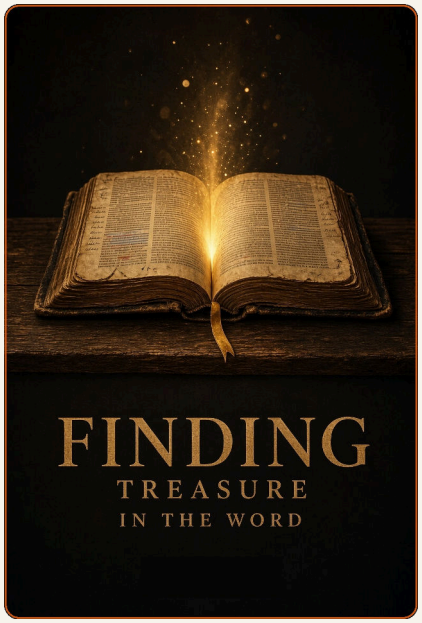

Bible Studies

Volume — Meetings 00 through 42

This is a series of Bible studies worked through with the Finding Treasure in The Word life group at RiverLife Fellowship. The studies are focused on Christ in us, our union with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, our relationship with all three and their relationship with us who believe in Him, living in the New Covenant and the finished work of the cross.

These studies are progressive. Each one builds on the last. We stay with a theme long enough to see it in full context, then carry that truth into the next meeting. They are created to go deep into full context and to aid in slowly digesting the Word.

This is a deep walk through the New Covenant and through the relationship God has with those who believe in His Son: the Father who adopted us, the Son who lives in us, and the Holy Spirit who dwells in the believer. He is not a distant influence. He is a Person with whom we can walk in close fellowship.

There is much treasure in the Word of God. It is worth digging for.

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MEETING 00

Union - Covenant Mindset - Communion - Expanded Overview

Finding Treasure in The Word

Finding Treasure in The Word Expanded Overview - Union • Covenant Mindset • Communion
08/22/26

I'd like to start with two questions for you to think about during this study:

"What is the difference between Union with Christ and Communion with Christ for the believer?"
"How does this tie into abiding in Christ and walking with the Holy Spirit?"

Keep that question in mind as we walk through some important truths about what you—a born-again believer in Christ who has become a new creation—received the moment you believed in Him, the reality of the New Covenant you are now living in, and how to walk out this new life in Christ.

I want to focus on three major concepts for the believer:

Union • Covenant Mindset • Communion

- **Union**: This is the believer's permanent position in Christ the moment they are saved and born again through faith in Christ.
- **Covenant Mindset**: This involves two very different mindsets for the believer—Old Covenant versus New Covenant. It's Law versus Grace, "have to" versus "get to," longing for His presence versus walking in His presence. We don't want to mix the two covenants. For example, **Gal.3:3** asks, *"Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?"*
  Going back to the law (Old Covenant) instead of living by the Holy Spirit (New Covenant) keeps us from allowing the Holy Spirit to produce good fruit in our lives (**Gal. 5:22-23**). It also shows up as prideful self-reliance ("I got this, Lord—I can do this on my own") versus humble dependence ("Lord, I need Your help. Holy Spirit, guide me and give me wisdom").
- **Communion**: This is the believer's ongoing, daily relationship with Him as we abide in Him—an intentional relationship.

  - **Union:** What you received when you believed (position in Christ).
  - **Covenant Mindset:** What you believe about your position (New Covenant mindset).
  - **Communion:** What you do with your new life in Christ (daily abiding/walking it out)

Union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the believer's spiritual position—a fixed legal reality. A **New Covenant mindset** is believing this spiritual reality. **Communion** is being intentional about your relationship with Christ. Below is a list breaking down these three concepts.

1. Union - What happens when you believe in Jesus Christ by faith?

Note: These are primarily the permanent positional realities received the moment we believed. Some also describe the ongoing work of the Spirit that flows from that position.

