not be able to prevent the "*fiery darts*" of the Devil from coming at us but we can shield ourselves from giving them a home in our mind.

Our weapons are; faith in the indwelling Word, "*Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*" and the truth of the Bible, and prayer as ongoing communion with the Lord. All these operate by the power of indwelling "*Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*" (Rom 8:2a). **Romans 1:16** *For I am not ashamed of THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST: for it is the POWER OF GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth...*

Without the "*helmet of salvation*" none of the other armor can be obtained. "Salvation" is what united us with Christ who now indwells us as our new life. He is alive and active in our lives; and from Him comes all our protective armor. Christ is called the "*head*" of "*the body*." Thus His "*mind*" is freely given to us as we walk in Him. As we live and walk under our helmet of salvation "*we have the mind of Christ*" (1 Cor 2:16). In this we will learn dependency upon Him. We never graduate from dependency upon Christ.

So believers do have weapons in their fight against the "*strongholds*" in their minds. These "*strongholds*" often are the *residual habits* that were formerly attached to "*the flesh*" and the mindset of our now deceased "*Old Man*" (Rom 6:6 who "***IS crucified*** with Him."

We have to ***learn, know, understand, and trust*** the elements of "*the gospel of our salvation*" by which we gain the "*whole armour of God*." We then will enjoy the riches supply of the "*Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*" within us as our new life.

Colossians 1:9b-11 (Paul prayed) ... ***(so) that ye might be filled with the KNOWLEDGE of his will in all wisdom and spiritual UNDERSTANDING;*** ¹⁰***(so) that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and INCREASING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD;*** ¹¹***Strengthened with all might, ACCORDING TO HIS GLORIOUS POWER, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;***

Part 8 of 10

Abiding in the Truth

Paul writes; "*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of STRONGHOLDS*" (2 Corinthians 10:4)

The “strongholds” to be pulled down are the repeated sinful tendencies that we as Christians might still practice. These are the “works of the flesh” that may continue in the life of perhaps an untrusting and unyielded Christians. These sinful *acts* and *thoughts* are according to “*the lusts (strong desires) of the flesh.*” These acts all begin as the *thoughts and imaginations or fantasies* of the “*carnal (fleshly) mind*” (Rom 8:7, below).

2 Corinthians 10:5 CASTING DOWN IMAGINATIONS, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and BRINGING INTO CAPTIVITY EVERY THOUGHT to the obedience of Christ;

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Romans

8:7 Because the CARNAL (FLESHLY) MIND (phroneo, mindset) IS ENMITY (in opposition to) AGAINST GOD: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Satan works repeatedly to fan the flames of these “strongholds.” But as believers we now know that his power and hold has been broken and that we are “freed” (Rom 6:7). Paul tell us how the power of the Sin-nature was “made of no effect” (Rom 6:6) in believers. Paul writes; “Know ye not” that you “have been crucified with Christ” (Rom 6:3, 6, Gal 2:20). Being dead with Christ, as to our “old man,” the Devil now has no compelling power over believers; all he can do is “tempt” us with his “fiery darts” as *thoughts* to tempt us. Now we can and must extinguish the “fiery darts” the enemy of our soul may shoot into our minds, by using the elements of “*the armour of God*” discussed in Part 7 of this series.

The word “*imaginings*” here above could be translated *thoughts* or *reasonings*. The “*carnal (fleshly) mind*” that is “*at enmity with God*” is full of moral or carnal reasonings of the “*mind of the flesh.*” Men often rationalize to justify their sinning against God’s providences and purposes and against Christ and His plan of salvation.

These thoughts are of “*the natural man (who) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*” (1 Corinthians 2:14). The “*natural man*” is the Greek, “*psych-ikos,*” meaning “*the man of the soul*”)” This is **not** the unsaved person but rather the Christian who lives by his *soul’s natural mind*, which is of “*the flesh.*” The “*natural*” is the Christian who lives independently of Christ in Him and so he is in opposition to the living Word of Christ speaking within his conscience. The “*vain imaginings*” of the fleshly mind must be set aside as trash, in favor of the truth being spoken by the “*Spirit of life in Christ*” within our conscience.

