

<sup>1</sup> If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

In Romans 6:8 Paul explained: “Now if we be **dead with Christ**, we believe that we shall also **live with him**.” To the Colossians, he said the same thing: “And you, being **dead** in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he **quickeneth together with him**, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Colossians 2:13). He has just touched on being *dead with Christ* (Colossians 2:20), and now he refers to being *risen with Christ* to begin the next part of his letter. In Colossians 2:12, Paul used the illustration of baptism to speak of being buried with Christ and raised with Him in new life – a parallel to Romans 6:4. Paul may have couched his Message in different words, but the Gospel message that he brought was always consistent: we must identify with Christ in His death (*dead unto sin*) and resurrection (*alive unto God*), and baptism symbolizes this identity with Him (Romans 6:11).

Paul begins by paralleling what he said earlier (*if ye be dead with Christ*): *if, therefore, ye have been raised with Christ* (literal).<sup>1</sup> What he taught earlier was contingent upon being accounted as *dead with Christ*, and, likewise, what he is about to launch into is dependent upon having been *raised with Christ*. *If* this is true, *then* what follows must also be true; based upon what Paul taught earlier, his anticipation is that this condition will be true. By using this conditional sentence structure, he is calling upon the Colossians (and us) to evaluate our position before God; in essence, he is acknowledging that it is possible for any one at any time to choose to depart from the Lord – being a part of the Lord is not to be taken for granted. To the Corinthians, Paul warned against a sense of pride or arrogance: *so that he who is thinking to be steadfast, beware lest he fall away* (1 Corinthians 10:12, literal);<sup>2</sup> the writer of Hebrews warned: “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12). Clearly, the modern concepts of eternal security (among Evangelicals) and the perseverance of the saints (among Calvinists) are not Biblical.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, Paul expresses abiding in Christ (being raised with Him) as a condition to be met in order for what follows to be applicable. Paul has already used *baptism* as the prescribed illustration of our death and resurrection with Christ, and explained in some detail how our death with Him frees us from the bondage of the Mosaic Law. The assurance that we have is that even as we identify with His death, so we are associated with Him in His

<sup>1</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT, *Bibleworks 8*.

<sup>2</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon, *Bibleworks 8*.

<sup>3</sup> If you would like more on these, consider: <https://www.thenarrowtruth.com/eternal-security.html>, and <https://www.thenarrowtruth.com/tulip--perseverance-of-the-saints.html>.

resurrection. It is on this premise that Paul uses the indicative mood for *risen* to show that this is a statement of fact<sup>4</sup> – it is true: if we have died with Him, then we *have been raised with Him!*

Therefore, the condition of his statement is this: *if we have been raised with Christ* (grammatically referred to as the *protasis*), and this is what follows when this condition is met (the *apodosis*): *what is above ye must be seeking*.<sup>5</sup> *Seek* is in the present tense (showing that this is to be a continuous action), the imperative mood (it is a command that **we** are called upon to obey), and active voice (**we** must do the seeking).<sup>6</sup> The Greek word *zeteo* (*seek*) means to look for (in a general way), but more fittingly within this context, to have a desire to possess – to have those things that are from above.<sup>7</sup> Paul immediately clarifies that *above* is *where the Christ is, the One Who is sitting at the right of God* (literal).<sup>8</sup> His explanation is very appropriate within the context, because he has just finished explaining to the Colossians that there are some who will exalt *angels* as a part of their teachings – i.e., they will draw upon that which is *above* (*angels*) in an effort to raise the importance and validity of their message in the minds of their audience (Colossians 2:18). Paul ensures that our understanding is accurate: our desire for heavenly things (what is *above*) is to be directed to the Lord Jesus as our Mediator, and God the Father Who loved humanity so much that the Word (His Son, God in the flesh) came to pay the price for our sin (1 Timothy 2:5; John 3:16). It is through Christ, Who is in that place of highest honor next to the Father, that we receive *every spiritual blessing* that God has prepared for us (Ephesians 1:3); it was after Christ brought cleansing from sin to all of humanity that He *did sit to the right of the Majesty on high* (Hebrews 1:3, literal).<sup>9</sup>

## **<sup>2</sup> Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.**

This is virtually a reiteration of the earlier *seek those things which are above* (from verse one): *what is above, you must set your minds on* (literal),<sup>10</sup> keeping in mind that Paul has already clarified what is *above*. *Phroneo* (the Greek word behind *affection*) primarily means to have an understanding, or an opinion of something, but, within this context, it is more to be intent on, or to not stop thinking about,

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<sup>4</sup> Strong's Online, <https://onlinebible.net/>.

<sup>5</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; [https://www.ntgreek.org/learn\\_nt\\_greek/conditional\\_sentences.htm#CONDITIONAL\\_PDF](https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/conditional_sentences.htm#CONDITIONAL_PDF).

<sup>6</sup> Strong's Online.

<sup>7</sup> Gingrich Lexicon, *Bibleworks 8*.

<sup>8</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

something.<sup>11</sup> Since Paul has carefully identified the *above* to be the Lord Jesus Christ, the command is that we are not to stop thinking about what He has done for us, what we have in Him, and how we must live for Him in obedience, showing forth His righteousness and holiness (John 14:15; Ephesians 4:24). Jesus said, “I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5) – the life of the *branch* comes from the *Vine*; the *branch* must maintain that critical link (*faith*) to the *Vine* in order to have life. *The one who is remaining in Me (I in him), this is the one who is bearing much fruit* (middle part of John 15:5, literal).<sup>12</sup> Consider this carefully: Jesus specifically points to *the one who is remaining in Him*; *meno* (*abideth, remaining*) is in the present tense (it is to be a continuous action) and active voice (*he, or the one who is performing the action of remaining*), and if this *one* is so *remaining*, **then**, Jesus says, *I in him*. This is paralleled by Hebrews 10:23 – “Let us hold fast [*be holding fast* (present tense)] the profession [expression of allegiance and commitment] of *our* faith [*the hope; elpidos* (this is not *faith*)] without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised)”;<sup>13</sup> the writer of Hebrews exhorts us to maintain a firm hold on the hope that we have in Christ (i.e., *abide in the Vine*) because He Who said “I in him” is *faithful!*

“...let us run [*be running* (present tense)] with patience [*hupomone, endurance* in the face of trials] the race that is set before us,” *who are fixing our eyes exclusively [aphorao] on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of the faith ...*” (Hebrews 12:1b-2a, literal in italics).<sup>14</sup> This is a call for us to be running with endurance, having Jesus as our singular focus because it is through Him that we have access to saving faith. Jesus declared that it would be the one who walks to the end of life in faithfulness to Him (the *enduring* one) who will be saved (Matthew 10:22, 24:13). When we hear Jesus’ parable of the sower, we are glad to hear that the *good ground* will *bring forth fruit*, but Luke includes the words *with patience* to describe this productive result – *hupomone*, the fruit is brought forth through *endurance* (Luke 8:15).<sup>15</sup> Jesus also warned us: “In the world ye shall have [*are having*] tribulation [*thlipsis, distress, affliction*]: but be of good cheer; I have overcome [*conquered*] the world” (John 16:33b).<sup>16</sup> The *world* (*kosmos*), as it is used here, is not a reference to humanity but to the world system, the culture of this world that is under the direct oversight of the devil. The kingdom of God is not of this world system (John 18:36), which is why we are to have our eyes continually fixed upon the Lord Jesus (Who is *above*) – this

<sup>11</sup> Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>12</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>13</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>14</sup> Strong’s Online; Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>15</sup> Strong’s Online.

<sup>16</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.

provides us with a spiritual focus according to the guidance of the Spirit of God, even while we live in the midst of a world system that runs contrary to the truth of the Lord. John's admonition is this: "Love not [*You must not be loving* (present tense, imperative mood – a command!)] the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love [*is loving*] the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).<sup>17</sup> It is as we have the Lord Jesus as our singular focus in life that we will not have a *love* for the world or its stuff; John makes it clear that if we do hold such a love for the world, then the love of the Father is **not** in us. Here the Greek word *ou* is used (for *not*), which makes this statement of fact negative (the indicative statement is: *the love of the Father is in him*) – it is made irrefutably, objectively, and undeniably negative!<sup>18</sup> After counselling to lay up treasure in heaven, Jesus made this statement: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon [the things of this world system]" (Matthew 6:24);<sup>19</sup> i.e., everyone is subject to a single master: God or wealth. If our eyes are focused on the Lord Jesus, then the *things of earth will grow strangely dim*,<sup>20</sup> but if we harbor a love for this world and all that it includes, then the Lord will be lost from sight.

Paul's counsel to the Colossians (and to us) is that we must have a singular focus on the Lord Who is *above*, and *not* on this world. Interestingly, this *not* is from the Greek *me*, and stands as a prohibition against filling our minds with the things of this world – unlike *ou* (an objective and absolute negative), *me* is both subjective and relative; in other words, it's not a denial that we are unable to have a focus on earthly things but that we must choose to commit to **not** fill our minds with the earthly – Paul is saying, "Don't do it!"<sup>21</sup> Unlike 1 John 2:15, where we saw the *ou* (*not*) act as an absolute negative in a statement of fact (indicative mood), the *me* (*not*), in this case, is used with the imperative mood (a command), which always leaves room for either compliance or defiance. Paul presents both sides in this case: obedience – fill your mind with the things of Christ; disobedience – fill your mind with the things of earth; the command to be obeyed (or disobeyed) is to have a singular focus on Christ (Hebrews 12:2). It is noteworthy that Paul does not include an option for a little of both; Jesus said that if we are not for Him, then we are against Him (Matthew 12:30) – there is no gray area, and no fence to straddle! This is a particularly appropriate challenge for today's "Christian."

There are many within the broader Evangelical community who hold to a name-it-and-claim-it gospel, a heresy that is not the Gospel of God at all, but a sham that

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<sup>17</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>18</sup> Strong's Online; <http://christswords.com/main/content/greek-no-and-not-two-different-negatives>.

<sup>19</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>20</sup> From the hymn, *Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus*.

<sup>21</sup> Strong's Online; <http://christswords.com/main/content/greek-no-and-not-two-different-negatives>.

is founded upon positive thinking. *Positive thinking* has been defined as “an emotional and mental attitude that focuses on the good and expects results that will benefit you.”<sup>22</sup> Joel Osteen, a huge purveyor of this heresy, declares: “The miracle is in your mouth”; in other words, speak the words that will turn your world around, and he suggests that you start with this: “I am blessed. I am prosperous. I am forgiven. I am healthy. I am free. I have the favor of God. Problems are turning around. New doors are opening. I will become all God created me to be.”<sup>23</sup> The entire focus of this *positive thinking* philosophy is personal, and securely tied to this world; by contrast, God commands: *Not of themselves every one being concerned, but every one of others* (Philippians 2:4, literal).<sup>24</sup> Jesus provided us with a conditional promise that our needs will be met: “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But **seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness**; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:31-33). Jesus’ words are in keeping with the First Commandment: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3), and He clarified the matter: “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not **all** that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33). It is evident that Joel Osteen does not understand God’s Word in this matter – he’s not even close! His focus is only on the things of this earth, and **not** on the things *above*; there are many professing Christians today who follow his philosophy. The admonition of the Spirit of God (through the Apostle Paul) is to fill our minds with the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master!



Joel Osteen

### **3. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.**

*For you have died, and your life has been hidden and protected with Christ in God.*<sup>25</sup> Paul has now moved past the two conditions that he laid out earlier: *if ye be dead* (Colossians 2:20) and *if ye be risen* (Colossians 3:1); *died* (*dead*) and *protected* (*hid*) are both in the indicative mood – he is presenting them here as a statement of fact! *Krupto*, the Greek word behind *hidden and protected* (*hid*), includes the thought of something that has been hidden by covering it, thereby providing protection from

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.tonyrobbins.com/positive-thinking/>.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.joelosteen.com/inspiration/todays-word/2021/06/08/19/58/the-miracle-in-your-mouth>.

<sup>24</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>25</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.



marauders or thieves;<sup>26</sup> both thoughts are significant within our consideration. Jesus explained just such a condition for us: “And I give unto them [the sheep who are hearing and following Him] eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand” (John 10:28); the last phrase is literally: *no one will snatch them out of My hand.*<sup>27</sup> Those who grasp at texts such as this in an effort to bolster their teaching of eternal security (that we cannot lose our salvation), fail to take the time to carefully examine Jesus’ words. As Paul says, our *eternal life* is hidden *with Christ in God*, we enjoy the secure protection of the hand of Jesus **and** the hand of the Father (John 10:29), but from what are we secure? We are *protected* from *anyone* snatching us out of Jesus’ (and the Father’s) hand; nevertheless, Jesus warned His close disciples: *You must continually watch lest anyone should lead you astray* (Matthew 24:4, literal).<sup>28</sup> This is not an isolated warning to us; earlier, we looked at these: “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12); “Take heed, **brethren**, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12). The many warnings of Scripture for us to remain steadfast in the faith are given because, even though God has provided us with every protection from *anyone* removing us from His hand, we must be ever vigilant because **our hearts** are deceitful and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9), and through the eloquence and flattery of those who do not hold the truth, it is possible for us to be persuaded to *depart from Him* (Romans 16:17-18). Yes, we have been *protected with Christ in God*, but that does not relieve us of the warnings and commands to remain alert so that *we* do not turn away from the saving truth. “For the time will come when they [those who hear the Gospel message] will not endure [*accept*] sound [*accurate*] doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears [craving to hear what they desire]”; *and, indeed, from the hearing of the truth they will turn away, and to myths they will be turned* (2 Timothy 4:3-4, literal in italics).<sup>29</sup> Even though Jesus has promised to protect us from every outside influence, notice that Paul warns about those who will *turn away* from the truth – *turn away* is in the active voice: **they will turn away!** Because we still bear His image (Genesis 9:6), God will not override our ability to choose, but He has assured us that we will reap the results of what we sow or choose (Galatians 6:7). Those who will not accept the accurate teaching of God’s Word, have *turned away* from truth and have *turned to* untruths (*myths*), i.e., as they *turn away from the faith*, they *turn to* no faith, which is the place of apostasy (Hebrews 3:12).