➢ **Because of faith and trust in Christ you are:** (a list for homework)

- saved: saved from what? saved from the wrath of God: Rom. 10:8-13; Rom. 5:9; Jn. 3:36; saved from eternal destruction and separation away from God's presence: 2 Thess. 1:8-9. saved from conscious torment: Lk. 16:23-24.
- in Christ and He is in you: Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27; Jn. 14:20; Jn. 14:20-23; 1 Cor. 6:17.
- no longer slaves to sin but have become slaves to righteous living: Rom. 6:17-18, 22.
- Justified, cleansed, sanctified, set apart, made holy, and made right with God by believing in and calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ: 1 Cor. 6:11; Rom. 3:21–28; 5:1; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9; Heb. 10:10–14.
- united with Him in his death, burial, and resurrection: Rom. 6:3–5, 11; Gal. 2:20; 3:27; Col. 2:12–13; Eph. 2:5–6.
- dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus: Rom. 6:11, 13; Col. 3:3; Eph. 2:4-6; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Pet. 2:24.

➢ **Because of salvation through faith and trust in Christ you have:** (a list for homework)

- life by the power of His name: Jn. 3:36, 5:24, 6:47, 10:10, 17:3, 20:31; 1 Jn. 5:11-13.
- passed from death to life and have eternal life now! Jn. 3:36, 5:11-13, 24, 6:4.
- become a new person, a new creation: 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 3:9-10; Rom. 6:4; Tit. 3:5.
- been born again: Jn. 3:3-8; 1 Pet. 1:3,23.
- been raised to new life with Christ: Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:1.
- been baptized <u>into Christ</u> and have <u>put on Christ</u>: Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3.
- become friends of God: Jn. 15:15; Jas. 2:23.
- received the promised Holy Spirit: Eph. 1:13; Gal. 3:1-4,14; Acts 2:33; 2 Cor. 1:22; Jn. 7:37-39.
- received God's promise of freedom: Gal. 5:1; Jn. 8:36.
- received forgiveness for your sins: Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13-14.
- become a child of God: Jn. 1:12; Gal. 3:26; Rom. 8:16.
- gone through a spiritual circumcision—a cutting away of your sinful nature: Col. 2:8-14, 3:9; Gal. 5:24; Eph. 4:22-24; Rom. 2:28-29, 6:6-7.
- crucified the flesh with its passions and desires: Gal. 5:24; Rom. 6:6.
- been saved, born-again, reborn from above—spiritually transformed and made new: Jn. 3:3-7; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:23.
- been renewed, sanctified, and set apart by faith and are being renewed, sanctified. e.g., ongoing relationship: 1 Cor. 6:11; Acts 26:18; Heb. 10:10, 14. Note: Have been sanctified <u>and</u> are being sanctified, e.g. the process of sanctification. (relationship/communion)
- died to your old life, were buried with Christ and have been raised to new life with Christ: Rom. 6:4-8; Col. 2:12.
- eternal life through Jesus Christ: Rom. 6:23; Jn. 10:28; 1 Jn. 5:13.

- been raised up together with Him and are seated with Him in the heavenly places: Eph. 2:4–6; Col. 3:1–3; Rom. 6:4–5.
- no longer under the law but under grace, died to the power of the law, when you died with Christ: Rom. 6:14; 7:4–6; 8:2; Gal. 2:19–21; 3:23–25; 5:18; Col. 2:13–14.
- been united with Christ: Rom. 6:5; Gal. 2:20.
- been brought near to Him through the blood of Christ: Eph. 2:13.
- renewed thoughts and a new nature: Eph. 4:23-24; Col. 3:10.
- turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God: Acts 26:18; Eph. 5:8.
- had the veil removed and can now see and reflect the glory of the Lord: 2 Cor. 3:16-18.
- become righteous through faith in Christ: 2 Cor. 5:17,21; Rom. 3:21-22, 4:24, 5:17.
  * Imputed righteousness: Christ's perfect righteousness is credited to the believer. Christ's righteousness is a free gift received by faith. The Cost: Free to you, but it cost Him everything. The Requirement: Simply "receiving" it through faith, rather than earning it.
- been made holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault: Col. 1:22; Eph. 5:27; Heb. 10:10; 1 Cor. 1:30, 6:11; Acts 20:32. (positional holiness).
- stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds have put on the new man (new nature) and are being renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. Col. 3:9-10.
- been rescued from the curse pronounced by the law: Gal. 3:10–13; Deut. 21:22–23; 27:26. The curse of the law is condemnation and death: Rom. 3:23, 6:23; Gal. 3:11.
- been delivered from justly deserved wrath and have come under the covenant of grace: Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:10; Rom. 6:14.
- been brought into a right relationship with God that comes by faith: Rom. 5:1; Gal. 2:16.
- peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us: Rom. 5:1.
- Access to God's grace through faith and full access to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Rom. 5:2; Eph. 2:18, 3:12; Heb. 10:19-22.
- been brought into a new way of living in the Spirit: Rom. 8:1-4; Gal. 5:16, 25.
- been identified as his own because He gave you the Holy Spirit: Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:22.
- received everything Christ did on the cross. You have received the finished work! YAY! Jn. 19:30; Heb. 10:12-14; Col. 2:14.