Our natural *reasonings*, though they may be seemingly logical and believable by the world’s terms, are little more than *imaginings* that have

been directed to us from the “*lying one*” to falsify the truth. Such reasonings bear no fruit or benefit. All such reasonings are of the deception of the lying one. Man’s reasonings are foolishness to God (Jeremiah 8:9, Romans 1:22, 1 Corinthians 1:20). **Jeremiah 8:9 The WISE MEN are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have REJECTED THE WORD OF THE LORD; and what wisdom is in them? 1 Corinthians 1:20 ...GOD MADE FOOLISH THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD.**

Paul says the lost “*are without excuse*” because everyone knows there is a God. **Romans 1:20-22 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are CLEARLY SEEN, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that THEY (the lost) ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE:** ²¹ *Because that, WHEN THEY KNEW GOD, THEY GLORIFIED HIM NOT AS GOD, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.* ²² *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,* But “the lost” gave no expression or reverence to “*glorified him,*” refusing to acknowledge Him as God. Paul says they are “*vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*” So we must “*cast down*” all false reasonings.

The indwelling “*Spirit of Christ*” is the “*one Spirit*” (*Eph 4:4*) called the “*Spirit of truth.*” Our trust and our walk must be according to the “*truth*” of God’s living Word – Christ in us. Paul’s “*mystery*” gospel “*is Christ in you the hope of Glory.*” Our “*hope of glory*” is our confident expectation of the indwelling Christ to bring us “*to glory.*” “*Glory*” is the full expression of His life in us both now and for eternity in heaven. Living by trusting Christ within us as our new life enables us to “*cast down*” such vain “*imaginations.*” Only Christ within us as the new us, is able to bring us to the “glory” or the full expression of His life resident within us. This is the Lord’s work in us; while our work is trust him (*John 6:29*). **Philippians 2:13 For it is GOD which WORKETH IN YOU both to will and to do of his good pleasure.**

Not only are we to “*cast down*” such “*vain imaginations,*” but we must also rid ourselves of every seemingly “*high thing*” or “*high thought*” that claims to be better than the knowledge of the truth of Christ. We exalt the “*high thing*” when we choose the world’s wisdom and ways or our own independent way of living; we elevate our self over God. We become like “*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God*” (*Psa 14:1*). A regenerated Christian can still choose to live their own self-life ignoring Christ within, thus elevating their own way of living according to their own *imaginings*. Whenever we think we have something right, even after God says it is wrong, *we have exalted our knowledge above God’s.*

Along these same lines of ridding ourselves of “*high things*” that are not of God, we are to take our very thoughts “*captive.*” What happens to one in captivity? In the case of a caged bird, for example, the bird may no longer

fly freely in the air; it no longer has the freedom to do as it wills. Likewise, our life is not our own, we been bought with a price – *the precious blood of Christ, He is our Lord. To take our thoughts “captive” is to not allow our thoughts the freedom to wander where they wish to go.* We must recognize these *thoughts* as they occur and set them aside. Example: Sometimes we fantasize, wishing, or wondering why things can’t be better, or we wonder why others who don’t seem to care for the Lord still seem to do well. These are worthless thoughts. Taking such vain “*imagination captive*” is to shut out all thoughts that are not thoughts that the Lord would wish us to have. If we take our thoughts “*captive*” we will not have *imagination* to cast down or become *strongholds*; nor will our thoughts ever exalt themselves above God.

I realize that this above is the ideal. As humans we still live in the flesh body; it is very difficult to accomplish this task 100%. When we fail, we know that we are still okay, because we trust the effectual blood sacrifice of Jesus who has already paid for and taken away ALL our sins. Nevertheless, through our failure, we should learn to depend upon the Lord. So, we can get up and walk again... having learned yet again to trust Him all the more. Every failing is a learning experience, its part of our training. If you find yourself getting distracted or are having problems staying on course you simply need to change your focus from the “*things which are seen*” (the earthly) and set your mind on “*things above*” (the eternal).

Col 3:2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

2 Corinthians 4:18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Paul has given us a way of short-circuiting vain “*imagination*” – and that is he suggests a new way of thinking. Paul below tells us how to maintain a good offense that precludes the need of the good defense.

Philippians 4:8-9 “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, THINK ON THESE THINGS. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me (Paul), do: and the God of PEACE shall be with you.”