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<sup>26</sup> Strong’s Dictionary, *ESword*; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>27</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

4. When Christ, *who is our life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Paul has very quickly taken us from being *dead with Christ*, to being *risen with Him*, to our life protected *with Christ in God*, to now looking forward to that day when Christ will come for His own. *When*, in this case, does two things: 1) it clarifies that the appearance of Christ will take place before what follows, and 2) it reminds us that we do not know the *day and hour* when Jesus will come (Matthew 24:36).<sup>30</sup> *When Christ (our life) becomes visible [phaneroo]*.<sup>31</sup>

Consider the broader context of when Christ will appear. Jesus said that after a time of tribulation, "... then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and **they shall see the Son of man** coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30). That will be the first time that the Son of Man will be made *visible* to those on earth since the day that He was taken up into heaven (Acts 1:9-11). We are assured by the Lord that no one knows the day and hour when He will come with all of His angels to harvest the earth of those who are His (Matthew 24:31, 36). John presents a related theme: "... we know that, when he shall appear [*phaneroo*], we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). The passive voice of *shall appear [phaneroo]* tells us that the timing of when Christ will become visible is under the control of the Father – Christ will come in the clouds to harvest the earth when the Father has deemed the time to be right! The subjunctive mood of *phaneroo*, combined with *when*, assures us that we do not know the day or hour of His return; the **timing** of His coming is unknown, but the assurance of His coming is without doubt. "I go [*am going*] to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, [then] I will come again [*I am coming again* (indicative mood, a statement of fact)], and [*will*] receive you unto myself; that [*in order that*] where I am, *there* ye may be also [*will be also*, as part of a purpose clause, the subjunctive *be* is viewed as a statement of fact]" (John 14:2b-3).<sup>32</sup> The promise that the Lord is coming for His own is without question.

Paul wrote of a change that will take place for the faithful when Christ comes: "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly ... In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For

<sup>30</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>31</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Strong's Online.

<sup>32</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; [https://www.ntgreek.org/learn\\_nt\\_greek/subj-purpose.htm](https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-purpose.htm).

this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:49, 52-53). Jesus said, “And he [the Son of Man] shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:31). When the Lord comes to harvest His own, we will see Him and our mortality will be replaced in an instant by an immortality that is like unto His (1 Timothy 6:16) – we will see Him and become like Him (1 John 3:2). Paul’s testimony to the Philippians was this: “For our conversation [*politeuma; citizenship*] is in heaven; from whence also we look for [eagerly await] the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change [*transform*] our vile body [*body of low condition* (subject to death)], that it may be fashioned [*it to become*] like unto his glorious body [*the body of His glory*], according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Philippians 3:20-21).<sup>33</sup> When Jesus raises us bodily to be with Him forever (the rapture), we will not only be with Him in the glories of heaven, but our bodies will lose their corruption to display a glory like unto His. The focus of our text is that when the Lord will come (and He will come!), then we will appear *with Him in glory* – the full implications of what this means became evident as we have considered the related Scriptures.

Nevertheless, we must also note that Paul places a qualifier on those who will *appear with Him*: it is for those whose *life is in Christ*! He has just explained that the *saints and faithful brethren* (Colossians 1:2) *have died*, and their *life has been hidden and protected with Christ in God* (Colossians 3:3). On the day that the Lord comes for those who are *in Him*, they will be changed into His glory! Therefore, it is very important that we understand what it means to be *in Him*. It is our faith in Him that establishes our relationship with Him – we become branches that are connected to the Vine (John 15), and it is obedience to His commands that ensures that we remain *in Him*. *And whoever may be keeping His Word, truly in this* [the keeping of His Word] *the love of God has been accomplished, in this* [the keeping of His Word] *we are coming to understand that we are in Him* (1 John 2:5, literal).<sup>34</sup> In simple terms, it is our obedience to the Lord that works to affirm that we are *in Him*: “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love ...” (John 15:10a). Indeed, Jesus said that if we are loving Him, then we must be living in obedience to His commands (John 14:15); what should be very obvious, by now, is that our obedience is essential to continuing our relationship with Him. Nevertheless, obedience is always our choice; the Lord will not force us to obey Him, but we must understand that, although we are free to choose to obey or disobey, we do not get to choose the consequences of our choice (Galatians 6:7-8). Jesus also said that *if*

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<sup>33</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>34</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.



*anyone does not remain in Me, he is cast outside as a branch and becomes withered, and these are being gathered and are being thrown into the fire, and it is being burned* (John 15:6, literal).<sup>35</sup> Jesus clarified the consequences of disobedience for the one who has been *in Him*: you are cast away from Him, become dried and are destined to be burned.

Returning to our text, appearing with Christ in glory will not take place unless we are committed to Him and remain faithful to Him, which involves our obedience to His commands! It is obedience that breathes life into our faith; James tells us that unless faith is accompanied by obedience (acceptable *works*) it is dead (James 2:17)! Unless we are doing the will of God (obedience to His commands) we will not be numbered among those who are His (Matthew 7:21). Our obedience to the Lord is the expression of our love for Him (John 14:15), and it is the evidence that we have come to know Him (1 John 2:3). “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord [obedience!], forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58). We are commanded to have a strong commitment to obey the Lord – something that can only take place as we follow the leading of the Spirit of God. Jesus made it abundantly clear that it is the one who remains faithful to Him (which is only possible through obedience) unto the end who will be saved (Matthew 24:13); *saved* is in the future tense, which means that our salvation, although complete in Him, will not see fruition unless we remain in Him (John 15:6), and we cannot remain in Him without being faithful (obedient) to Him (John 15:10). This is **not** salvation by works, which is legalism; this is the salvation that has been prepared by God for His obedient children who are *in Christ*, and who are destined for His glory!

**5. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:**

*Therefore* – because of what has come before, this is to be our course of action. In order to understand the meaning of this first clause, we must refresh what we have just looked at, beginning at verse 2: “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” *Upon the earth* (verse 5) and *on the earth* (verse 2) are exactly the same in the Greek; the earlier verse tells us that we are **not** to set our affections on that which is *on the earth* (see, 1 John 2:15-16). Following this, Paul declares that we *have died* (verse 3), drawing upon the theme of Romans 6:3-4: “Know ye not,

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<sup>35</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should [*will*; as part of a purpose clause, *walk*, as described here, is the stated outcome of identifying with Christ in His death and resurrection (not the usual subjunctive mood that indicates only possibility)] walk in newness of life.”<sup>36</sup> It is because we have identified with Christ in His death that we are living in *newness of life* on this earth – a newness that sees our focus drawn heavenward!

Because we have *died* through our identification with Christ in His death, we must then *live* in the newness of life that comes through His resurrection. To the Romans, Paul wrote: *thus also ye must be accounting yourselves [as] being dead, indeed, to sin, and you are living to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, do not let sin be controlling in your mortal body so that [you] are being obedient to it in its cravings; not even presenting your members [as] tools of unrighteousness to sin, but you must present yourselves to God as living from the dead and your members [as] tools of righteousness to God* (Romans 6:11-13, literal).<sup>37</sup> *Members* (*melh*, plural of *melos*), as it is used here, speaks of a part of the *mortal body*; it is our mortal body that is on this earth, and that faces the challenge of putting the *old man* off and donning the *new man* of righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:22, 24). Therefore, every *member* of our *mortal body* is to be reckoned to be dead *in Christ* so that we are free from the control of sin. Jesus explained this: “Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot [members of the mortal body] offend thee [are causing you to stumble], cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye [a member of the mortal body] offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell [*Gehenna*] fire” (Matthew 18:8-9).<sup>38</sup> Jesus said that it is better that the members of our bodies die (are removed) than that we should find ourselves eternally in the Lake of Fire because of them. Paul commanded that we are to account ourselves to be dead to sin (Romans 6:11), which is the same command that Paul presents to the Colossians: *mortify*, do away with, *your members* as it relates to sin (Colossians 3:5). What follows is a short listing (it is not exhaustive) of sins to which our *members* can so easily yield, and that characterize those who are disobedient (as we will see in a moment); let’s take a quick look at what is included.

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<sup>36</sup> [https://www.ntgreek.org/learn\\_nt\\_greek/subj-purpose.htm](https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-purpose.htm).

<sup>37</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.

<sup>38</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

*Fornication (porneian)* is a general reference to any sexual activity that is extramarital, unlawful, or unnatural; within the spiritual realm, it refers to idolatry – that which comes between God and someone who knows Him, and serves to draw him into apostasy.<sup>39</sup> Today, *fornication*, and its negative connotation, has been replaced by what the world likes to call *freedom*; spiritually, *idolatry* has become normalized and is swept under a broad rug of so-called *love*. This is to have no part in the life of the child of God!

*Uncleanness* brings to mind the obligation of the Jews under the Mosaic Law to be continually vigilant lest they become unfit to participate in their required traditions. *Uncleanness* stands in contrast to *holiness* – whatever is not *holy* is *unclean*!<sup>40</sup>

*Inordinate affection (pathos)* is an obscure way of saying an evil craving; it is a negative and excessively strong passion.<sup>41</sup>

*Evil concupiscence* is somewhat similar to *inordinate affection*. The phrase in Greek is *epithumian kakhn*, and is an evil, strong desire; *epithumia* alone denotes a strong craving that can be either good or bad – the additional word (*kakhn*, bad) clarifies the matter.<sup>42</sup> Paul is identifying those things that are to be dead to us, and a strong, evil passion for what is forbidden, must die.

*Covetousness* carries the further explanation that it really is *idolatry*. Covetousness (*pleonexian*) speaks of an insatiable craving to have more than is really one's due, a greediness that is ever present and often finds fulfillment at the expense of others.<sup>43</sup> *Idolatry (eidololatrea)* is image worship, or to do service to a false god; in other words, it is placing something or someone ahead of God as our motivation for life. Idolatry is a violation of the First Commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3), and it proved to be the undoing of both Israel and Judah before the Lord sent them into exile (2 Kings 17:9-20). After returning from exile, Israel rebuilt the Lord's temple and resumed their practices as described in the Law of Moses – in general, they had forsaken their former propensity to follow the practices of the heathen around them. However, the religious rulers took it upon themselves to add many rules to the Law of Moses, which they imposed upon the people. In essence, they elevated themselves as being the righteous of Israel, and this feigned righteousness became their "graven image" that replaced the Lord (Matthew 23:4-7). They were so captivated by this *idolatry*

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<sup>39</sup> Friberg Lexicon; Vine's "fornication."

<sup>40</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Vine's "lust."

<sup>43</sup> Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.

of their own making that they did not even recognize the promised Messiah when He stood before them! Most within our modern, sophisticated western culture, would look upon idolatry with disdain – after all, no one would make an image and bow before it as God, yet Paul’s warning is that *covetousness* is really *idolatry*. We live in a world that is obsessed with possessions. When gaining wealth, power, prestige, or things has become the primary goal in life, then *covetousness* has become *idolatry* – God has been replaced by our goal. How easily the *idol* of wealth and possessions can be accounted as God’s blessing, power appears to be the wonderful gift of administration, and prestige hides behind a false humility – all are admired by Evangelicals, and often considered to be signs of great spirituality.

Everything that Paul has listed here is to be rendered as being *dead*! None of these are a result of the upward, singular focus that we are to have on the Lord Jesus (Hebrews 12:2a); all reveal a focus on the world to the exclusion of the Lord. “Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 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” (1 John 2:15-16). Clearly, a love for the world is completely distinct from a love for the Lord; if we are not *with* the Lord, then we are *against* Him (Luke 11:23)! Jesus said that if we are loving Him, then we must be living in obedience to His commands (John 14:15): obedience to the Lord stands in sharp contrast to what Paul has just commanded us to *mortify*.

**6. For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:**

*Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming against the sons of disobedience* (literal).<sup>44</sup> All of what Paul has just listed are representative of a life that yields to personal cravings; although there are differences among them, all include some form of submitting to the passions and lusts of the *old man* – even if they may be rationalized as being positive! The essence is that all of these represent a heart that has been overcome by the temptation to find satisfaction in this world – such a heart has no place for Christ.

*Wrath* is translated from the Greek *orge*, which is generally defined as a reaction of displeasure against something.<sup>45</sup> However, within the framework of *the wrath of God*, it speaks of God’s abiding displeasure with sin and evil that has led to His

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<sup>44</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>45</sup> Strong’s Online.

judgment and punishment of sinners in the past, and will ultimately be appeased when He assigns disobedient (rebellious) humanity and the demonic world to everlasting punishment in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:10, 15). However, it is clear from Scripture that the Lord takes no delight in condemning rebellious humanity to such an eternity. Consider God's message for Israel through Ezekiel: "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but [rather] that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11).<sup>46</sup> It brings no joy to the Lord's heart when those who have lived in opposition to Him die in their wickedness. God created humanity for life (by the breath of God, man became a *living soul* – Genesis 2:7) and fellowship (God came to the Garden and called for Adam – Genesis 3:8-9); the Lake of Fire was created for the devil and his hordes (Matthew 25:41), not for those who are created in the image of God! Nevertheless, those who are **not in Christ**, which requires faith in the Lord's sacrifice for sin **and** continuous obedience to His commands, will join the devil in that destiny of the rebellious. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15); those whose names are in the Book of Life are *in Christ*. The just recompense for sin is death (Romans 6:23), and the sinless Christ died for sin; when we personally accept Christ's death for our sin, then we are accounted as being *in Christ* and righteous before God (2 Corinthians 5:21), but that is not the end – it is only the beginning. James wrote: *thus even faith, if it is having no works, it is dead by itself* (James 2:17, literal);<sup>47</sup> Jesus explained that if we are loving Him (faith), then we must also be obedient to His commands (works; John 14:15). Therefore, unless our lives include a living faith in the Lord Jesus **and** a continuous obedience to His commands, we will **not** enter into the presence of the Lord (Matthew 7:21). Our salvation **is** by faith and **not** by works, but unless active obedience follows our faith in the Lord, we will not be saved because such a faith is *dead*! Yes, our salvation is entirely the work of God through the sacrifice made by the Lord Jesus, but our salvation is **not complete** until we leave this earthly life, and our time, between our initial faith in the Lord and our end, must be filled with faithfulness (obedience). This is how Jesus presented this truth: *the one who endures unto the end, this is the one who will be saved* (Matthew 24:13, literal).<sup>48</sup> *Endure (hupomeno)* means to remain faithful despite trials; therefore, it is the one who is faithfully obedient unto the end who will be saved.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Holladay Lexicon, *Bibleworks 8*.

<sup>47</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Friberg Lexicon.



Our verse exposes the opposite of what we have just been considering: *disobedience* to what God has commanded will lead to the expression of His *orge*. What Paul itemized in the previous verse are all products of living in disobedience to God's stated desires. Within this framework, it is easy to understand how His salvation for us works: disobedience to Him results in His wrath being poured upon us; obedience, founded upon a living faith in Him, leads to salvation. It is important that we understand the Lord's teaching on this matter because Evangelical doctrine would have us believe that how we live has no impact on our salvation; this verse makes it very clear that they are wrong! The devil loves the doctrine of eternal security because it lulls its adherents into a false sense of safekeeping so that they will not seek any other understanding. He is the master of deception, and in this case, his ruse is that he has convinced many that they are on their way to heaven when, in reality, they are walking the broad road that leads to their ruin in the Lake of Fire!