…and now you must continue in faith and to abide in Him, ongoing relationship:

- Continue in faith: Col 1:22–23, Acts 14:22, Heb 3:14. (Believe what is listed above)
- Add to your faith: 2 Pet. 1:5-10; Gal. 5:22-23; Phil. 4:8; Col. 1:9-10; 1 Tim. 4:7-8; Jas. 1:2-4.
- Growing in faith: 1 Pet. 2:2; Eph. 4:15; Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:10; 2:6-7; 2 Thess. 1:3; Heb. 6:1.
- Abiding in Him: Jn 15:4–5, 1 Jn 2:24, 1 Jn 2:28.
- Communion: Ongoing Relationship: Col 2:6, Gal 2:20, Jn 8:31.

➢ **Those who believe in Jesus Christ will:** (a list for homework)

- never thirst: Jn. 4:14; 6:35.
- never go hungry: Jn. 6:35.
- have springs and rivers of living water flowing [continuous] from their innermost being. (Which is the Holy Spirit): Jn. 7:37-39; 4:14.
- be saved: Jn. 3:16; Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9.
- live and never die: Jn. 11:25-26.
- have abundant life. (To the full, till it overflows): Jn. 10:10.
- be overflowing (bubbling over) with hope: Rom. 15:13.
- become children of light: Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5; Jn. 12:36.
- do the same works Jesus has done, and even greater works: Jn. 14:12.
- never walk in darkness, but have the light of life: Jn. 8:12.
- be set free indeed: Jn. 8:36; Gal. 5:1.
- have His peace that the world cannot give: Jn. 14:27; 16:33.
- bear much fruit: Jn. 15:5, 8, 16.
- overcome the world: Jn. 16:33; 1 Jn. 5:4–5.

Everything listed above is our “position” in Christ because of our “union” with Christ through faith. These are just some of the "exceedingly great and precious promises" mentioned in 2 Pet. 1:4 that allow us to partake in His divine nature.

2. <u>Covenant Mindset</u> – The important of not mixing covenants.

Two different mindsets for the believer

Old Covenant ↔ New Covenant mindset; Law ↔ Grace; have to ↔ get to; religion ↔ relationship.

(A quick-glance comparison – the "mindset shift" that changes everything!)

Old Covenant	**New Covenant**	**Supporting Scriptures** (OC ↔ NC)
Law	Grace	Ex. 20:1-17; 2 Cor. 3:7 ↔ Jn. 1:17; Rom. 6:14
Works (law-based)	Believe and receive	Gal. 2:16; Rom. 3:20 ↔ Eph. 2:8-9; Gal. 3:2
The written law	Laws written on our hearts	Ex. 31:18; 2 Cor. 3:3 ↔ Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10
Heavy yoke and burden of the law	His yoke is easy and His burden is light	Acts 15:10; Gal. 5:1; Matt. 23:4 ↔ Matt. 11:28-30
Keeping the law	New way of faith	Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:12 ↔ Gal. 3:11; Rom. 1:17
Separation / Far from God	No longer any separation (for those in Christ); Brought near to God by the blood of Christ	Isa. 59:2; Eph. 2:12 ↔ Eph. 2:13-14; Matt. 27:51
Separated from His presence (limited access); Longing for His presence; God was in a temple behind a curtain (limited access)	We can now boldly enter His presence (permanent, bold, 24/7 access); Walking in His presence because of the Holy Spirit; We are the temple (permanent access)	Heb. 9:7-8; Ps. 27:4, 42:1-2; Ex. 33:15; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Lev. 16:2 ↔ Heb. 4:16; Heb. 10:19-22; Jn. 14:16-17, 23; 1 Jn. 4:13; 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Matt. 27:51
Ministry of death & condemnation. (The law's penalty for sin is death.)	Ministry of the Spirit & righteousness (Flesh profits nothing, The Spirit brings life!)	2 Cor. 3:7-9; Jn. 6:63; Rom. 8:2-4
Repeated sacrifices that could never take away sins	One perfect sacrifice – perfect forever. Christ was the propitiation for our sin.	Heb. 10:1-4 ↔ Heb. 10:10-14; Rom.3:25, 1 Jn. 2:2, 4:10, Heb. 2:17

Note: See 2 Cor. 3 for a powerful chapter that contrasts the two covenants side-by-side (letter vs. Spirit, fading glory vs. lasting glory, veil, condemnation vs. righteousness). Heb. 10 drives home the finished work of Christ even more clearly.