Consider the kind of things Paul says we need to “*think on.*” He said thinking on these below will yield the “*peace*” that is of the “*God of Peace.*”

- **true** - not concealed, not false, not hypocritical, without pretense
- **honest** - venerable, honorable, devout
- **just** - equitable, just, of good character, holy
- **pure** - innocent, untainted, unsullied, clean, chaste
- **lovely** - acceptable, exquisite – there is a beauty to genuine righteousness

- **good report** - reputable, upright, decent
- **virtue** - excellence, righteousness

Thinking on these things of God that were given to Paul for us (verse 9) will prevent the entrance of thoughts that can gain a “*stronghold*” and we will enjoy His peace. My most common way of turning my wayward heart and mind to Him when I recognize I have been straying from Him is to breathe out His name *in mind or word*, “*Lord Jesus.*” We are to be those who “*call upon the name of the Lord*” (*Rom 10:13*) to be saved from our thoughts.

When we are tempted we can “*call upon His name*” and “*think on these things*” (these are prayers); this turns our focus away from the *thought temptation* at hand and establishes us in a new and proper *mindset* of His everpresence. “***Let this mind (Greek, phroneo, “mindset”) be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus***” (*Philippians 2:5*). Paul’s instruction is in perfect accord with what Isaiah wrote. *Isaiah 26:3* *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed (set) on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

Recall some our key text from Part 1, now we will add verse 6.

*“for though we walk in the flesh (body), we do NOT WAR after (in the manner of) the flesh:⁴ (for the weapons of our WARFARE are NOT carnal (fleshly),⁴ but (our weapons are) mighty through God (who is “Spirit”) to the PULLING DOWN (Gk., *kathairesis*, *destruction*) of STRONG HOLDS:⁵ CASTING DOWN IMAGINATIONS, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the KNOWLEDGE of God, and BRINGING INTO CAPTIVITY EVERY THOUGHT to the obedience of (attentively harkening to) Christ.*

⁶And HAVING IN A READINESS (OF MIND) TO REVENGE (BRING JUSTICE FOR) all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled (secured and complete).” (2Corinthians 10:1-6)

Verse 6 (above) indicates that we can bring “*revenge (KJV)*,” which actually translates as “*justice*,” to the “*every (disobedient) thought (referring back to v5)*” we have, thus we “*cast (them) down.*”

We can set such “*thoughts*” aside in “*captivity (v5)*.” To help us understand this verse, let’s consider a military campaign. After the fighting is over and the enemy is defeated, there still may remain *pockets of resistance*; these are rebels in hiding who still fight on against the victorious army. Each of these foes must be *rooted out* and *justice must be meted out to them*. If not, the insurgency will never end. Victory requires that our troops search out those rebels in an effort to stop the harassing violence. For with such violence, it will be difficult for a new government to succeed.

We are called to do the very same thing in our “*thought life*,” as we turn our heart and yield to Christ who is our Lord or *governor*, having “*the government*” of our lives “*upon His shoulders*” (*Isa 9:6*). So it is with these insurgent “*thoughts*” that are of what Paul calls “*the mind of the flesh.*” Even with Christ as our Savior and even though we try to take every

thought *captive*, there will still be some improper *thoughts* that sneak in as “*fiery darts*” from the *fleshly Sin-nature* to tempt us. These insurgent thoughts are shot into our mind so unexpectedly. We must recognize them as *not being of ourselves, not of our new nature*. “**Now THEN IT IS NO MORE I THAT DO IT, but SIN THAT DWELLETH IN ME.**” (*Romans 7:17*) We must treat our thoughts uncompromisingly, by rejecting them as we turn our heart to the Lord.

Some might ask, why does the Lord allow this? The Lord permits these tempting situations in order to show us our utter neediness in ourselves, thus to build our *dependence upon Him*. We have the truth of the written word of our faith as our defensive armor, upon which we stand, but this only works **by our faith in the ever-present living “Word of God,”** which is the Lord Jesus Christ within us. We can overcome these *insurgent thoughts* with the truth of the unshakable “*gospel of our salvation*,” which is **by grace through faith alone**; and by our continual dependence upon and communion with the Lord

Part 9 of 10

Letting Go of Our Past

Many Christians are still hanging onto the wounds of their past life; regretting and/or grieving the choices and experiences of their past life. There also are many who have suffered abuse in word or deed, being exploited at the hand of a parent or other authority figure. When we recall such things, holding them in mind, we still may feel the bite, bitterness and may have unforgiveness that will taint our life. Satan knows our habit and will remind us of our failings and deepest hurts; he will use every tool in his bag to rob us of the riches of our inheritance that we may enjoy “*in Christ*.”