Paul declared: "For God hath not appointed us to wrath [*orge*], but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ ... (1 Thessalonians 5:9); therefore, those who obtain salvation through Jesus **cannot** live in disobedience to the Lord, because our verse says that His wrath (*orge*) will fall upon the disobedient. John the Baptist also declared the necessity of obedience in order to avoid God's wrath: "He that believeth [*is believing*] on the Son hath [*is having*] everlasting life: and he that believeth not [*apeitheo – is not obeying*] the Son shall not see life; but the wrath [*orge*] of God abideth [*is abiding*] on him" (John 3:36).<sup>50</sup> **Obedience to the commands of the Lord is not negotiable.** Man's theologies might seem to cover it with a blanket of spiritually-sounding language, and they may even quote from Scripture in an effort to justify their doctrines, but the clarity of God's Word on this matter cuts through it all. For everyone who has a love for the truth of God, the Lord will open his understanding to this very important matter.

<sup>7</sup> [In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.](#)

*Among whom also ye did walk at one time, when ye did live among them (literal).*<sup>51</sup> Paul reminds the Colossians that there was a time when they, too, were living under God's *wrath (orge)*. Indeed, we can all look to a time when our conduct numbered us among the *disobedient*! The understanding is that since we are now *in Christ*, we are no longer under God's wrath. *Therefore, at the present time, [there is] no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus, who are not living in conformity with*

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<sup>50</sup> Strong's Online.

<sup>51</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

*the flesh but in accordance with the Spirit* (Romans 8:1, literal).<sup>52</sup> *No condemnation* from God is for those who are *in Christ Jesus*, which requires living under the guidance of the Spirit of God: faithfully keeping the commands of the Lord! It is not complex, but neither is it easy. Jesus declared the way to life to be narrow, and also noted that it would be found by only a few (Matthew 7:14). We must be wary of the popular theologies that are widely accepted as being the truth, for that alone runs contrary to *few* finding the Narrow Way: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Jesus warned us, *Beware, lest anyone should lead you astray* (Matthew 24:4b, literal).<sup>53</sup> We must continually guard our hearts lest we be led away from faith in the Lord Jesus (Hebrews 3:12).

***8. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.***

Let’s begin by considering a literal translation: *And now ye also must cease from all of these: wrath, the expression of wrath, hatefulness, slander, foul language out of your mouth.*<sup>54</sup> Paul has just dealt with the practices of the disobedient, outlining the things to which we are to be dead, since we are now in Christ. Having established that, he now goes on to identify other things that are to no longer be a part of our lives – some that might seem to be rather harmless in light of the practices of the *children of disobedience*. However, *put off* (*cease from*) is in the imperative mood (it is a command), and, therefore, deserves our careful attention! This command is also in the middle voice, which means that, although **we** must carry this action out, **we** are also its beneficiaries. Let’s consider these for a moment.

*Anger* is from the Greek word *orge*.<sup>55</sup> Earlier we learned that this is a passionate indignation against someone or something, and is best illustrated by God’s timeless abhorrence for sin.<sup>56</sup> What is also very evident is that God does not act upon His *orge* against sin whenever it rears its ugly head – else none of us would survive. God’s *orge* for sin found expression in the flood of Noah’s day (Genesis 6:5-8), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 13:13; 19:24-25), and will be expressed during the time when the plagues will fall upon the earth during the last days of the Antichrist’s rule (Revelation 16:1). His final expression will come with the Great White Throne Judgement, when all sinners, death and Hades will be

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<sup>52</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Strong’s Online.

<sup>56</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

banished to the Lake of Fire where the devil, his demons, the Antichrist and the False Prophet are already (Revelation 20:15). “*It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed ...*” (Lamentations 3:22); “For thou, Lord, *art* good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee” (Psalm 86:5). God’s indignation against all sin does not diminish, but He extends His mercy to a humanity that, individually, still bears His image (James 3:9).

So, what does it mean to *cease from orge*? God holds *orge* against sin, and Jesus said many times that we are to follow Him – therefore, should we not also hold an *orge* against sin? Within God’s *orge* toward sin and evil there is a future judgment and punishment, when He will put an end to it forever. “And death [the just recompense for sin – Romans 6:23] and hell [Hades] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:14-15). Jesus warned us to remove anything from us that would cause us to depart from Him (whether hand, foot, or eye), because it is better to be handicapped in this life than to be cast into *everlasting fire* or *Gehenna* (Matthew 18:8-9) where there is perpetual torment (Mark 9:43-48). The Lake of Fire is this place of unending fire and torment where the devil and all who follow him (whose names are not found in the Book of Life) will abide forever (Revelation 20:10, 15).

As we ponder God’s *orge* against evil, we can understand that He will deal with all sin in His time. As Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He included this phrase: *and forgive us our offenses as also we are forgiving our offenders* (Matthew 6:12, literal).<sup>57</sup> What is absent from this prayer is any thought of holding *orge* against another, awaiting a day of justice; rather, it is a call upon God to forgive us according to the pattern that we have of forgiving others. Moreover, God has specifically told us that vengeance belongs exclusively to Him: “Dearly beloved, avenge not [do not seek revenge] yourselves, but *rather* give place unto [an opportunity for] wrath [*orge*]: for it is written, Vengeance [justice, punishment] *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Romans 12:19; Deuteronomy 32:35). We are not to seek justice for ourselves, but to allow the *orge* of God to establish His justice in His time – this requires a strong faith in the Lord!

*Wrath* (*thumos*) is the expression of *orge*: examples are the flood of Noah, the fire and brimstone that fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and the vials that will be emptied onto the earth (Revelation 16). We live in a day when God’s mercy is being extended to a humanity that is delving ever deeper into the wickedness of the devil, but we must realize that a day will soon come when His mercy will be withdrawn

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<sup>57</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

and the *thumos* of His *orge* against sin will descend upon this world. As in the days of Noah, we have been warned so that we can take shelter under the sin-cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus. However, also like unto the days of Noah, when God's mercy is withdrawn, those who are left on this earth will then be without hope.

Jesus used the time of Noah to explain what will take place on the earth when He comes for His own. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:30-31). *His elect* are those who are *in Christ*, whose names are recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life. This harvest of the righteous does not include the OT saints; at the time of the Lord's resurrection from the dead, the OT saints were also raised (Matthew 27:52-53), and ascended to heaven along with the Lord Jesus (Ephesians 4:8). The OT saints are referred to as *the firstfruit to God and the Lamb* (Revelation 14:4, literal); they are the *wave offering* that was made before the full harvest – the rapture (the gathering of *His elect*) is the full harvest.<sup>58</sup>

Jesus then draws on Noah for an illustration of what will take place: *And just as [in] the days of Noah, so also will be the coming of the Son of Man. For just as it happened in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day [that] Noah entered into the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and they were all taken away – so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. At that time, two will be in the field, the one is received and the one is left; two are grinding at the mill, one is received and one is left. Be watching, therefore, because you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.* (Matthew 24:37-42, literal).<sup>59</sup> The parallels between the Lord's coming for His own and the flood are these: 1) those who were in the ark were saved/those whom the Lord will harvest are the saved from the wrath that is coming; 2) those outside of the ark perished without hope/those who are left behind at the rapture are lost and without hope. After the Lord has removed those who are His from the earth (the rapture), then His wrath (*thumos*) will be poured out upon the earth (Revelation 16) – this is the *thumos* of God's *orge*! The rapture of the Lord's faithful ones will close the door on salvation (just as God closed the door of the ark behind Noah and his family, and everyone outside of the ark perished [Genesis 7:16, 21]); during the outpouring of God's wrath upon the earth, no one will be saved – the eternal destiny

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<sup>58</sup> This is dealt with in much more detail in the study of Revelation 14: <https://www.thenarrowtruth.com/firstfruit-and-harvests.html>.

<sup>59</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

of those who are left behind is secured (Revelation 15:8). The Lord's faithful ones have been promised a life of tribulation (*thlipsis*, John 16:33), but, through the blood of Christ, we are saved from God's wrath (*orge*, Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:10). God's *wrath* rests upon those who are disobedient (John 3:36; Colossians 3:6).

*Malice* is a desire to cause harm or pain to others, and is somewhat specific in its meaning;<sup>60</sup> whereas, the Greek, *kakia* (from which *malice* is translated), speaks more generally of an innate evil or badness that is exclusive of anything that is constructive or positive.<sup>61</sup>

*Blasphemy* (*blasphemia*) is best understood as words or actions of insult or contempt for God, or a lack of reverence for God.<sup>62</sup> Although this has been its historical meaning, and is still dominant today, it has been extended to include belittling others – the essential meaning is still there, but its application is broadened.<sup>63</sup> Couched within *blasphemy* is an attitude of contempt for its object, and therein lies the *evil* that lurks within its shadows – a product of Satan's ploys, for sure. Although *blasphemy* is typically considered to be verbal, it can certainly include actions.

*Filthy communication* is from a compound word in Greek: *aischrologia*, *aischros*, which means shameful, filthy, and base, and *logos*, of speech – talk that characterizes the world: foul language and obscenities.<sup>64</sup> This is distinctive of the children of disobedience who are functioning under the control of the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). By contrast, Paul exhorts us: “Let your speech [*logos*, word] *be* always [*pantote*, at all times] with grace [*charis*, that which brings delight or favor] ...” (Colossians 4:6).<sup>65</sup>

Paul has itemized five things that are not to be a part of how we live in this world: *wrath*, *the expression of wrath*, *hatefulness*, *slander* and *foul language*; of all of these, only the last one (*foul language*) is limited to speech. Therefore, I would link *out of your mouth* with *foul language*; although the others can all be verbalized, to limit them in this way would detract from their ability to invade the heart and mind of those who are not alert. These are to be *put off* by the child of God, we must *cease from* them – it matters not whether their expression comes through words, attitudes or actions.

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<sup>60</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/malice>.

<sup>61</sup> Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/blasphemy>; <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=blasphemy>.

<sup>63</sup> Friberg Lexicon; Strong's Online.

<sup>64</sup> Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>65</sup> Friberg Lexicon.



<sup>9</sup> Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;  
<sup>10</sup> And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

*Do not be lying to one another* – something else that is to no longer be a part of how we live. *Lie* identifies a blatant untruth, but the Greek word (*pseudomai*) also includes deceiving and misleading, which can be more subtle.<sup>66</sup> Paul explains the reason that this is to find no place in us: *you have removed the old man with his practices, and have put the new on* (literal).<sup>67</sup> There is a very good reason that what Paul has listed is no longer a part of our lives: there has been a change from the deeds of the *old man* to the righteousness and holiness of Christ. *Therefore, whoever [is] in Christ [is] a new creation; the old things passed away, indeed, you have been made new* (2 Corinthians 5:17, literal).<sup>68</sup> Among Evangelicals, there is a focus on the prayer for salvation as the key to eternal life, and an overwhelming neglect of how we are to live thereafter. However, the Scriptures are clear that all that is associated with a life without Christ has perished when we place our faith in Him; it is because the *old* is gone (accounted to be dead with Christ – Romans 6:6), that we, as a new creation, are to exhibit God’s holiness and righteousness (Ephesians 4:24).

Although we, through faith, are a *new creation* in Christ, that is not the end. Paul tells us here that this *new*, which is within a body of sinful flesh, *is being renewed toward a full knowledge in keeping with the likeness of Him Who did create* (literal).<sup>69</sup> We have been made new, but we are also continually being renewed as we live under the control and guidance of the Spirit of God. We are living in a body of flesh and in a world that is under the influence of the spirit of antichrist, therefore we must continually reckon ourselves to be dead to sin and alive unto God – free from what is dead and enslaved to the righteousness of God (Romans 6:11, 18). As we yield to the leading of God’s Spirit in obedience to His Word, we can “know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2). What the Scriptures make very clear is that there is no glory with Christ, unless there is a lifetime of obedience to Him; Evangelicals, generally speaking, cling to a two-stage “Christian” life: 1) Jesus as your Savior, which they claim will open the gates of heaven one day, and 2) Jesus as your Lord and Master, which they believe to be optional, and that such a life of obedience does nothing to secure your salvation. They piously refer to this as *relationship* and *fellowship*: *relationship* brings you into

<sup>66</sup> Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>67</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>68</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

the Body of Christ (Jesus as Savior), while *fellowship* builds upon the relationship to result in spiritual growth in the Lord (Jesus as Lord).<sup>70</sup> Unfortunately, Evangelicals do not study the Scriptures carefully enough to avoid the trap of eternal security that the devil has laid for them. John the Baptist declared the truth on this matter: *The one who is believing in the Son is having life everlasting; and the one who is disobeying the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God is abiding on him* (John 3:36, literal).<sup>71</sup> *Believing* is in the active voice and present tense – it is to be a continuous activity that is carried out by *the one*; therefore, if the *believing* should fail, then the *life everlasting* also ceases to be theirs. Hebrews 3:12 – “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief [*apistia* – no belief, faithless], in departing [*to become apostate*] from the living God.” Jesus told His disciples: *if ye are loving Me, then My commandments you must keep* (John 14:15, literal);<sup>72</sup> the reality of His statement is this: if you are not keeping His commandments, then you are not loving Him, and if you are not loving Him, then you have no part in Him – the one who is *disobeying* the Lord is under *the wrath of God!*

Through His death and resurrection, Jesus paid the debt of sin for all of humanity, from Adam to the last person to be born into this world. “And he is the propitiation [the means of forgiveness] for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world* [*kosmos*, in this case it means humanity, those who have sinned]” (1 John 2:2).<sup>73</sup> When we place our faith in the Lord Jesus for cleansing from sin, we are joining those who have been bought out of the blackness of sin and brought into the light of His spiritual kingdom. “Who hath delivered us **from** the power of darkness, and hath translated *us into* the kingdom of his dear Son ...” (Colossians 1:13); these are **not** two events, but are the two sides of the Lord’s single event of redemption for the sinner. Paul explained this very carefully to the Roman Christians: “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 [*will*] walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4).<sup>74</sup> When we place our faith in the Lord for salvation, we are identifying with Christ in His death; we are told that the just recompense for sin is death (Romans 6:23), therefore, when Christ died for sin, He paid the price for our sin. When we place our faith in Him for salvation, we are acknowledging that He bought us out of sin (He redeemed us); because He bought us out of sin, we are no longer our own but belong to Him – He is now our Lord and

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<sup>70</sup> <https://elcmatters.org/2020/05/13/relationship-and-fellowship/>.