Both **Union** and **Covenant Mindset** have to do with the believer's permanent position in Christ. **Union** being their spiritual reality and **Covenant Mindset** being the belief of this reality.

3. **Communion**: This is the believer's ongoing, daily relationship with Him as we abide in Him—an intentional relationship (Jn. 15:4–5). This is the walking out of our new life with Christ. Putting into practice what the Word says, walking daily, moment by moment in the reality of being in union with Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

   The above lists and comparisons have to do with "receiving" what God has done for us. About what we "received" when we believed in Christ and believing that reality by having a New Covenant mindset. Now we are heading into the "doing": Our intentionality with our relationship with Christ. Gal. 5:16–18, 24–25; Rom. 8:5–6, 9, 13–14. We are called to walk by and keep in step with the Spirit and to live according to the Spirit—active dependence, not passive inactivity or self-powered striving.

   Important Note: We need the Holy Spirit to help us with this "doing" part. Jesus called the Holy Spirit the helper, the Spirit of truth who will teach us all things and will guide us into all truth. Jn. 14:16-17, 26, 15:26, 16:7, 16:12-15. The Holy Spirit helps us produce good fruit:

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

   We need to work with the Holy Spirit and "let" Him and "allow" Him to produce this fruit in our lives. This takes Humility, surrender and trust. The list below is accomplished by being "Spirit-Led" vs. "Flesh driven".

   Here is a short list of what we (believers) should be doing with all that we have received.

   - We are told to be: Sober-minded, watchful, alert, vigilant, self-controlled and prepared: 1 Pet. 1:13, 4:7, 5:7-9, 5:8-10; 1 Cor. 16:13-14; Col. 4:2; Lk. 21:36; Mat. 24:4-6; Eph. 6:10-18.
   - We are told to: Humble ourselves and resist the enemy, to stand firm in our faith and to continue in the faith: 1 Pet. 5:6-9; Jas. 4:7, 1 Cor. 16:13; Phil. 1:27.
   - We are told to: Live as children of the light, walk in the light, walk in love, shine brightly, and walk in newness of life: Eph. 5:8-10; 1 Jn. 1:7; Eph. 5:2; Phil. 2:15; Rom. 6:4; Jn. 8:12.
   - We are told to: Love one another but to not love this world: 1 Jn. 2:15-17, 4:7-12, 21; Jn. 13:34-35.
   - We are told to: Lay Aside (Strip off) every unnecessary weight and the sin which so easily and cleverly entangles us, to put off your old self, cast off the works of darkness and put away all filthiness and malice: Heb. 12:1; Eph. 4:22–24; Col. 3:8–10; Rom. 13:12; Jas. 1:21; 1 Pet. 2:1. --- *take off before you put on* ---
   - We are told to: Put on our new nature/new self/new man, put on Christ and put on the full armor of God: Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; Rom. 13:14; Eph. 6:11-18.

- We are told to: Clothe ourselves with Christ, humility, the Lord Jesus Christ, compassion and with kindness: Rom. 13:14; 1 Pet. 5:5; Col. 3:12.
- We are told to: Present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. Rom. 6:12–14, 19, 12:1; 1 Cor. 6:19–20; 1 Pet. 2:4–5; Heb.13:15–16; Eph. 5:1–2.
- We are told to: Not be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. A renewed mind is a mind acting under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Rom. 8:5–6, 12:2; Eph. 4:22–24; Col.3:9–10; 1 Pet. 1:13–15; Tit. 3:5.
- We are told to: Look away from all that will distract us; to focus our eyes on Jesus and run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus and daily fixing our gaze, attention and thoughts on God. Heb. 12:1-3; Col. 3:2; Phil. 3:13–14; 1 Cor. 9:24–27; 2 Tim. 4:7–8; Isa. 26:3.