There is a remedy that God has provided for us and that is that our “*new creation*” life which is found “*in Christ*.” Believers can come to **know the truth of who they now are as a new creation**, and thereby **learn to reject and “cast down” these plaguing thoughts of our past.**

“Therefore IF ANY MAN BE IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATURE: OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY; BEHOLD, ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW.” (*2 Corinthians 5:17*)

For some, these thoughts have become such a stronghold that they have adopted the sad story of their past as their “*identity*.” In doing so they deny their new identity that they have “*in Christ*.” It is only as we realize that we are now “*in Christ*” that our past can be effectively set aside. Christ is now our only legitimate life and person (*Gal 2:20*). So when the accuser assails us in mind we can turn his thoughts and accusations aside, saying; “**I know** *I’m not a failure or a reject, I’m the new-born beloved child of my Father God Almighty; I’ve literally been born anew by His indwelling “Seed” (Gk., sperma, 1Pet 1:23, Gal 3:16).*

1 Peter 1:23 Being BORN AGAIN, NOT OF CORRUPTIBLE SEED, BUT OF INCORRUPTIBLE, by the word of God (which is Christ, Jn 1:1), which liveth and abideth for ever.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to THY SEED (GK., SPERMA), WHICH IS CHRIST.

Every believer is in fact “*A new creature... in Christ,*” bearing Christ’s life and nature. Yet, for many their past is always close at hand and part of their mindset that needs to be renewed. Many suffer daily, not realizing the harm they suffer by not leaving behind their past to go on to live as the new persons they now in fact are “*in Christ.*” These believers miss out on the freedom and the blessings of rest and peace that they might otherwise enjoy “*in Christ.*” The enjoyment of the riches of “*Christ who is our life*” is lost to them until they come to see, become established, and then stand upon “the truth” of who they now are in Christ.

Paul uses the word “*mind*” 39 times in 37 verses of his 13 epistles to the members of “*the church, which is the body of Christ.*” He uses the word “*think*” 23 times and “*know*” 88 times. The answer for wrong thinking believers is not psychoanalysis per se, or mind over matter. Rather the answer is a psychological change that comes about when we *learn, see, and trust “the truth”* of “*the gospel of our salvation.*” We must stand on the facts and truth of what God has done for us according to Paul’s words of the “*gospel of the grace of God*” (Acts 20:24).

First, most Christians should already know they are *already* rendered guiltless by the simple and yet most powerful truth... that *their sins (past, present, and future) are freely and fully forgiven,* washed away by having believed in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“(Christ) In whom WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, according to the riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7) ... having [FREELY] FORGIVEN US ALL OUR TRANSGRESSIONS” (Colossians 2:13 AMP)

Also, all too few Christians have come to properly see and realize that they are now “*delivered from the power of the darkness*” (Col 2:13 below). They are now free from any event or wicked happening that came upon them in their past life. The remedy that God has provided us is our ***CO-DEATH, CO-BURIAL, AND CO-RESURRECTION WITH CHRIST... TO NEWNESS OF LIFE.*** In Christ, all things are new for us.

“Are you ignorant of the fact that ALL OF US (believers) WHO HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED (PLACED) INTO CHRIST JESUS WERE BAPTIZED (PLACED) INTO HIS DEATH?”

“WE WERE BURIED THEREFORE WITH HIM BY THE BAPTISM (placement) INTO DEATH, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious [power] of the Father, so we too might [habitually] live and behave in NEWNESS OF LIFE. (Romans 6:3-4)

“Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet [fit] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: ¹³ who HATH DELIVERED US FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Col. 1:12, 13).