<sup>71</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>74</sup> [https://www.ntgreek.org/learn\\_nt\\_greek/subj-purpose.htm](https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-purpose.htm).

Master. “For in that he [Jesus] died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. **Likewise** reckon ye also yourselves to be **dead indeed unto sin** [Christ died for our sin], but **alive unto God** through Jesus Christ our Lord [He lives so that we can also live in Him]” (Romans 6:10-11); “Being then made free from sin [Christ bought us out of sin], ye became the servants of [ye became enslaved to] righteousness” (Romans 6:18).<sup>75</sup> If we have been saved from the power of sin (in this life) through faith in Christ, then we are His; He is our Lord and Master, and we must live in obedience to His commands – just like He said (John 14:15).

Linked to the removal of the *old*, is: *and did put on the new, which is being renewed toward a full knowledge in keeping with the likeness of Him Who did create [the new] (literal)*.<sup>76</sup> Donning the *new man* does not automatically eliminate the yearnings of the *old man*; “... reckon [to account, or consider] ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but [*and (account that) ye are*] alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11).<sup>77</sup> To the Romans, Paul identifies that we must consider ourselves to be dead to sin (removing the *old man*), **and** we must also account ourselves to being alive to God through Christ (donning the *new man*)! Hence, we are told in our present consideration that the *new man* is continually *being renewed (anakainoumenon)* – this is God’s work of sanctification in us: growing in our expression of the righteousness of His Law through the enablement of the Spirit of God (Romans 8:4). Our role in this *renewal* is to always consider ourselves to be alive unto God, thereby affirming that we are dead to sin; this permits the Spirit to work in us to accomplish His purposes.

**<sup>11</sup> Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.**

This follows the *new man* being renewed in the knowledge of God – the *new man* who is created within us by God when we place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. *Where* refers to the state of living in the *new man* under the guidance of the Spirit of God – i.e., *in faith, in Christ and in obedience to Him!* Paul takes a moment to describe a different perspective of what it means to be in Christ. As he lists these things that are not descriptive of being *in Christ*, they may not hold much significance in our minds, but during the early days of the growth of the *ekklesia*, these could be quite important for some.

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<sup>75</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>76</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>77</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

*In Christ* there is *neither Greek nor Jew*. Indications are that Colossae's population consisted primarily of Jews and Greeks,<sup>78</sup> and so this would have been fitting for them. Paul expressed this same thought to two other groups, but with one difference: "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" (Romans 10:12); "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). It would be only speculation as to why the nationalities are reversed in this letter; of the three letters, this one was the latest to be written (60's AD, rather than 40's AD for Galatians and 50's AD for Romans). What is particularly significant, even for today, is that no preferential treatment is accorded to the Jews; yet there are many Evangelicals who covet everything Jewish, many going so far as to make a pretense of keeping the Jewish feasts. To the Romans, Paul wrote: "What advantage then hath [*of*, no *hath* in the Greek] the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles [*they were entrusted with the sayings*] of God" (Romans 3:1-2).<sup>79</sup> This follows on the heels of Paul explaining that a Jew is not a physical descendant of Abraham but one who has Abraham's faith inwardly, and circumcision is not of the flesh but of the heart (Romans 2:28-29); he is now asking, based upon what he has just taught, whether there is an advantage to being Jewish and a benefit from circumcision. His response to these questions is: great advantage, because they *were entrusted with the sayings* of God (aorist/past tense);<sup>80</sup> their advantage was that they received God's Word (the OT). Very clearly, that advantage has come to an end; the New Covenant has made access to salvation the same for everyone: in Christ, there is *neither Greek nor Jew* – there is no advantage either way.

*Circumcision nor uncircumcision* – in essence, Jew nor Gentile. Abraham was given the sign of circumcision as a reminder of God's covenant to be their God (Genesis 17:7). What the Jew considered to be the sign of their advantage in the world, is ended (Ephesians 2:11-17); Jesus removed the wall of separation from between the Jew and Gentile – they are now one!

*Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free*. *Barbarian* (the Greek: *barbaros*) strictly refers to those who utter unintelligible sounds – a foreigner, someone who was uncivilized.<sup>81</sup> The Scythians, although largely nomadic, were noted for having "house-wagons" that were pulled by oxen from place-to-place, thereby permitting

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<sup>78</sup> <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/colossae>.

<sup>79</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>80</sup> [https://www.ntgreek.org/learn\\_nt\\_greek/inter-tense.htm](https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/inter-tense.htm).

<sup>81</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

both mobility and a permanent home.<sup>82</sup> They were particularly noted as being skilled warriors, and their weaponry and effective use of horses in battle made many seek their military services. Despite being nomadic (they functioned as a confederation of tribes, rather than a single unit), the Scythians were not uncivilized, and archeology has proven them to be highly skilled craftsmen who produced musical instruments, delicate carvings in gold, as well as elaborate clothing.<sup>83</sup> The *barbarian* and *Scythian* would stand in contrast to one another; *in Christ* there is neither uncivilized nor civilized – the extent of cultural sophistication means nothing.

Likewise with *bond* nor *free*. *Bond* is from the Greek *doulos* (slave) – *in Christ*, there is neither slave nor free (*eleutheros*, independent, free of obligation).<sup>84</sup> To the Corinthians, Paul stated: *For the one who [is] in the Lord, who [is] called a slave [doulos], is a freed man [apeleutheros, someone who is freed from slavery (to sin)] of the Lord; likewise, also, he who [is] called free [eleutheros] is a slave [doulos] of Christ* (1 Corinthians 7:22, literal).<sup>85</sup> Regardless of our station in this life, we are all freed from sin in the Lord, and we are all His slaves: *And you who have been set free from sin, have become enslaved to righteousness* (Romans 6:18, literal).<sup>86</sup>

Paul's summary statement is this: "but Christ *is* all, and in all," or *but the whole and in all things, Christ!*<sup>87</sup> If we are *in Christ*, wearing the *new man*, then Christ is everything and all things to us. "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature [*creation*]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Paul also referred to this *new creation* as the *new man*: "... put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24). If we are *in Christ*, then we are a *new creation* **and** we are clothed in the *new man* whom God has created to show forth His righteousness and holiness. Yet, as we look at our lives, we also recognize that all of this *new* is being borne about in a body of flesh; it is essential, therefore, that we learn to *reckon* ourselves to be dead to sin (after all, our *old man* has been crucified with Christ – Romans 6:6) so that we are able to live in this newness of life that is ours *in Christ* (Romans 6:11)! As we learn to continually account our *old man* to be dead to sin, we are then free to live with Christ being our all – a life of faithfulness that can only be expressed through obedience to the commands of the Lord. Jesus said that if we are loving Him, then we must be living in obedience to His commands (John 14:15), and it is as we are obeying Him that we abide in His love (John 15:10).

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<sup>82</sup> <https://www.worldhistory.org/Scythians/>.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*; <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Scythian>.

<sup>84</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>85</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>86</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>87</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.



12. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

This is somewhat similar to putting the *old man* off and donning the *new man* (as in verses 9-10), except that this *put on* bears the imperative mood – a different form of the same Greek word, it is now a command to be obeyed! In other words, having already donned the *new man*, here are some additional characteristics that must become a part of our *new life in Christ*.

Paul begins by clarifying who it is to whom he is addressing this command. Yes, his audience is still the *saints* and *faithful brethren* at Colossae, but he now elaborates on who they (and we) are *in Christ*. Let's consider these carefully because they are equally applicable to everyone who is *in Christ*.

The *elect* (*eklektōi*) of God; the Greek word means those who are chosen, and in this case it is the chosen of God.<sup>88</sup> *Elect* is a term that has fallen into much confusion, and particularly so today, when the doctrines of Calvinism are becoming increasingly widespread. The Canons of Dort, the doctrinal statement of Calvinists that dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, proclaims: “Election is the unchangeable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, He hath out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of His own will, **chosen, from the whole human race**, which had fallen through their own fault from their primitive state of rectitude into sin and destruction, **a certain number of persons to redemption** in Christ ...” (emphasis added).<sup>89</sup> Calvinism leans heavily upon an exaggerated view of God's sovereignty – to the extent that they nullify the image of God within every person, and limit God's saving purpose to those individuals whom He chose before creation. In God's account of creation, we are told this: “So God created man [*adam*, mankind] in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male [*zakar*, male] and female [*n<sup>e</sup>qebah*, female] created he them” (Genesis 1:27).<sup>90</sup> We understand from this that both Adam and Eve were created *in the image of God*, which means that they had the ability to think, evaluate, reason, and to choose; God did not create our sinless forebears to be robotic, but provided them with the ability to make choices. Otherwise, God's instruction to Adam to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would have been meaningless (Genesis 2:17); God provided the warning because Adam (and Eve, after him) had the ability to choose – it is part of bearing the *image of God*. What's more, they did not lose this essential attribute

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<sup>88</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>89</sup> <https://prts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Canons-of-Dort-with-Intro.pdf>; Article 1.7.

<sup>90</sup> Strong's Dictionary.

when they sinned; when the Lord spoke with Noah **after the flood**, He instituted the death penalty because man (though sinful) still bore His image (Genesis 9:6). Therefore, for the Calvinists to claim that people will be saved because God has chosen them individually (*persons*) before creation, destroys a person's ability to evaluate, think and choose, and, more specifically, it strips people of the ability to choose to love God.

Out of this distorted view of God and humanity, comes an even greater desecration of God's Truth: Jesus did not die for the sins of all of humanity, but only for the sins of those whom God has chosen from before creation: "... Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant, should **effectually redeem** out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and **those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation ...**" (emphasis added).<sup>91</sup> Notice that their premise is that those who are *elect*, or *chosen*, by God from eternity past, have been *chosen to salvation*. Therefore, within their theology, only those whom God has chosen can be saved, and if they have been chosen, then they **will** be saved because God has predetermined it! Yet, in the same breath, they will contend this: "The cross is to be taken to every person everywhere because every person is responsible for accepting its message or rejecting it."<sup>92</sup> How can *every person* be responsible to either accept or reject the Gospel message that centers around the cross of Christ? Within their theology, God has already predetermined who will be saved, so then, how can that *responsibility* suddenly become ours? How can we be held responsible for something that we, in essence (according to their theology), have no ability to do? Even further, what possible difference could our acceptance or rejection make, since God has already predetermined who will be saved? I find it amazing that even though their theology says that God has determined from eternity past who will be saved, they will yet endeavor to justify their preaching and teaching by uttering words that are contrary to their theology.

John MacArthur makes this observation: "when false teaching goes unchallenged, it breeds more confusion and draws still more shallow and insincere people into the fold";<sup>93</sup> by *fold* he means the local congregation. Coming from within the confines of Calvinism, this doesn't make sense. According to Calvinism, there are only two groups of people: those whom God has chosen for salvation, and those whom He has destined for destruction. Since salvation is all predetermined by God, how can *false teaching* have any eternal impact? MacArthur also makes this statement: "The gospel message in all its component facts is a clear, definitive,

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<sup>91</sup> <https://prts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Canons-of-Dort-with-Intro.pdf>; Article 2.8.

<sup>92</sup> Michael Scott Horton, *Putting Amazing Back into Grace*, p. 87.

<sup>93</sup> John MacArthur, *The Truth War*, p. 45.

confident, authoritative proclamation that Jesus is Lord, and that He gives eternal and abundant life to all who *believe*.”<sup>94</sup> Although this might appear to be quite Evangelical when taking the words as they are, I am convinced that he uses this language for the very purpose of hiding his Calvinism so that he will not be estranged from the broader Evangelical community. MacArthur doesn’t really believe that God will give life to the one who comes to believe in Jesus; his theology dictates that it is only after God has worked regeneration in the heart of the one whom He has chosen that then they are able to *believe*. Within Calvinism, no one can gain eternal life by *believing* that Jesus, as the Son of God, paid the price for his sins and by living faithfully for the Lord – unless that individual is among God’s *chosen*, all is futile. That is the essence of this theology that few Calvinists will present to their audiences, lest its emptiness and contradiction of the Scriptures should be exposed.

It is interesting to see how those who drafted the canons of Calvinism sought to minimize how contrary to God’s Word their theology was, by including things that made them sound Biblically accurate. Consider this: “The death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sin, and is of infinite worth and value, **abundantly sufficient** to expiate the sins of the whole world” (emphasis added).<sup>95</sup> Undoubtedly, they knew 1 John 2:2 that says: “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*.” They acknowledge that Christ’s death is able to save all of humanity, yet God chose to limit the application of His sacrifice to those whom He had chosen to be saved. They are forever caught on the absolute sovereignty of God – He is sovereign above all things, to the point of suppressing His image that He placed within every human being. After making the above concession, they go on to say: “For this was the **sovereign** counsel, and most gracious **will and purpose** of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His Son should extend to **all the elect**, for **bestowing upon them alone** the gift of justifying faith ...” (emphasis added).<sup>96</sup> You are not able to be saved unless you are among the *chosen*. In summary, Calvinism is a flawed theology that is founded upon an unbiblical view of God and man, and, when taken to its logical end, makes God responsible for causing man to sin.<sup>97</sup> Yet it remains attractive to so many because it removes from the individual any responsibility for their eternal destiny – if they are sent to the Lake of Fire, then it’s because God determined that that’s where they were to go. Jesus told us that 1) whosoever is believing that He is the way to the Father is having everlasting life (John 3:16; 14:6), and 2) that if we remain faithful to Him unto the

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<sup>94</sup> MacArthur, *Truth*, p. 25.

<sup>95</sup> <https://prts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Canons-of-Dort-with-Intro.pdf>, Article 2.3.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, Article 2.8.

<sup>97</sup> I deal with this theology more fully here: <https://www.thenarrowtruth.com/the-tulip-of-calvinism.html>.

end, then we will be saved (Matthew 24:13). Two things that the Calvinist denies: 1) salvation is open to *whosoever* is persuaded that Jesus is the Savior and paid for his sins, and 2) salvation can be lost if unfaithfulness (disobedience) enters in (Hebrews 3:12).

The Bible tells us that the *elect* are simply those who are *in Christ*. Ephesians 1:3-4: *Worthy of praise [is] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who did bless us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ, even as He did choose us in Him before the foundation of the world ...* (Ephesians 1:3-4a, literal).<sup>98</sup> We are numbered among God's chosen, if we are *in Christ*. The key to being the *chosen*, or the *elect*, of God is to be assured that we are *in Christ*: have we placed our faith in Him (a present tense believing) **and** are we living in obedience to His commands (necessary in order to remain *in Him*). Jesus said, *if you are loving Me, then you must keep my commands* (John 14:15, literal).<sup>99</sup> Let's be sure that we have a Biblical understanding of who God's *elect* really are, so that we will not be spiritually lost for eternity because we have assumed something that proves to be untrue.