These are some of the hard ones:

- We are told to: Do everything without grumbling or arguing so that you may become blameless and pure, 'children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. 1 Pet. 4:9; Jas. 5:9; Deut. 32:5; Mat. 5:14–16; 1 Pet. 2:12; Acts 2:40.
- We are told to: Rejoice at all times, to pray without ceasing and to give thanks in all circumstances. 1 Thess. 5:16–18; Phil.4:4–6; Rom. 12:12; Eph.5:18–20, 6:18; Col. 3:15–17, 4:2; Lk. 18:1.
- We are told to: be anxious for nothing, are told to not worry about our life and should cast all our cares on Him because He cares for us. – How much do we trust Jesus with our lives and our families? Phil. 4:6; Mt. 6:25-34; 1 Pet. 5:7; Psa. 37:5, 55:22; Prov. 3:5–6; Isa. 41:10; Jn. 14:1, 27; Heb. 13:5–6.
- We are told to: Go and make disciples and be ministers of the New Covenant. 2 Cor. 3:6, 5:18–20; Mk. 16:15; Acts 1:8; Col. 1:28–29; 2 Tim. 2:2; Rom. 10:14–15; Lk. 24:46–48.
- We are told to: Make every effort to enter into His rest. Much of what is listed above can come out of this rest. Heb. 3:12-14, 4:1–3, 9–11; Psa.95:7–11; Mat. 11:28–30; Isa. 30:15; Ex. 33:14.

Union is what you received the moment you believed — your permanent position in Christ.

Covenant Mindset is what you believe about that position — living under grace instead of law.

Communion is how you walk it out — daily abiding in Christ and keeping in step with the Holy Spirit.

Everything listed above flows from these three realities. Through faith in Christ, you are already in Christ. Believe it. Then, by the power of the Spirit, live it.

"Finding Treasure in the Word" RiverLife Fellowship Life Link – Overview - 08/22/26
All studies with full notes in PDF format are available here:
https://christinyoustudymap.com/biblestudies/

MEETING 01

Christ In You - The mystery has been revealed - Overview

Finding Treasure in The Word

Christ In You (The mystery has been revealed) – (Old Covenant vs. New Covenant)

1. **<u>Finding Treasure in the Word – Series Introduction</u>**
   *__Note__: this first study is longer than most, because it's an overview of what's to come.

   Imagine studying the Bible like a treasure hunt—digging deeper, uncovering hidden riches, and discovering more of Jesus (His relationship with us and ours with Him) with every find. That's where we are heading together in this study series.

   This first session is an overview of what's coming: a journey through the glorious good news of our union and intimate relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit which is received the moment we believe in Jesus Christ. Salvation is God's "free gift," given by grace through faith alone (**Rom. 10:9; Gal. 2:16; Rom. 3:21-31; 2 Cor. 5:14-21**). We don't earn it; we simply "receive" it. And the result? "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (**Col. 1:27**), a living, abiding relationship with the Triune God. Learning what you "received" at salvation will be a big focus of these studies.

   In the studies ahead, we will explore together:
   - Our true identity in union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (who we are in Christ)
   - How each Person of the Godhead relates to us—and how we relate to Him.
   - Practical ways to maintain and deepen this relationship by abiding in Christ (Jn. 15:1-11) and becoming partakers of His divine nature (2 Pet. 1:1-11).

   I'm calling this series "**Finding Treasure in The Word**" because that's exactly what studying Scripture has become for me: like hunting for priceless treasure hidden in full context, treasure right there in plain sight that we can miss if we don't dig deeper.

   For years I read the Bible out of duty, with an "Old-Testament, works-based mindset", trying to maintain my right standing with God. But everything changed when I began reading through the lens of the New Covenant and the finished work of the cross. Now I read because I *get* to spend time with Jesus through His Word. The "*have to*" changed to a "*get to*" and it changed everything! Now I let the Holy Spirit teach me (**Jn. 14:26; 16:13**), and I've learned the joy of digging in full context. The deeper I go, the more treasure I find and the by-product is overflowing joy! The more time spent in the Bible the more outflow and overflow of joy!

   That's the "New Covenant mindset" shift I pray for every one of us. Think of these studies as a shared treasure hunt. The Holy Spirit is our guide, the Bible is the map, and Jesus Himself is the treasure. It takes time to dig, but it's time wonderfully well spent.