Not only is Jesus’ death our death, but also Jesus’ burial is ours, and His resurrection is our resurrection to “*newness of life.*” These are the facts of Paul’s “*Gospel of*

Christ” (Rom 1:16). Jesus’ blood and death paid for our sins, but also His death is the death of the “Old Man” (Rom 6:6-7), our “old identity” of our past, to whom the happenings of our past life occurred. Being now dead with and “in Christ” we’re freed (v7 below) from the past; we in fact are new persons in Christ.

“We know that OUR OLD (UNRENEWED) SELF WAS NAILED TO THE CROSS WITH HIM in order that [our] body [which is the instrument] of sin might be MADE INEFFECTIVE and inactive for evil, that we might NO LONGER BE THE SLAVES OF SIN.

⁷ For WHEN A MAN DIES, HE IS FREED (LOOSED, DELIVERED) FROM [THE POWER OF] SIN [among men].” (Romans 6:6-7)

Our co-death with and “in Christ” separates us from our past and all its events, it no longer has a hold on us. Yes, we may remember the events but they have no hold upon us unless we permit them to occupy our mind. Our co-burial is significant because we only bury “dead” people. Even our government’s judicial system never punishes *dead* criminals. Thankfully, the Lord did not leave us dead and buried; He also resurrected us by our co-resurrection with and “in Christ” so that we might enjoy the benefits of His mighty life within our spirit as **our new life**. These facts are the crux of the Pauline mystery gospel.

“I HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST [IN HIM I HAVE SHARED HIS CRUCIFIXION]; it is no longer (the Old) I who live, but CHRIST LIVES IN ME; and the life I now live in the body I live by faith of (ek, from and with) the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me. (Galatians 2:20)

“... God would make known what is the riches of the glory (expression) of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is CHRIST IN YOU, the hope of glory: (Colossians 1:27)

We still live in a dying sin-laden physical body and we have a soul that yet needs to be renewed to completion, but Christ is now our life *at its core*, within our spirit, we’re **100% new**. The engine of our being, our spirit, was made all together new the very moment we are received Christ, being *regenerated*, at our new birth. Christ in us is *our new mind*, as He leads us, guides us and fellowships with us from within.

God heals our wounds when we truly let Him into our *hearts* and *minds*, allowing Him to take over in our whole life. “To **BE MADE NEW IN THE ATTITUDE OF YOUR MINDS, AND TO PUT ON (Grk, enduo, BE CLOTHED IN) THE NEW SELF, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.**” **Ephesians 4:23.** We must agree with Christ in us and say good bye to our past life. Let your *mindset* be renewed with Christ’s Spirit and mindset (Philippians 2:5), so as to be “transformed” in “mind” (Rom 12:2). We need to eat and be nourished by the words of truth in all Paul’s epistles. God wants you to “be renewed” in mind, recreated in your soul, as a new person “in Christ.” Let go of your old self and past by adopting this new *mindset*.

The “(Satan’s) spirit of error” (1John 4:6) likes to keep us wrapped up in our self, our past, our sins, depressions, and addictions; that way we can’t mature spiritually and find or enjoy the riches of Jesus Christ as our new life. These devices keep us from having a living relationship with “Christ who is our life” (Col 3:4a). If we are depressed, lonely, angry, addicted, or living our life in bitterness, seeking continual “activities” as distractions, then these things are controlling and limiting who we are “in Christ.” This keeps us from becoming the person that God created us and freed us to be. These psychological issues are the symptoms of a pain that we suffer when **we allow the past to dictate our life today.** We may think we ease the hurt through these temporary activities, vices and emotions that occupy us. We may even remain in our own little world where no one else can come in and hurt us again. When

we are live a life walled off from the truth, without the Lord's light, life, love and truth working in us, we are more vulnerable to sin and pain.

When we harbor and/or dwell on our hurts we let our past decide what we will do with today? God does not want us to be unhappy, always guarding ourselves from being hurt again. "God is love"... it's His nature, and this is our new nature in union with Christ. If we are afraid to receive love or to love others and really give of ourselves, then we will never be happy in this life. As long we remain spiritually stunted we won't enjoy the fruits of salvation, because our mindset and way of living are literally starving us of spiritual insight and God's wisdom. This is what living in our past does to us.