The Colossians are then addressed as *holy* and *beloved*. *Holy* (*hagios*) is an adjective, and it describes the *elect*, those who are *in Christ*; it is the emphasized characteristic of God (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8), and describes those who have been separated from this world unto Him, something that can only take place when we are *in Christ*.<sup>100</sup> *Beloved* is a participle filling the role of an adjective, and its core is from *agapao* – the verb form of *agape*, love.<sup>101</sup> As a participle, it carries some characteristics of a verb; in this case, it is in the perfect tense (a past action with ongoing consequences) and passive voice (the subject is the recipient of the action), and describes those who are loved by God. The perfect tense carries this back before creation, when God determined that it would be those who are *in Christ* who would be His *chosen* ones, and it was for those that He prepared every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3-4). Those who are *in Christ* are holy and loved!

Now we come to a list of things in which, as the *elect of God*, we are to be clothing ourselves. The first is *bowels of mercies*; in our modern use of terms, this doesn't sound all that wonderful. *Bowels* (*splagchnon*), always plural in its NT usage, refers to the organs within the abdominal cavity: heart, liver, lungs, kidneys, etc.<sup>102</sup> Within our modern context, it compares to our use of *heart*, as in that place where emotions

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<sup>98</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Strong's Online.

<sup>101</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>102</sup> Strong's Online; Abbott-Smith Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament:

<https://archive.org/details/manualgreeklexic00abborich/page/414/mode/2up?ref=ol&view=theater>.

are deeply felt. Therefore, *bowels of mercies* expresses a deep, heart-felt (using our terms) compassion; we are to exhibit a thoughtfulness and empathy for others that flows from the very core of our being.

The Greek word for *kindness* (*chrestotes*) is also translated as *goodness*; it identifies someone who is gracious, generous and gentle.<sup>103</sup>

*Humbleness of mind* comes from one Greek word: *tapeinophrosune*, which is a compound of not rising far from the ground (*tapeinos*) and the mind (*phren*).<sup>104</sup> Pride and arrogance describe the opposite of this trait; this is a genuine humility, and certainly excludes any form of feigned meekness, which is really pride in disguise.

*Meekness*, we are often told, is not *weakness*, and that is true. However, we don't typically define a word by what it isn't – so, what is *meekness*? This describes someone who is in calm control, most particularly over his own emotions, words and actions; such a person will diffuse a volatile situation rather than adding fuel to the fire. Part of that *calm* will be evident in their quiet input into a matter; such people are not loud or boisterous, and, in fact, they are not drawn to those who are. Jesus describes Himself as being *meek* (*praos*) and *lowly* (*tapeinos*) in heart (Matthew 11:29), and so invites us to be yoked together with Him and, thereby, finding rest.<sup>105</sup> As the Son of God, Jesus is the ultimate expression of *meekness* – He was unflappable in the face of the wrath of those image-bearers whom He had created.

*Longsuffering* (*makrothumian*) is from another compound Greek word: *makro*, meaning long or distant, and *thumos*, meaning anger, or wrath – literally, long tempered.<sup>106</sup> If applied in a time of trial or suffering, it speaks of endurance, steadfastness, and faithfulness; when extended to people, it is self-control and patience.<sup>107</sup> Since *longsuffering* includes the concept of *thumos*, we are again faced with understanding the distinction between *orge* (frequently translated as *wrath*) and *thumos* (most often translated as *wrath*, never as *anger*).<sup>108</sup> *Orge*, by definition, is linked to a person's character, or nature; as such, it represents an abiding emotion that is held pending a day when it will find expression. Although *orge* can be a human emotion, it is best understood as God's abiding anger against sin that has found expression in the past (Noah's flood, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, for examples) and will find its ultimate expression in the future when death (the just recompense for sin) will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation

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<sup>103</sup> Strong's Online; Gingrich Lexicon; <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/benignity>.

<sup>104</sup> Strong's Online.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Abbott-Smith Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament:

<https://archive.org/details/manualgreeklexic00abborich/page/276/mode/2up?ref=ol&view=theater>.

<sup>107</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>108</sup> Strong's Online.



20:14) – sin will be no more, and therefore, death will also be ended. *Orge* is a long-standing indignation that will find resolution through the removal of its object; God’s anger against sin will be settled when sin is no more, but, from time-to-time, He has expressed His displeasure with sin in very evident ways, and will do so with the future out-pouring of His wrath (*thumos*) upon the earth (Revelation 16:1). *Thumos*, on the other hand, is a product of *orge* that rises, finds expression, and then subsides. God destroyed the world by the flood (the expression of His anger against the sinfulness of mankind), but He followed that with a promise to never again destroy the earth with a flood of water (Genesis 9:11-13); God’s anger at sin remains unabated (*orge*), but His expression of this anger by the flood came and went (*thumos*). Nevertheless, the fact that God has not yet made a full end to sin demonstrates His *longsuffering* (His *long-anger*) toward humanity, during which He continues to extend His mercy and grace that is available through Christ.

Paul has just listed more things that are to characterize those who are *in Christ*; what is abundantly evident, is that none of these will become a part of who we are without the specific working of the Spirit of God. On the other hand, unless we desire to become more like Christ and to be renewed by the Spirit in our minds, none of these will become ours because the Spirit will not work in us unless we are willing.

**13. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.**

*Forbear* (*anechomenoi*) means to bear with, or to show self-restraint and tolerance.<sup>109</sup> However, as with all things Biblical, we must note the context for this word, lest we find “justification” for the tolerance that Evangelicals show for error and compromise today. The immediate context is *one another*, which is from one Greek word: *allelon*;<sup>110</sup> the root of this word, *allos*, speaks of a difference but of the same kind or quality; by contrast, *heteros* (also translated as *another*) identifies a difference in quality.<sup>111</sup> A couple of examples should help to make this clear. Jesus promised to have the Father send *another Comforter* (*allon parakleton*) – a Comforter different from Jesus, but like unto Him, also being a part of the Godhead (John 14:16). Paul, in admonishing the Galatians, was surprised that they were so soon removed from the Gospel, which he had brought to them, unto *another* (*eteron* – different in quality; it was a false gospel) *Gospel, which is not another* (*allo* – of the same Message that Paul proclaimed) – they were not accepting a Gospel that

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<sup>109</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>110</sup> Vine’s, “one another.”

<sup>111</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

simply came from someone other than Paul (but was true); what they were accommodating was without life – it was a perversion that needed to be rejected (Galatians 1:6-9). From this we can understand that *forbearing one another* includes no thought of being tolerant of those who promote concepts that are contrary to God’s Word. We are to show forbearance toward those who, like us, are *in Christ*.

Today, a common mantra that is piously uttered is this: we must not judge. This is a revelation as to how well professing Christians read God’s Word and consider the context in order to understand God’s instruction properly. They read Matthew 7:1 where Jesus said, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” Indeed, when you take this out of its context, it might appear that we are not to judge. However, Jesus went on to say that we are not to practice a hypocritical judgment of others; don’t judge someone for doing something that you also do: *and why are you seeing the speck in the eye of your brother but the log in your eye you are not seeing?* (Matthew 7:3, literal).<sup>112</sup> **That** is the judgment in which we are **not** to become involved; however, Jesus also declared: “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). John has told us what this means: *beloved, do not be believing every spirit, but you must be examining the spirits whether it is from God – because many false prophets have gone into the world* (1 John 4:1, literal).<sup>113</sup> The only correct method of *judging*, or *examining*, is to use God’s Word as the Standard against which everything and everyone is held – any other judgment or examination will contain a subjective element that will render it of questionable value. *Righteous judgment* can **only** come by using the Scriptures carefully – paying particular heed to the words and context.

Out of this *judge not* attitude has come the tolerance and accommodation of much error, and it is within this flawed thinking that Ecumenism has come to thrive among Evangelicals. It is only as we learn to make *righteous judgment* that we will be able to avoid error, live faithfully for the Lord, and grow in our understanding of God’s Truth. Today, many professing Christians refuse to weigh the many messages that they hear and see, against God’s Word; they hold an attitude that says, “I am the *weaker brother* whom you must not offend, lest I fall away from the Lord.” Frequently, they will attempt to use Scripture to “support” this perspective; let’s consider this position more fully, lest we become guilty of tolerating it!

There are a couple of passages to which they will refer, but probably the primary one is in Romans 14. *He who is without strength in the faith, welcome – not unto endless discussions about controversial reasoning. Indeed, the one is believing all things to eat, and the other, who is without strength, is eating vegetables. The one*

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<sup>112</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>113</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

who is eating must not disdain the one who is not eating, and the one who is not eating must not criticize the one who is eating, for God did receive him (Romans 14:1-3, literal).<sup>114</sup> Paul's opening statement is somewhat difficult to express accurately, so permit me to expand on it. *Welcome* (*receive*) is from *proslambanesthe*, which has *to take (lambano)* as its central concept;<sup>115</sup> in this case, it is more than simply receiving someone who is *weak* into the local fellowship – he is to be received with a specific purpose in mind, namely, to be given protective support while in this state of vulnerability (1 Thessalonians 5:14). We are to welcome the one who is *without strength in the faith*, but that is not the end of the matter; he is to be supported (but not in his weakness) so as to prevent his possible failure in the faith, **and** to lead him into a place of strength and maturity. We *receive* the weak in order to come alongside of them and help them to grow in their walk with the Lord; we are warned against the opposite: immersing him in endless, fruitless debates about minutia (things that really don't matter) that would only sow confusion and leave him in a state of being *without strength*. Jesus identified this very thing within the scribes and Pharisees: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes [*are tithing* (present tense)] of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted [*forsaken*] the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone [*and the other not neglecting*]. Ye blind guides, which strain at [*are filtering* (present tense)] a gnat, and swallow [*swallowing* (present tense)] a camel” (Matthew 23:23-24).<sup>116</sup> Jesus did not condemn the religious leaders for tithing of their backyard herbs, but likened that to filtering a gnat out of their wine (focusing on the minutia), even while they were swallowing a camel (neglecting the essence of the law) – both the gnat and the camel are unclean under the Law of Moses (Leviticus 11:4, 23); so filtering out the gnat was not wrong, but their acceptance of the camel proved that they did not understand the very Law that they professed to uphold.

This reminds me of what many professing Christians are involved in today: they have reduced the narrow message of the Gospel to a philosophy that they can banter about – thereby never coming to grips with the Narrow Way that so few will find (Matthew 7:14). Unfortunately, such a *philo* (love) *sophia* (wisdom) does not focus on the wisdom that comes from God, but is a human wisdom that is accommodating of all sorts of error – there is an enthrallment with the endless debates that exclude “thus saith the Lord.”<sup>117</sup> This is the ultimate expression of: “Ever learning, and never

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<sup>114</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; [Complete Word Study of the New Testament](https://archive.org/details/completewordstud0000unse/page/902/mode/2up), #1253 and #1261: <https://archive.org/details/completewordstud0000unse/page/902/mode/2up>.

<sup>115</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Strong's Online.

<sup>116</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; [Vine's "omitted."](#)

<sup>117</sup> <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=philosophy>.

able to come to the [full] knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:7).<sup>118</sup> The solid food of the Scriptures is reduced to nebulous concepts that are enjoyed in theory, but serve no practical purpose – certainly not in promoting growth in the Lord.

The thrust of the passage in Romans 14 is that we are not to be a *stumblingblock* to those who are weaker in the faith; if our maturity in the faith causes someone to falter in their walk with the Lord, then we are in error – not in what we have done, but in that we have not been aware of how our actions have impacted others. However, that is not to say that we are to live at the spiritual level of the weakest member, but rather, we are to come alongside of them in order to encourage them to grow and mature in Christ – we noted this earlier as we looked at Paul’s opening statement in Romans 14. His conclusion is this: for the sake of food, do not destroy God’s work in someone else; don’t do anything that would cause a brother in the Lord to stumble, to sin, or to be without strength (Romans 14:20-21). We must be alert for those who may be offended by our maturity in Christ so that we can help them to mature in the faith.

Our *forbearing* (tolerance) is to be extended to those who are growing in their faith, not those who are still sipping the milk of the Word after many years of being a “Christian.” *For everyone who is partaking of milk [is] inexperienced in the word of righteousness, for he is a baby; but for the mature is the solid food, because of exercise they have disciplined the senses so as to have discernment of good and also evil* (Hebrews 5:13-14, literal).<sup>119</sup> I’ve encountered someone who professed to have been a Christian for over 60 years, yet there was no appetite for the solid food of Scripture – anything beyond the milk of the Word, that which they had sipped for all of those years, was deemed to be too deep and confusing; the reality was that comfort was found in the familiar, and everything outside of that was, in fact, rejected. Unfortunately, for such persons, they have no Biblical discernment because they have not exercised their minds to understand more and more of the Lord and His Word (we are commanded to grow [2 Peter 3:18]) – they have plateaued at a very immature level, with no desire for growth. It’s as though they have been convinced that they are okay for eternity (probably by their favored preacher or teacher), and they envision themselves coasting into the grandeur of God’s glory. Our *forbearance* must **never** extend to accommodating such error; we must do our utmost to lift such a one out of their state of spiritual delusion to the place where they can enjoy a living and maturing relationship with the Lord Who paid the price for our sins!

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<sup>118</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>119</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

Returning to our text, *forgiving one another* does not quite catch the essence of the Greek. *Forgiving* is from *charizomenoi*, which brings together the concepts of freely giving and grace, or favor; on the other hand, the primary Greek word translated as *forgive* is a form of *aphimui*, which means to send away, or to let go.<sup>120</sup> The word in our text is better understood as freely extending favor to someone; *charis*, which is apparent in the Greek word, speaks of favor, grace, or that which brings joy or pleasure.<sup>121</sup> Therefore, *being gracious among yourselves* more accurately expresses the Greek.