   Ready to hunt for hidden treasure together? Let's begin! 😊

2. **Christ In You (The mystery has been revealed) - Overview**
   a) Christ in You (the "you" is referring to believers).
   Let's read **Col. 1:26-28** – Note: KJV "*Hidden mystery made manifest to His saints*".
   Then back up to **Col. 1:1-6**. Paul is speaking to believers who understand the truth about God's wonderful grace.
   In **Col. 1:11-14** Paul is speaking to believers who have been saved and rescued from darkness and transferred into the Kingdom of His son. Christ is supreme **Jn. 1:1-4, Col. 1:15-20** and He has reconciled you (believers) to Himself **Col. 1:21-22**. – Believe and "continue" to believe!
   Col. 1:23. "*All treasure and wisdom is hidden in Him"*
   Col. 2:2-3 (NKJV & AMPC) The Holy Spirit gives us access to this treasure. Christ is supreme and in Him is all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and He is living in us (those who believe) because of the Holy Spirit. Wow!
   b) Christ in us? Us in Christ? How does that work?
   How can Christ live in us and us in Him? Because of the Holy Spirit who is also called the Spirit of Christ.
   c) Jesus promises the Holy Spirit: **Jn. 15:26**. Let's talk about the work of the Holy Spirit **Jn .16:5-15**. Discuss how this ties this in with **Col. 2:2-3 (NKJV)** in regards to the Holy Spirit being how "Christ is in" believers.

   These two passages **Col. 2:2-3** and **Jn. 16:12-15** function like a divine "wealth management" system. Colossians identifies where the treasure is stored, while John explains the delivery method. Together, they show that the Christian life isn't about searching for new truths outside of Christ, but about the Holy Spirit unpacking the infinite truths already contained within Him.

   If Colossians tells us what the treasure is, John 16 tells us how we get our hands on it. This passage outlines a beautiful "chain of custody" for divine truth:
   - **The Source**: The Father owns everything.
   - **The Heir**: The Son (Christ) has everything the Father has.
   - **The Courier**: The Holy Spirit takes what belongs to the Son and "declares" (or reveals) it to the believer.

   God has given us (believers) His Spirit and we live in Him and He in us: **1 Jn. 4:13-16.** When did you receive the Holy Spirit? When you believed in Christ: **Eph. 1:13-14.**
   You receive the Holy Spirit through faith when you believed: **Gal. 3:1-14**.
   He put His seal upon us by giving us the Holy Spirit as a guarantee: **2 Cor. 1:22.**

3. **Old Covenant vs. New Covenant.** Two different mindsets for the believer.
   Old Covenant vs. New Covenant – Law vs. Grace (have to vs. get to)
   (A quick-glance comparison – the "mindset shift" that changes everything!)

Old Covenant	New Covenant	Supporting Scriptures (OC <> NC)
Law	Grace	Ex. 20:1-17; 2 Cor. 3:7 <> Jn. 1:17; Rom. 6:14
Works	Believe and receive	Gal. 2:16; Rom. 3:20 <> Eph. 2:8-9; Gal. 3:2
The written law	Laws written on our hearts	Ex. 31:18; 2 Cor. 3:3 <> Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10
Heavy yoke of the law	His yoke is easy	Acts 15:10; Gal. 5:1 <> Matt. 11:28-30
Heavy burden of trying to keep the law	His burden is light	Matt. 23:4 <> Matt. 11:30
Keeping the law	New way of faith	Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:12 <> Gal. 3:11; Rom. 1:17
Separation	No longer any separation	Isa. 59:2; Eph. 2:12 <> Eph. 2:14; Matt. 27:51
His presence in a temple behind a veil	The veil torn (We are the temple)	Lev. 16:2; Heb. 9:7-8 <> Matt. 27:51; 1 Cor. 3:16
Separated from His presence	We can now boldly enter into His presence	Heb. 9:7-8 <> Heb. 4:16; Heb. 10:19-22
God was in a temple behind a curtain	We are the temple	1 Kings 8:10-11 <> 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16
Far from God	Brought near to God by the blood of Christ	Isa. 59:2; Eph. 2:12 <> Eph. 2:13
Longing for His presence	Walking in His presence	Ps. 42:1-2; Ex. 33:15 <> Jn. 14:23; 1 Jn. 4:13
Ministry of death / condemnation	Ministry of the Spirit / righteousness	2 Cor. 3:7-9
Repeated sacrifices that could never take away sins	One perfect sacrifice – perfect forever	Heb. 10:1-4 <> Heb. 10:10-14