Only when we decide to **let go of the past** and **believe the truth of our new identity in Christ** will we be able to live to our full human potential in the Lord, to freely live and enjoy life. Put your trust solely in the Lord and He will lift you up.

*"He (The Lord) gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall, **but those who HOPE (HAVE THIS EXPECTATION) IN THE LORD will renew their strength. THEY WILL SOAR ON WINGS LIKE EAGLES; THEY WILL RUN AND NOT GROW WEARY, THEY WILL WALK AND NOT BE FAINT.**" (Isa 40:29-31*

Part 10 of 10

Standing On and Walking In the Truth

Paul said he laid "the foundation" of our faith, which is Christ (1Cor 3:10-11). "Truth" is what is real and eternal. The eternal Christ is the "Spirit of Truth." The verses discussed in this series reveal the foundational **facts** of the **truth** of the Pauline "gospel of Christ" for us today. It is "gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). Paul explains the key gospel facts we "**stand**" upon; the Lord's sovereignty and love, "the foundation" of Christ's all-sufficient substitutionary work at the cross on our behalf, and then also of the truth of Christ's resurrection life now indwelling us as our new life - "all things are made new..."

*"Therefore if any person is [ingrafted] in Christ **he is A NEW CREATION (a NEW CREATURE ALTOGETHER); the OLD [PREVIOUS MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CONDITION] has passed away.** Behold, **the fresh and NEW has come!**" 2 Cor 5:17 (AMP)*

Every believer's position and relationship with God has forever changed from what it was before they were saved. Once I was lost in sin and dead toward God, destined to be eternally lost. Now I am eternally alive "in Christ." We have a new life and a new identity "in Christ"; I'm now a "Christ person." Having died with Christ at the Cross we now have no past except His past experience, which was victorious over sin and death – this is now our past experience; **we died with him and we are now alive "in Christ."**

As discussed in the last installment, many Christians still have scars from the past that they have never let go of. When we keep replaying past hurts in our mind we keep picking the scab and it never heals. We may erroneously *think* we can't let of the past go because we can still recall it – so we keep bringing up the hurt, replaying the scenes in our *mind*. This keeps us from truly acknowledging “**Christ who is our (new) life**” (Col 3:4). We shouldn't be occupied with our past or allow it to affect our living today.

The truth is this, if we want a happy and fulfilled life, then we need to give up the past and allow God to bring us into *our present, secure, unshakable, status as His loved child*, based upon Christ's cross and His unconditional love for us. But this “*truth*” will never become effective for us if we keep wallowing in what once was. We don't need to go back there in our minds, trying to “figure it out,” or to ask “why,” or to redo or fix the past. We may have been hurt deeply, but the “old us” is now *dead and buried with Christ*. If you are to enjoy the abundant life in Christ then you can't bring what is dead with you –you must leave it behind where it belongs, buried. Our new found life and our liberty from the past of our “*Old Man*” will then yield *rest and peace to our souls*. We will sleep better and live better in body and soul. Jesus said, “**Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest... and you will find rest for your souls.**” (Matthew 11:28-29a). We must turn from the past to the Lord now within us. *Psalms 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

Sometimes it can be difficult to let go of and “*cast down*” the thoughts and emotional pangs of the past, but without moving away from it, we remain stunted spiritually. We must *replace our illegitimate notions of the past with the truth of God's word* as to our present loved, eternally secure, status “*in Christ.*” We must live in “*the faith,*” knowing who we really are as Christ persons. “**Examine yourselves to see whether you are in “THE FAITH”... Do you not realize that CHRIST JESUS IS IN YOU...**” (2 Cor 13:5)

We must let go of the past and the future. They belong to our Eternal Heavenly Father who watches over us. Let your mindset be renewed with Christ's Spirit and mindset (Philippians 2:5), to be transformed (Rom 12:2). We need to eat, be nourished, and grow by the words of the “*truth*” in Paul's epistles, many of which we've recounted in this series. God wants you to be renewed, recreated as a new person in Christ. God heals our wounds when we truly let Him into our hearts and *minds*, allowing Him to take over in our whole life.

“**To BE MADE NEW IN THE ATTITUDE OF YOUR MINDS, AND TO PUT ON (Grk, enduo, be clothed in) THE NEW SELF, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.**” *Ephesians 4:23*

Only when we decide to let go of the past and future to believe the **“truth”** will we be able to live and soar to our potential in the Lord. Put your trust solely in the Lord and He will lift you up.