Let's consider a literal translation of the remainder of the verse: *if someone has a complaint against anyone, just as Christ freely extended grace to you, so also you.*<sup>122</sup> Paul presents, in this verse, the favor that the *elect of God* are to extend toward those who are *in Christ*; we are to show tolerance, couched within a gracious attitude, toward our fellow saints. However, such patience and grace must **never** become an excuse for accommodating error – that is not showing grace to the one who is caught in error. Then, too, we must realize that for those who are not *caught* in error but have chosen that which does not align itself with God's Word, until they come to recognize the error of that which they have chosen, there is nothing that anyone can do – and that unless they come to a place of repentance, they will perish in their error. In this, Jesus is our example: He taught using parables because the religious leaders of the Jews had calloused hearts, their ears were closed and they had shut their eyes to His truth (Matthew 13:14-15). These Jewish leaders' minds were filled with their well-honed application of the Law of Moses that served to establish their positions over the people (error); although Jesus freely confronted them regarding their errors (Matthew 23, for example), He did not override the choices that they made. In the same way, if we have chosen to follow error, God will not force us to choose His truth, and there is a very fundamental principle for this: we have been created in His image, and part of that is the ability to think, reason, and make choices – if we have lost our ability to choose, then His image in us has been breached. God's Word is clear; despite being sinful creatures, His image in us has not been lost (Genesis 9:6; James 3:9), and we still hold the ability to think, reason and choose. "...whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7) – the *sowing* represents the choices that we make; the *reaping* is based upon the choices that we have made; if we desire to have a godly harvest, then we must make godly choices. We are to be gracious toward those who are *in Christ*; for those who are struggling to account the *old man* as being dead to sin, we must come alongside of them and lift them up to life in Him (Romans 6:11). Being gracious does not overlook failure

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<sup>120</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>121</sup> Strong's Online.

<sup>122</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.



or weakness, but serves to lead such as these to a place of being *overcomers* in the Lord.

**14. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.**

*And, in addition to all of these, the love, which is the bond of full completeness* (literal).<sup>123</sup> The translators have added the words *put on* that are not in the Greek; in this case, they have correctly made the connection with verse 12, where Paul enjoins the Colossians, and us, to clothe ourselves in that which is fitting for a child of God. The pinnacle of all that Paul has outlined is *charity*, or love (Greek *agapen*); a love that is the result of a conscious evaluation and choice.<sup>124</sup> This is **not** the product of stimulated emotions – it does not spring from how we feel, but is a choice that we make that will govern our attitude and actions. As Paul described the singular fruit of the Spirit for the Galatians, this was the first characteristic (Galatians 5:22); it is this love that forms the theme of 1 Corinthians 13. This is the love that God has for humanity – a love that saw *the Word* choose to come to this earth for the purpose of being the Sacrifice for sin (John 1:14, 3:16; 1 John 2:2). God chose to love us, even sinful mankind; as we, who have been created in His image, place our faith in the provision of the Lord Jesus, so we choose to love Him – it is an act of our will, not a product of our emotions.

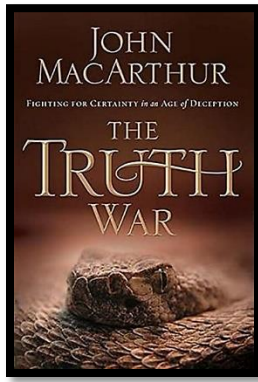
In light of this, let's consider a part of the parable of the sower and the seed that Jesus taught. He identified the Word that fell upon rocky soil this way: “They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive [*accepting*] the word with joy [*delight*]; and these have no root, which for a while believe [*are believing*], and in time of temptation [*trial*] fall away [*are becoming apostate*]” (Luke 8:13).<sup>125</sup> Those with rocky soil, accepted the Word of God with great joy – everything is wonderful and they *are believing*, but when they face a time of testing, their emotional response changes and they become apostate. Two things that must be noted here (both of which are denied by many within the Evangelical community): 1) those with rocky soil are born again – they *are believing*; 2) when they *fall away* (*are falling away*, present tense), the Greek is *aphistantai* (*are becoming apostate*) – you cannot apostatize from something of which you have never been a part.<sup>126</sup> It is on this latter point that even John MacArthur stumbles. He identifies the essence of apostasy as “hearing the truth, knowing what it is, **professing to accept it**, and then finally

<sup>123</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Gingrich Lexicon.

<sup>124</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.



rejecting it” (emphasis added).<sup>127</sup> *Professing to accept* the truth of Christ is **not** the same as accepting His truth, and it does **not** make anyone a Christian; there is a tendency today to receive someone as a Christian if he says that he is, but such a profession does not make it so. Unless there is living evidence of obedience to the Lord, such a profession remains hollow and worthless. For such a one to step away from Christianity (loosely speaking) into the world, is **not** apostasy – that is merely living out the reality of his heart! Therein is the rub for

men like MacArthur, who also wrote: “Can a genuine Christian fall away from the faith and become an apostate? No.”<sup>128</sup> If you believe in the eternal security, or the perseverance of a believer in Christ, then you are faced with redefining apostasy (which MacArthur tries to do). An apostate (within the Biblical context) can only be the one who has been born again by the Spirit of God and then turns away from the faith of Christ. Consider a few definitions of apostasy: “‘renunciation, abandonment or neglect of established religion,’ from ... Greek *apostasia* for earlier *apostasis* ‘revolt, defection’”;<sup>129</sup> “abandonment of a previous loyalty”;<sup>130</sup> “a total desertion, or departure from one’s faith or religion.”<sup>131</sup> Apostasy is turning away from something to which there has been a total commitment; *professing to accept* does not reflect such a commitment, but rather indicates an element of deception – they want to appear as having *accepted*, when they really haven’t. The *rocky soil* hearers were committed (they were actively believing, it was not a façade) until they faced a trial that caused them to fall away, to abandon the Word – that is apostasy, from which there is no recovery (Hebrews 6:4-6).

Paul refers to the *agape* (love) as being the *bond of full completeness*. *Bond* is from the Greek *sundesmos* (singular); the same word is used in Colossians 2:19 in conjunction with *joints*, which we likened to faith (*joints*) and obedience (*bands*, it is plural there).<sup>132</sup> This *agape*, a love that is a function of choice and not emotions, is **the** bond that binds everything together that we have in Christ. Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15): if you are loving (*agapate*, verb form of *agape*) Me, then you must be living in obedience (*teresate* (*keep*), imperative mood) to My commands.<sup>133</sup> There is an unbreakable association between loving the Lord and obeying Him; James makes the same link between *faith* and *obedience*

<sup>127</sup> MacArthur, *Truth*, p. 64.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, p. 43.

<sup>129</sup> <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=apostasy>.

<sup>130</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/apostasy>.

<sup>131</sup> <https://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/apostasy>.

<sup>132</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>133</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

(James 2:17), from which we can deduce that if we have *faith* in the Lord, then we are *loving* Him – for both yield a life of obedience! Earlier we noted that *faith* in the Lord, and *obedience* to Him (*faithfulness*), yields spiritual *growth* in Him; through faith and obedience (a *love* for the Lord) comes an ever increasing spiritual maturity (*full completeness*).

**15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.**

*And the peace of God must be ruling in your hearts, to which also you have been called in one Body, and you are to be thankful* (literal).<sup>134</sup> Let's begin our examination of this verse by ensuring that we understand the word *peace*. The Greek word is *eirene*, and speaks particularly of an inner rest and harmony that comes from being reconciled with God. Isaiah prophesied of Jesus as the *Prince of Peace* (Isaiah 9:6) – the *sar shalom*, the One Who will bring fulfillment and righteousness to mankind; *shalom*, mostly translated as *peace*, speaks of wholeness, fulfillment and harmony, often extending to include the thought of health, prosperity and safety.<sup>135</sup> When the birth of Jesus was announced, the angel proclaimed “on earth peace [*eirene*], good will toward men” (Luke 2:14). Yet Jesus said, “Think not that I am come to send [*cast*] peace [*eirene*] on [*over*] earth: I came not to send [*cast*] peace [*eirene*], but a sword [*machairan*, used figuratively for hostility]” (Matthew 10:34).<sup>136</sup> Jesus went on to explain: “For I am come to set a man at variance [*to divide in two, a man*] against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes [*enemies*] shall be they of his own household” (Matthew 10:35-36);<sup>137</sup> anyone who places his family ahead of his relationship with the Lord, and is unwilling to follow the Lord, bearing his cross, is unworthy, or not deserving, of the Lord (Matthew 10:37-38). If you place the Lord as your priority in life and endeavor to live in keeping with His commands, you can rest assured that there will be family members (and others) who will turn away from you – you don't even have to explain your changes, it's like they can smell it. I'm reminded of Paul's words to the Corinthians: *for we are a fragrance of Christ to God, among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing: to the one, an odor of death unto death, and to the other, the fragrance of life unto life, and with regard to these, who [is] able?* (2 Corinthians 2:15-16,

<sup>134</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>135</sup> [Theological Wordbook of the OT #2401](#); Strong's Online.

<sup>136</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

literal).<sup>138</sup> If we are following Christ in obedience, we will exude an odor of life to those who are also *in Christ*, but an odor of death to those who are not *in Him*; this is not something that we consciously do – with our eyes fixed on Christ, it is there and others will notice!

As Jesus explained to His disciples that He would be leaving them, He provided them with this assurance: *these things I have spoken to you in order that in Me you will have peace; in the world you are having affliction, but take courage, I have conquered the world* (John 16:33, literal).<sup>139</sup> In the midst of the oppression and tribulation that comes from being in this world but not of this world, Jesus assured His disciples (and, therefore, us as well) that His Word was given so that *in Him* they (and we) will have *peace*. Even though family and friends will turn against us because of our commitment to the Lord, He is our peace! His peace is ours as long as we remain *in Him*, even as we are suffering from being in the world.

*Rule* (from the Greek, *brabeuto*) means to be the judge or umpire, and so to preside over, or to control.<sup>140</sup> It is in the present tense (this is to be a continuous action), active voice (**God's peace**, as the subject, is to be the controlling influence in our hearts), and imperative mood – this is where this phrase becomes interesting. *Peace* is the subject, and *ruling* is the verb and a command; *peace* cannot respond to an order, therefore it is we who must ensure that we remain *in Him* so that His peace will be ours. We are to make certain that the peace of God is continuously uppermost in our hearts; again, this is only possible through the work of the Spirit of God within us.

In almost all of the epistles that we have in our NT, *peace* is used as part of the greetings that open the letter, and, in many cases, it was also a part of the closing. As such, it is used in a comparable manner to the Hebrew *shalom*, which, as we noted earlier, is much broader than *peace*. However, let's consider some more specific uses of *peace*.

When Paul explained to the Ephesians what Jesus had accomplished through His death and resurrection, he made this observation: “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he [Christ] is our peace [*eirene*], who hath made both one [the Jew (*nigh*) and the Gentile (*far off*) are brought together into one – harmony, *peace*], and hath broken down the middle wall [*barrier*] of partition [*separation*] *between us*; Having abolished [destruction by replacement, *caused to cease*, the New Covenant replacing the Old] in his flesh the

<sup>138</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Gingrich Lexicon.

<sup>139</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace [*eirene*]" (Ephesians 2:13-15).<sup>141</sup> The barrier that stood between the Jew and the Gentile was the Law of Moses; Jesus said that He did not come to remove the Law, but to complete it (Matthew 5:17). Through His death and resurrection, He completed the Law of Moses and brought it to an end – that *barrier* has been replaced by an open Door to the Father for everyone. The superiority that the Jews felt toward the Gentiles is now without merit; both must now come to the Father through the Lord Jesus – the Way of peace is the same for both!

As Paul taught the Corinthians regarding marriages where one spouse has become a follower of Christ, he made this observation: "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart [*is separating, then permit him to be departing*]. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases*: but God hath called us to peace [*eirene; in peace God has called us*]" (1 Corinthians 7:15).<sup>142</sup> In the midst of separation and turmoil, God is our peace. As Jesus began to speak to His disciples about His departure, He said: "Peace [*eirene*] I leave [*am leaving*] with you, my peace [*eirene*] I give [*am giving*] unto you ..." (John 14:27a); Jesus presents this as a fact (both are in the indicative mood) – His peace is given to us when we are *in Him*. It only follows that this *peace* is also one of the evidences of the presence of the Spirit of God within us (Galatians 5:22).

Returning to our text, we are told that it is to the *peace of God* that we have been called in His Body; when we are *in Christ*, we not only have *peace with God* (for we are reconciled with Him through Christ), but we also have *His peace* within. Notice that Paul clarifies that we are in *one Body*; through Jesus' sacrifice, saints from all of the ages are brought together into One. After identifying a few of the many faithful saints of the OT, the writer of Hebrews draws this conclusion: *concerning us, God did provide something preferable, in order that, without us, they* [the OT saints] *are not complete* (Hebrews 11:40, literal).<sup>143</sup> Christ is building only **one** Body!

Finally, we have this: *and thankful ye must be becoming*. Gratitude is to characterize who we are. Paul has just presented a long list of traits that need to be ours as we live *in Christ*, and this is the ribbon that holds it all together. Our gratitude must be to God Who makes all of this possible through His Spirit Who is dwelling within us.

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<sup>141</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>142</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.



<sup>16</sup>. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

*The word of Christ is to be living in you abundantly in all wisdom; teaching and warning one another with psalms and songs of praise and spiritual songs; with thanks, singing in your heart to the Lord (literal).*<sup>144</sup> There is one imperative in this verse: *dwell*, or *is to be living*, and the command is that we must have the *word of Christ* in us completely. When Jesus comes to establish His millennial reign, we are told that one of His many names is *the Word of God* (Revelation 19:13), and John testified: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1) – it was this eternal *Word* Who took on a body of flesh in order to become the Sacrifice for the sins of humanity (John 1:14). The Scriptures that we have today are the *Word of Christ*: the OT looked forward, through the promises of God, to the One Who was coming to bring cleansing from sin; the NT tells us of Christ Who came, His ministry on earth, and the New Covenant that He implemented through His shed blood. Indeed, “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God [*theopneustos*, literally, *God-breathed*], and *is* profitable for doctrine [*instruction*], for reproof [*elegchos*, identifying error with a view to imparting truth], for correction [restoring truth, the result of *reproof*], for instruction [*paideian*, rooted in the training and education of children] in righteousness: That the man of God may be [*is*, as a purpose clause, the subjunctive becomes a statement of fact] perfect [*artios*, *exactly right*], thoroughly furnished [*fully equipped*] unto all good works [what we have been created by God, *in Christ*, to do (Ephesians 2:10)]” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).<sup>145</sup> We are to be growing in our understanding of the Lord (2 Peter 3:18), which can only come through an increasing knowledge of the Word of God.

*Wisdom (sophia)* within this context is not referring to human wisdom that finds expression in various philosophies (as we have already seen); rather, this is the *wisdom* that the Psalmist spoke of: “The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom” (Psalm 111:10). *Beginning (re’shiyth)* means the starting place, or the first, but it also refers to the foundation of wisdom – that which must be laid down first.<sup>146</sup> It is only as we have a proper reverence for the Lord that our growing understanding of His Word will flourish to His glory; without this essential foundation, theologies and philosophies (the musings of men) will multiply. We must be vigilant lest we become convinced by the thinking and eloquence of those who promote a love of

<sup>144</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Gingrich Lexicon.