Note: See **2 Cor. 3** for a powerful chapter that contrasts the two covenants side-by-side (letter vs. Spirit, fading glory vs. lasting glory, veil, condemnation vs. righteousness). **Heb. 10** drives home the finished work of Christ even more clearly.

a) Two examples of mixing Covenants: **Law vs. grace.**
Phil. 2:12,13 (NKJV) vs. **12** is law, vs. **13** is grace.
- **v. 13** tells me I'm not alone in this salvation thing. It is His "free gift" that I have received. Read v. **13** in **(NLT and AMPC)**
- Note on "work out your salvation" (v. 12): This isn't a command to earn salvation through our own effort (that would be law). Salvation is already a finished work and a free gift to be received; we receive it by faith! Instead, "work out" means to live out and express in daily life the salvation God has already worked in us. We'll explore in future studies how this connects to abiding in Christ. And here's the best part: we can only do this because of verse 13's grace—God Himself is the One working inside us, giving us both the desire ("to will") and the power ("to do") to live for His good pleasure. We're never striving alone; His grace empowers every step! (See v. 13 in NLT: "For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.")
- **Isa. 55:8-9 (NLT**.) His thoughts and ways higher than ours. Who can know His thoughts? Let's talk about how New Covenant passages can be misread through an Old Covenant lens and why we must avoid mixing the two using the following as one example:
  1 Cor. 2:9 and **2:16**. Note old covenant reference. Full context: **1 Cor. 2:6-16**.
  Note the "But" in **v. 10** and in **vs 16**. - Read **1 Cor. 2:10 in (AMPC)** - Read **1 Cor. 2:16 in (AMPC)**
- Many people stop at **1 Cor. 2:9** ("Eye has not seen...") and use it to suggest that God's plans are a total mystery. The Old Covenant Lens (**v. 9**): Isa. was looking forward to something he couldn't yet see or fully grasp.
  While **v. 9** (quoting Isaiah) describes the limitations of the human senses under the Old Covenant, **v.10** begins with a definitive '**But**.' This '**But**' signals a change in era: what was once hidden from the prophets is now revealed to us (believers) by the Spirit."
- The New Covenant Reality (**v. 10**): The Holy Spirit has now pulled back the curtain.
- **Note**: There is still Old Covenant in the written text of the New Testament. Keep that in mind when you are reading through the Gospels. E.g. the New Testament writings have Old and New Covenant mentioned in the text.
- Be careful not to mistake the location of a verse for its covenant. Because the Gospels record the life of Jesus before the Cross, He is often speaking to people still bound by the Old Covenant. The New Covenant officially begins with His blood (Lk. 22:20). If we apply Old Covenant requirements to a New Covenant believer, we miss the 'finished work' of Christ.

4. **God first chose us, but we still must choose Him**
(The chosen still must choose Christ via faith, believe in Christ and you will be saved)
    - **God first chose us: Eph. 1:4-7, 11** Keep in mind that Paul is speaking to believers, faithful followers of Christ and he is speaking to the church as a group.
    - **Gal. 1:15-16** …"it pleased him to reveal his Son to me so that I would proclaim the Good News about Jesus". This is God's heart for all of us.
    - **2 Tim. 1:9** - Salvation for us was His plan before the beginning of time. However, we need to choose Him to receive this salvation.
    - God draws us to Himself through Christ and at the same time invites us to believe and receive Him. God's sovereignty and grace is Him drawing us to the Son and man's free will is choosing to believe or reject Christ. **Jn. 4:14, Jn. 6:40, Jn. 7:37-39, Mat. 11:28, Jn. 10:9, Jn. 6:44, 2 Pet. 1:3-4.**
    - **Grace:** This is God's unearned initiative—the source of the drawing. Through Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection, He reaches out to us first, offering what we could never achieve on our own.
    - **Faith:** This is our essential response. The drawing brings us to the crossroads: we can look to the crucified and risen Savior, choose to believe and receive His grace, or freely reject Him and remain separated from the Father.
    - Those who believe in Jesus Christ receive eternal life and salvation, escaping God's righteous judgment (**Jn. 3:16, 5:24; Rom. 6:23**). Conversely, those who reject Him through unbelief face eternal death and everlasting separation from God (**Jn. 3:18, 36; 2 Thes. 1:9**).