“He (The Lord) gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall, but those who hope (have this expectation) in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” Isa 40:29-31

When we think on the past we may become chronically depressed, lonely, and angry, addicted, or live a life of bitterness. These then become **“strongholds”** that control and limit who we are in Christ. They literally keep us from becoming the person that God created us and freed us to be. These things are symptoms of the pain that Christians may have not yet chosen to not give up, they allow the past to dictate their life today.

Some are tempted to ease the hurt of the past by remaining in their own little world where no one else can come in and hurt them. They can't be emotionally close or available to anyone. The truth is that living a walled off life, without the Lord's light, life, and truth working in us, we are more vulnerable to secret sin. The **“spirit of error”** (1John 4:6) likes to keep us wrapped up in our self, our sins, our depressions and our addictions. These devices then keep us from having a living relationship with **“Christ who is our life,”** but that need not be because we as His children have been forgiven of **“all trespasses (sins),”** past present and future. **Colossians 2:13** *And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;* We can turn to the Light of Christ

As long we remain spiritually stunted we won't enjoy the *fruit* of our salvation because our mindset and way of living are literally starving us of spiritual light, insight, and Christ's wisdom. This is what living in our past does to us. We must let go of the past; that is we must **“cast down”** the images and imaginations we might still carry concerning the past that distract us from living according to our new identity **“in Christ.”** Paul uses the two words **“in Christ”** 75 times in 74 verses of His 13 epistles. The fact is that we as believers already are a **“new creature... in Christ Jesus,”** thus **now we are “as He is in this world.”** (1 John 4:17b).

If we are vigilant, knowing our enemies few devices, and recognizing them, we can overcome them. Actually, God can use **“all”** these temptations **“for the good”** (Rom 8:28). Upon recognizing and understanding the temptation at hand, it should provoke us to turn our heart to the Lord who has saved us from judgment and now will save us moment by moment from whatever evil is at hand.

Believers must learn to broaden their *faith*; that is to adopt a new **“mindset,”** a mind that is set upon and relies upon “the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” Christ within us as our new life will guide

our “walk.” God has given us Christ’s life as the way of victory over “*the flesh*.” As we abide in an intimate thoughtful union with the Lord, we enjoy His “*life and peace*” and our “walk” then reflects this new way of living. A man’s conduct, in Scripture, is called his “walk.” The Bible has much to say about how we “walk,” morally and spiritually. Many “walk after their own lusts” (2 Pet. 3:3) and “walk in darkness” (John 12:35). Some even “walk in craftiness” (2 Cor. 4:2) trying to lead others astray. Indeed, even Christian believers are sometimes careless about their “walk” and so cause others to stumble. They are walking in concert with the “Sin” spirit that indwells their “flesh” (Rom 7:17, 18, and 20).

Every true child of God should be very mindful of his walk or conduct. Yet, we are saved and walk by God’s grace. Our fixed and sure salvation came “by grace through faith, not of works” (Eph 2:8-10). Yet, we’re saved “unto good works.” God’s grace is the **root** of our salvation, and good works are the **fruit of our union with “Christ who is our life.”** That fruit is seen in our “walk.” Sincere believers in Christ are “one spirit” with Him (1Cor 6:17) and so it is expected of us that “as Christ was raised up from the dead” after having died for our sins, “even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).

Christians are exhorted to “walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing” (Col. 1:10), to “walk in (accord with) the spirit” that they might not “fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16). They are exhorted to “walk worthy of (their) calling” (Eph. 4:1), to “walk as children of the light” (Eph. 5:8). They are exhorted to “walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise” (Eph. 5:15), to “walk honestly” (Rom. 13:13), to “walk in love” (Eph. 5:2) and to “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7).

Much more is said about the believer’s “walk” in the Bible, but never are we told that it is our “walk,” or conduct, that makes us acceptable or qualifies us to be saved. Our failing, stumbling ways could never earn salvation for us (Titus 3:5). On the contrary, having seen and received the Lord’s love, we are exhorted by Paul to “walk” pleasing to the Lord out of sheer gratitude to Him.