<sup>145</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Strong’s Online.

<sup>146</sup> TWOT, #2097.

human wisdom (philosophy) – a God-based wisdom will help to protect us from such a disaster.

Paul goes on to explain how this *Word of Christ* is to be expressed through the avenue of music: *psalms*, *hymns* and *spiritual songs*.

*Psalms* – When we think of *psalms*, our minds go immediately to the book of Psalms; the Hebrew name for this book is *Praises*,<sup>147</sup> and the primary meaning of the Hebrew word is *melody*.<sup>148</sup> The Greek word *psalmos*, literally means to touch sharply, pull or twang with the fingers on a musical instrument (the *melody* from the Hebrew), and later came to be a song that was sung to the harp.<sup>149</sup> It is evident that the word primarily denotes music (vocal or instrumental), and, within the context of Scripture, it is directed as praise to the Lord.

*Hymns* – a song of praise to God.<sup>150</sup> The distinguishing feature of the *psalm* is that its first use was as a song on a stringed instrument; *hymn* focuses on the human voice singing in praise to God.

*Spiritual songs* – *songs (odais)* is a generic word that can refer to any kind of song, hence it is qualified here as referring specifically to those that are *spiritual*.<sup>151</sup>

Paul writes that we are to use *psalms*, *hymns*, and *spiritual songs* as tools to impart knowledge (*teaching*) and to issue warnings (*admonishing*). In other words, as we sing, or listen to singing, within this context, the words must carry the truth of God’s Word – as instruction, godly comfort and exhortation. What is evident is that there is no thought given to entertainment, yet that is a huge part of modern “Christian” singing. The music within today’s “church” has lost sight of Paul’s guiding words to the Colossians, and John’s call to separation: “Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him (1 John 2:15). So-called “Christian music” has not only been influenced by the popular music of the world, but it has literally absorbed every aspect of the world’s music. We are now at a point in time when it is deemed to be acceptable to take any worldly genre of music (pop, jazz, rock and roll, punk, hip-hop, heavy metal, etc.), place the word “Christian” in front of it, and, by simply adding some “Christian” lyrics, you suddenly have a widely acceptable Christian musical style.<sup>152</sup> Interestingly, rock music is typically described as being a complex fusion of gospel,

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<sup>147</sup> TWOT, #558.

<sup>148</sup> BDB.

<sup>149</sup> [https://archive.org/details/greekenglishlexi00lidd\\_9/page/1752/mode/2up?q=%22col.+3%3A16%22](https://archive.org/details/greekenglishlexi00lidd_9/page/1752/mode/2up?q=%22col.+3%3A16%22).

<sup>150</sup> <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=hymn>; <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hymn>.

<sup>151</sup> Vine’s, “song.”

<sup>152</sup> [http://www.christianmusic.com/christian\\_music\\_genres.htm](http://www.christianmusic.com/christian_music_genres.htm).

country, jazz and R & B (rhythm and blues) genres,<sup>153</sup> with a strong black influence.<sup>154</sup>

However, what we find within the broad category of rock music is a dark side that runs contrary to the godly music that Paul teaches is to be a part of our lives *in Christ*. The 20<sup>th</sup> century began with a generally accepted cultural norm that still bore some resemblance of the godly standards of the Bible, but music became a weapon in the hand of the devil to destroy this morality. It is openly admitted that “the emergence of rock and roll challenged these societal norms by representing freedom, self-expression, and rebellion against authority.”<sup>155</sup> It has so thoroughly permeated modern musical genres (including the *psalms, hymns and spiritual songs* of the “church”), that it has been accepted as the *new normal* among Evangelicals – the music enjoyed by today’s Christians is, for the most part, of the world. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses [spiritually speaking], know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4). Spiritual adultery, or fornication, describes someone who is *in Christ*, but who begins to dabble in the things of the world – such a love is hostility toward God, and, without early repentance, will lead to apostasy. The broad acceptance of the rock and roll influence on “Christian” music has, in the past, softened the attitude of many to compromise, and, frequently, to the acceptance of error. I say *the past* because, among Evangelicals today, there is no longer a twinge of conscience regarding this compromised music, and the style of music is considered to be a choice – neither good nor bad. The music of rebellion against authority is being enjoyed by many as they lift their hands in “praise to God” – what contradiction abides in the minds of those who claim Christ even as they dishonor Him!

Paul’s summary statement is this: *with thanks, singing in your heart to the Lord*.<sup>156</sup> What should be understood is that our thankfulness to the Lord must be expressed in a manner that is pleasing to Him (both lyrically and musically), which immediately eliminates anything that is patterned after the world. Yet we find very popular Evangelical musicians, like Bill and Gloria Gaither, who favor the variety of “Christian music” today.<sup>157</sup> From this we can safely deduce that Gaither, and those of like mind, have bought into the concept of music



Bill & Gloria Gaither

<sup>153</sup> <https://stacker.com/music/history-rock-n-roll>.

<sup>154</sup> [https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Origins\\_of\\_rock\\_and\\_roll](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Origins_of_rock_and_roll).

<sup>155</sup> <https://www.liveabout.com/what-is-rock-music-2898293>.

<sup>156</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Gingrich Lexicon.

<sup>157</sup> <https://americansongwriter.com/the-gaithers-a-strong-team-in-gospel-music/>.

being neutral, yet even among those who profess that any musical style can be used to communicate God's message (they claim that His truth is only present in the lyrics), there are some who will grudgingly admit that music "can arouse emotions and induce physical actions"<sup>158</sup> – that is **not** neutral! The essence of the music-is-neutral argument, as near as I can determine, is that it provides those who desire to be looked upon as being Christians, with an excuse to use any musical style without any consideration for what it is actually communicating. In truth, a very large portion of modern "Christian music" is not honoring to the Lord: the lyrics are too frequently lacking any Biblical basis, and the music is of the world; how do these so-called Christians expect to communicate God's Truth through superficial lyrics and worldly music? In short, they cannot!

Unless singing with gratitude to the Lord comes from a heart that is *in Christ* and is earnestly living in obedience to Him, it will not be acceptable. Music is a volatile subject in these days, yet we must not allow anything that is not pleasing to the Lord to remain in our lives. What we sing and how we sing it, are both very important if we desire to exalt the Lord. Once again, we must be alert and vigilant!

**17. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.**

*And everything that you [singular] may be doing in word or in deed [that which flows out of our faith in the Lord (obedience, holiness, righteousness)], all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to the God and Father through Him (literal).*<sup>159</sup> As we noted above, our singing is to be done with *gratitude* to the Lord; here our thanks is extended to include all that we say and do, and it is to be done in the name of the Lord.

James tells us: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:26). We have come to understand that faith and works are two sides of the same coin (so to speak); unless works, in keeping with the faith that we have in the Lord, are present in our lives, our faith *is dead*. Therefore, faith in the Lord **requires** actions that demonstrate that faith: obedience to His commands, and out of that will flow the expression of His righteousness and holiness. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep [from *tereo*, give heed to (also a command)] my commandments" (John 14:15);<sup>160</sup> unless we are living in obedience to the commands of the Lord, there is no evidence of our love for Him. Likewise, unless we demonstrate an active

<sup>158</sup> <https://worshipleader.com/leadership/is-music-morally-neutral/>.

<sup>159</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

obedience to the Lord, our professed faith in Him is *dead*! Jesus taught this very clearly: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied **in thy name**? and **in thy name** have cast out devils? and **in thy name** done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, **I never knew you**: depart from me, ye that work iniquity [literally, *lawlessness*; wickedness]” (Matthew 7:21-23).<sup>161</sup> Jesus identifies those who have proclaimed His truth, have cast demons out, and have performed miracles, all in His name, yet He *never knew* them. *Knew*, in this case (*egnon*), finds its root in the Greek *ginosko*, which includes the thought that there is a relationship between the one who is knowing and the object that is known.<sup>162</sup> In this application, however, Jesus (the One Who is knowing) states very clearly that such a relationship has *never* existed, and, therefore, their works are deemed to be *wickedness* – no matter how spiritual they might have appeared to be. In essence, these workers were missing the key ingredient of *faith* – that which would have brought them into a relationship with the Lord was lacking. Without this relational *faith*, their works are of no value, for they are not works of obedience – they are like the works of Cain, who sought to impress the Lord with what **he** had done.

This provides us with a warning that we must take heed that we are not unduly influenced (deceived) by the words of those who seemingly carry out activities in the name of the Lord, but whose heart does not belong to the Lord. Jesus said, “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me” (Matthew 15:8). John provided some very necessary instruction on this matter: *Beloved, to every spirit you must not be giving credence, but you must be examining the spirits, whether from God it is, because many false prophets have gone out into the world* (1 John 4:1, literal).<sup>163</sup> It is only as we are carefully testing what we see and hear according to God’s Word, under the guidance of the Spirit, that we will be able to discern the error in those who appear to be very spiritual.

In all things, we are to be giving thanks to *the God and Father* by way of Christ. We just learned that we are to sing with thankfulness in our hearts to the Lord; this is now broadened to include all things. There are a couple of things here that, although they may not be definitive, serve to support other Scriptures – if we are prepared to read this passage carefully.

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<sup>161</sup> Vine’s, “iniquity.”

<sup>162</sup> Vine’s, “knew.”

<sup>163</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.



First of all, we are to be giving thanks to *the God and Father*. It was when Jesus referred to God as His Father that the Jewish leaders took great offence: “But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto [*until now is working*], and I work [*I also am working*]. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God” (John 5:17-18).<sup>164</sup> With the incarnation of the *Word*, God became a Father to the Lord Jesus Christ, but that did not do anything to make Jesus any less God – the religious leaders of the Jews recognized this, and they were incensed because this made Him *equal with God*. However, through His sacrifice, Jesus opened this relationship with His Father to all who have faith in Him. After His resurrection, Jesus said to Mary Magdalene: “I ascend unto my Father, and **your Father**; and *to my God, and your God*” (John 20:17b). Through Christ, we are able to enter into a new relationship with our Creator. In a truly unique way, God was the Father of Jesus, but as we establish a relationship with the Lord Jesus through faith, God also becomes *our Father*. What a huge basis for thanksgiving!

Secondly, we come to God, our Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus made it abundantly clear: *I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one is coming to the Father except through Me* (John 14:6, literal).<sup>165</sup> Yes, we have access to God, but it is **only** through Jesus. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14). The *Word* took a body of flesh in order to identify with the humanity whom He had come to earth to provide release from sin (John 1:14); by this means, He was able to empathize with us, because He confined Himself to His physical body – He was no less eternal God, but was fully God and fully human. *For we do not have a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but Who has experienced in all respects according to [our] likeness – apart from sin; accordingly, may we be coming with freedom to the throne of grace in order to receive mercy, and to find grace in timely help* (Hebrews 4:15-16, literal).<sup>166</sup> Jesus experienced the limitations of the human body, but He was not born with the sin-nature that we inherit from our father, Adam – He was conceived by the Spirit of God (Luke 1:35). Therefore, being fully human, Jesus experienced all of the temptations that come to us, yet, being fully God, He remained completely without sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). When Jesus told His disciples that He is the only way that anyone is able to come to the Father, He was revealing that He was going to become the perfect sacrificial Lamb Who would restore fellowship between God and those who place their faith in His

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<sup>164</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.

sacrifice – He had come to earth to fulfill God’s promise to Satan in Genesis 3:15 (Hebrews 2:14). What greater reason could there be for gratitude than to know that Jesus paid the price of death so that we (humanity) are now able to come to God *through Him*. It is through Jesus that we have the *freedom* to bring anything before God our Father; the Greek word *parresias*, shown as *boldly* in Hebrews 4:16 by the KJV translators, does include an element of confidence, but excludes any thought of the fearlessness contained within our modern concept of *bold*.<sup>167</sup> We must **never** lose a strong sense of reverence (fear) for the Lord, nor lose sight of the fact that it is **only** through Christ that we can even come before the Lord with our concerns. We must continually account ourselves as being dead to sin **and** alive to obedience to the commands of the Lord (Romans 6:11, 18). In our obedience to God, we are to be grateful to Him for all that He has done for us, and will do, as we remain faithful to Him. Jesus said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

**18. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.**

Paul now moves into family relationships, beginning with the wife and husband. *Wives, be submitting to your own husbands as is proper in the Lord* (literal).<sup>168</sup> When the Lord first created the woman, He said: “... I will make him [Adam] an help [assistant] meet [equal and adequate] for him” (Genesis 2:18b).<sup>169</sup> From this we understand that the wife is to be a helper to the husband, but that does not, in any way, suggest that she is beneath him;<sup>170</sup> what the Lord did when He stated His intentions for Adam, was to present the roles that Adam and his helper were to fill within the marriage relationship that He was about to create. Paul used the word *submitting* (*hupotassesthe*; KJV, *submit yourselves*) in the middle voice, which means that it is the wives who are to be placing themselves under the leadership of their husbands, and they will also be recipients of the benefits for doing so.<sup>171</sup> This does **not** give the husband the right to lord it over his wife; the *assistant* that God made for man is *equal* to him and *adequate* for him. However, it **does** mean that the wife is to be submitting to the husband’s lead – not the other way around.

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<sup>167</sup> Friberg Lexicon; <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bold>.

<sup>168</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>169</sup> Brown, Driver, Briggs Lexicon, *Bibleworks 8*.

<sup>170</sup> TWOT #1598.

<sup>171</sup> Strong’s Online.

In the failure of Adam and Eve, it was Eve who took the lead and Adam submitted to her suggestion of eating the forbidden fruit: Eve “took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Genesis 3:6b). In the Lord’s judgment of Eve, He said this: “...thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Genesis 3:16b); in essence, God reinforced His role for the wife in the marriage relationship: the husband is to have the responsibility of leading, and the wife is to submit to him. The context for this is that the wife is still *equal* and *adequate*; the husband’s role in marriage will soften what some might consider to be a harsh determination for the wife.

Although Paul follows a similar pattern to the instructions that he gave to the Ephesians, he does so without any explanation; it seems that he is nearing the end of this letter, and he has begun to touch on many subjects without any details (something that characterizes many of his letters). To the Ephesians, he provided this further clarification: “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing” (Ephesians 5:23-24). By providing this spiritual basis for the marriage relationship, Paul draws it to a much higher level than simply a man and a woman, and thereby he adds a significance to it that is important to understand. Marriage is an illustration of Christ and His *ekklesia*, and the wife’s submission to her husband is to follow that of the Body of Christ to Christ, as the Head.

Paul does include an important qualification to the wife’s submission: it must be what is proper in the Lord. The pattern for the wife, in marriage, is the *ekklesia* and Christ, but, beyond that, the wife is also in a submissive relationship with Christ. Therefore, it is very clear that the wife’s submission to her husband can **never** go beyond that which is right before the Lord. In other words, the wife is under no obligation to submit to her husband if what he is asking of her contravenes God’s Word, because she is still under submission to the Lord! In essence, if the husband is requiring that which is against the Lord, then the wife’s obedience must be to the Lord, and not to her husband; in this case, the husband has contravened his role as leader of his wife by not living in submission to the Lord. Nevertheless, the wife must be very certain that she is understanding the Lord’s desire in this matter; since the husband and wife are *equal*, neither a dictatorial leadership nor a blind submission are God’s desire for marriage.

**19. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.**

This balances the wife's submission to her husband; it is noteworthy that the Lord has never told the husband to *rule* his wife. *Husbands, be loving [your] wives, and do not become angry with them* (literal).<sup>172</sup> *Loving* has its source in *agape*, that love that flows as an act of the will, rather than being dependent upon favorable circumstances. The husband is to have an unending love for his wife; a love that will see him sacrifice what is his to ensure that his wife's needs are met. Once again, Paul's letter to the Ephesians provides the basis for the husband's role in marriage: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it ..." (Ephesians 5:25) – the husband is to imitate Christ's love for the *ekklesia*. In the face of this, the wife should have a much easier time living in submission to her husband.

Interestingly, *be not bitter* is in the passive voice; what this means is that the husband is not pursuing being angry (*bitter*) with his wife (which would require the active voice), but rather, it might be a "normal" response to something that has happened where the wife is at the center of the matter. Paul is commanding the husband not to give in to what might be considered to be a natural reaction, but to allow the love of God to flow through him, even during such a situation. Clearly, it is important that the husband be in close fellowship with the Lord; only the Spirit of God could intervene to draw a response that is godly rather than manly.

**<sup>20</sup> Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.**

Having dealt briefly with the roles within marriage, Paul now moves on to the children. *Children, be obedient to [your] parents in all things, for this is acceptable to the Lord* (literal).<sup>173</sup> Earlier, we saw a somewhat similar concept for the wife – she is to submit to her husband (middle voice, imperative mood); however, in this case, the children are commanded to obey their parents (active voice, imperative mood). *Obey* (*hupakouete*) means to listen (with more than the ears) and to do as instructed.<sup>174</sup> The wife is to place herself under the leadership and authority of her husband, which is how the Lord designed the marriage relationship; by doing so, she will reap the reward of being where the Lord wants her – this is within a relationship of equals. The children, on the other hand, are simply told to hearken to their mom and dad; there is no place made for a discussion on a matter, or of obedience only

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<sup>172</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Vine's, "obey."

after something has been carefully explained – the essence is: children, do as you have been told.

Such obedience by children to their parents is *well-pleasing*, or *acceptable*, to the Lord. Within the family setting, the Lord has determined that the children are to be obedient to their parents. Solomon wrote: “He that spareth [*withholdeth*] his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes [*seeks him early with discipline*]” (Proverbs 13:24).<sup>175</sup> We live in a time when, in Canada, assault is defined as “any non-consensual touch,” and can lead to criminal charges.<sup>176</sup> However, Canada still has Section 43 of the criminal code that permits parents and teachers to use “reasonable force on a child”; however, this is qualified: no physical force (*rod*, ruler, belt, etc.) on teenagers or children under two, no slap to the head, and teachers are not permitted to use any force as punishment – only *reasonable force* to remove a child or to make him comply.<sup>177</sup> That arm of Satan, the United Nations, has been pressuring Canada to repeal Section 43 entirely, which would make **all** corporal punishment and non-consensual touch illegal – as it already is in some countries.<sup>178</sup>

Solomon also wrote: “My son, despise not [*do not reject*] the chastening [*discipline*] of the LORD; neither be weary of [*do not loath*] his correction [*reproof*]: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth [*reproves*]; even as a father the son *in whom* he delighteth” (Proverbs 3:11-12).<sup>179</sup> The writer of Hebrews quotes this passage and then goes on: “If ye endure chastening [*discipline*], God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth [*disciplines*] not? But if ye be without chastisement [*discipline*], whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards [*illegitimate children*], and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us* [*discipline and correct by punishment*], and we gave *them* reverence [*respect*]: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?” (Hebrews 12:7-9).<sup>180</sup> This reminds all of us that we are not beyond God’s rod of correction, something that we need to keep in mind as we discipline our children.

“Foolishness [*folly*] is bound in the heart of a child; *but* the rod of correction [*discipline*] shall drive it far from him” (Proverbs 22:15); “The thought of [*to purpose*] foolishness [*folly*] is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men”

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<sup>175</sup> BDB.

<sup>176</sup> [https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en\\_CA/ResearchPublications/201635E](https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en_CA/ResearchPublications/201635E).

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>179</sup> BDB.

<sup>180</sup> Friberg Lexicon.



(Proverbs 24:9).<sup>181</sup> What becomes evident from reading these Scriptures, is that discipline (*chastening*) is an essential part of being a child, and it is also what the Lord uses to assist us to spiritual maturity. We understand that discipline includes training, instruction, and correction, but also that it does not exclude punishment, whether corporal or otherwise.<sup>182</sup> Therefore, we are entering a time when parents will have to be vigilant in their obedience to the Word of God, for *we must be obeying God rather than men* (Acts 5:29b, literal).<sup>183</sup> Many homes already exhibit a departure from the Scriptures – children are permitted to hold the position of leadership in the home: whatever they want goes, and there is no longer a *rod of correction* in the home. The *folly* that is permitted to flourish within today’s child is a product of the *folly* that is present within the heart of the parents. The generation that is growing up under this, is described in 2 Timothy 3:2-4: “For men [*people*] shall be lovers of their own selves [*selfish*] ... disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection [*astorgoi*, without love for family] ... fierce [brutal], despisers of those that are good [*aphilagathoi*, not loving what is good], Traitors, heady [*propeteis*, thoughtless], highminded [stupid through a sense of one’s own importance], lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.”<sup>184</sup> These are already evident in the people of this present world. Jesus spoke of times such as these: “And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death” (Matthew 10:21) – this reveals a loss of familial love. Recent events in the world have shown that there is contempt for what is good and right, and a love for what is evil. “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Isaiah 5:20-21). We must be very vigilant, for we are now living in a time when good and evil have been switched and standing for the truth of the Lord will be increasingly contrary to public policy.

**21. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.**

*Fathers, do not be irritating your children, so that they do not become discouraged* (literal).<sup>185</sup> What is very interesting is that this is directed to the *fathers*. *Provoke* (*erethizo*) appears only twice in the NT, and it is a verb that can have either

<sup>181</sup> BDB.

<sup>182</sup> <https://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/Discipline>.

<sup>183</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Gingrich Lexicon.

<sup>184</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Strong’s Dictionary.

<sup>185</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

a good or bad sense; here it appears in its negative application as a present tense command.<sup>186</sup> Paul commended the Corinthians for their eagerness to minister to the needs of the saints, and their zeal in this matter became a stimulating influence on others to do likewise (2 Corinthians 9:1-2); this is a positive use of the word. Paul's exhortation here is that fathers are not to arouse negative responses from their children. How are we to understand this?

As we looked at the children's role in the family, we noted that their obedience is pleasing to the Lord. Additionally, we noted that *foolishness* is something that needs to be removed from a child through discipline: education, instruction, correction and punishment. Through discipline (as noted), fathers must learn to communicate the expectations of their children clearly and consistently. The noted discipline is a balance between ensuring that the child understands what is expected, and chastening them for disobedience. If balance falls in favor of instruction, then the children will quickly learn to play dumb so as to never mature past being talked to about everything that they are asked to do, and how they want to do it; in this case, the *foolishness* is in the father. Should the balance fall toward punishment, then the child will live in fear of never doing anything right, even though proper instruction is not there; the child will not mature to the place of accepting responsibility by doing what is expected without a specific request. Balanced discipline is required to bring a child to a balanced maturity. The warning that Paul raises is for the fathers to guard against being heavy punishers, because this will discourage the children to the point that they will give up trying to do anything to please.

**22. Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:**

*Slaves, in all things obeying masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice as men-pleasers but with integrity of heart, fearing God* (literal).<sup>187</sup> There is little doubt that slaves were, for the most part, obedient to their masters, for they would be sure to pay for any disobedience. However, here that obedience is described in such a way so as to make the slaves pleasing to the Lord. *Not with eyeservice as men-pleasers* describes what their obedience is not to be. *Eyeservice*, from the Greek *ophthalmoudouleiais*, brings together the words for eye and slave, and describes a service that is done under the master's watchful eye; in other words, service that

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<sup>186</sup> Strong's Online.

<sup>187</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

appears to be carried out with diligence – it passes the visual test.<sup>188</sup> The motive for this kind of obedience is to be well thought of by men (the masters). The exhortation given is to perform the service from a pure heart before God, for Whom there is to be a reverence and fear. The difference is this: *eyeservice* signifies that a minimum of effort is made to meet the lowest expectations of the master (the slave has his master in mind), and the latter indicates that the service will be done thoroughly as unto the Lord and not for men (the slave serves the Lord, while he is serving his master).

What we must keep in mind is that we are the Lord's slaves, and so this exhortation to slaves also holds an application for all of those who are *in Christ*, which is exactly the application that Paul proceeds to make.

**23. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24. Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.**

Although this follows on the heels of Paul's instruction for slaves and is very applicable to slaves who are *in Christ*, its relevance is much broader than that. Even as we noted, the charges to slaves is really appropriate to all of us who are *in Christ*.

*And all, whenever you are doing anything, be working from the soul as to the Lord, and not to men* (literal).<sup>189</sup> *Heartily* is from the Greek *ek psuches*, *from the soul*; *psuche* (*soul*) identifies that fundamental essence of man created in God's image – life from God: the seat of the emotions, thoughts and will, the resting place of spiritual life in Christ, and often referred to as the heart, or mind.<sup>190</sup> Whatever we endeavor to do, we are to undertake with our whole being as though we are doing it for the Lord – our best, not simply getting by with the minimum. This also serves as a means of governing the kind of activities to which we put our hand; clearly, we could not carry out anything *from the soul as to the Lord* that would not have His approval. As we live in obedience to the Lord in all things (as we must), then He is foremost in our thoughts and motives (as it should be), and nothing will be done simply for men.

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<sup>188</sup> Vine's, "eyeservice."

<sup>189</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.

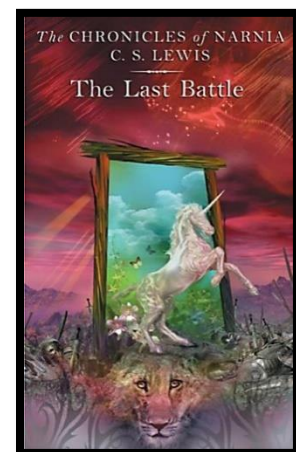
<sup>190</sup> Gingrich Lexicon.

Paul goes on to explain the basis for this Lord-focused service: *ye have known that from the Lord ye will receive the reward of an inheritance – for the Lord Christ ye are serving* (literal).<sup>191</sup> The immediate application, again, is to slaves serving their masters, but this is equally applicable to all who are living in obedience to the Lord, our Master, as well as our Savior. It is helpful to keep in mind that Jesus paid the price for our sins – He **bought** us out of sin, and has now **enslaved** us to His righteousness (Romans 6:18). *Serving* is from the Greek *douleuete*, which has *doulos* (slave) as its root;<sup>192</sup> our service (obedience) to the Lord is based upon a slave relationship with our Master. However, our Master also loves us with an everlasting love (Ephesians 1:4-5), considers us to be His brethren (Hebrews 2:11), and has secured a place for us in the inheritance prepared by His Father (Ephesians 1:11). Although we must not overlook the reality of Jesus as our Master, He is not a taskmaster but has promised to bear our burden with us and to lighten our load in this life (Matthew 11:28-30).

**25. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.**

*But he who is doing wrong will receive to himself that wrong – there is no partiality* (literal).<sup>193</sup> After exhorting us to do all things as unto the Lord, Paul balances that with this. When we are working *to the Lord*, it is evident that we are doing that which is in keeping with His commands; we certainly cannot expect to live in disobedience to Him and still claim that it is done to His glory.

I am reminded of the instruction that the heretic C.S. Lewis imparts to children in his Narnia series; as the child stands before God (Aslan), he is told, “Child, all the service thou hast done to Tash [Satan], I account as service done to me.”<sup>194</sup> Lewis is teaching that whatever good we do for Satan, God accepts that as having been done for Him; his explanation for this heresy is this: “... no service which is vile can be done to me [Aslan/God], and none which is not vile can be done to him [Tash/Satan].”<sup>195</sup> In other words, you can



<sup>191</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*, p. 154.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid, p. 155.

live your whole life for Satan but all of the good things that you've done, God will hold as a credit on your account with Him. In essence, Lewis is promoting a works salvation where your good deeds will be held against your evil ones, and sufficient *good* will bring you into the regions of heaven. Contrary to Lewis, Jesus' words to those who will stand before Him, who did many *good* things in their lives (and even in His name): "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:23). Despite this blatant contradiction of the words of Jesus, the Narnia series remains popular with Evangelicals, and C.S. Lewis still stands as a pillar among Evangelical theologians.



C.S. Lewis

To the Galatians Paul wrote: *for whatever a man is sowing, even this he will reap; for this reason, the one who is sowing to his own flesh, from the flesh he will reap ruin; but the one who is sowing to the Spirit, from the Spirit he will reap life everlasting* (Galatians 6:7b-8, literal).<sup>196</sup> *Sowing* and *reaping* are related: just as a farmer cannot sow weeds and hope to harvest barley, so you cannot live for yourself and hope to enjoy heaven with the Lord – you cannot sow to the devil and reap heavenly rewards! Unless we faithfully sow a life of obedience to the Lord, we cannot hope to gain the heavenly inheritance that is promised to those who are *in Christ*. Jesus said: *the one who endures unto the end, this is the one who will be saved* (Matthew 24:13, literal); *endure* (from the Greek root *hupomeno*) means to remain faithful even under tribulation – it is the one who *endures* (faithfully perseveres) who *will* receive salvation (future tense).<sup>197</sup>

For this, Paul writes, there is *no partiality* – no favoritism, it is without bias. The law of sowing and reaping is for everyone; no matter who you are, you cannot sow evil and hope to reap righteousness. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). It is only through obedience to the Lord that we can be pleasing to Him, and this is the only way to one day receive salvation from Him.

<sup>196</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>197</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.