a) **<u>He chose us first, adopted us into His family and He draws us to Himself:</u>**
As a result of us hearing/reading the good news that Christ died for our sins, we can willingly respond and choose or we can reject Him. (God gave us free will to choose)
He first chose us; that is His yes to us. When we choose Him; that is our yes to Him!

b) Only when we believe in Christ do we become a child of God and can then receive the inheritance of being adopted. **Gal. 3:23 - 4:7** - God's children <u>through faith</u>.
(Be sure to read **Gal. 3:26-27 in AMP**) **Note:** *Baptized into Christ* **(ESV, KJV, NKJV, NASB, ASV, MSG)** and clothed with Christ. (Immersed into Christ)

c) See also **Rom. 6:3-7 (AMP)** – baptized into Christ and into His death and into newness of life! (*We receive all of this at salvation*)

d) When one believes in Christ He is in Christ and Christ is in them. **1 Jn. 4:15 (AMP).**
→ Baptized into Christ at salvation. ← Water baptism is a celebration of publicly identifying with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ! **A public celebration of what you received when you believed in Christ.**

e) <u>When we believe in Christ, we receive His free gift of salvation and the finished work of the cross.</u>

f) When you were saved, you were united with Christ in His crucifixion (see **Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20**). Positionally — in God's eyes and in your new identity — the old self dominated by

the flesh was crucified with Christ. Its rightful power and condemnation over you were broken once for all.

5. **What happens when you believe in Jesus Christ by faith?**
   Because you have believed in Christ.
   You have received His finished work on the cross.
   Believe that you have received and continue to believe.

➢ **Because of Your faith and trust in Christ you are:** (a list for homework)

- in Christ and He is in you: Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27; Jn. 14:20.
- no longer slaves to sin but have become slaves to righteous living: Rom. 6:17-18, 22.
- cleansed; made holy; and made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ: 1 Cor. 6:11; Rom. 10:13.
- made right with God through Christ: Rom. 3:24; 5:1, 9.
- united with Him in his death, burial, and resurrection: Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12.
- dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus: Rom. 6:11, 13.

➢ **Because of Your faith and trust in Christ you have:** (a list for homework)

- life by the power of His name: Jn. 20:31; 1 Jn. 5:11-13.
- Has passed from death to life and has eternal life now! Jn. 3:36, 5:11-13, 24, 6:40.
- become a new person, a new creation: 2 Cor. 5:17.
- been raised to new life with Christ: Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:1.
- been baptized <u>into Christ</u> and have <u>put on Christ</u>: Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3.
- become friends of God: Jn. 15:15; Jas. 2:23.
- received the promised Holy Spirit: Eph. 1:13; Gal. 3:1-4,14; Acts 2:33; 2 Cor. 1:22; Jn. 7:37-39.
- received God's promise of freedom: Gal. 5:1; Jn. 8:36.
- received forgiveness for your sins: Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13-14.
- become a child of God: Jn. 1:12; Gal. 3:26; Rom. 8:16.
- gone through a spiritual circumcision—a cutting away of your sinful nature: Col. 2:11.
- crucified the flesh with its passions and desires: Gal. 5:24; Rom. 6:6.
- been saved, born-again, reborn from above—spiritually transformed and made new: Jn. 3:3-7; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:23.
- been renewed, sanctified, and set apart by faith and are being renewed, sanctified. e.g., ongoing relationship: 1 Cor. 6:11; Acts 26:18; Heb. 10:10, 14. Note: Have been sanctified <u>and</u> are being sanctified, e.g. the process of sanctification.
- died to your old life, were buried with Christ and have been raised to new life with Christ: Rom. 6:4-8; Col. 2:12.
- eternal life through Jesus Christ: Rom. 6:23; Jn. 10:28; 1 Jn. 5:13.
- been raised up together with Him and seated with Him in the heavenly places: Eph. 2:6.
- died to the power of the law when you died with Christ: Rom. 7:4-6; Gal. 2:19.
- been united with Christ: Rom. 6:5; Gal. 2:20.
- been brought near to Him through the blood of Christ: Eph. 2:13.
- renewed thoughts and a new nature: Eph. 4:23-24; Col. 3:10.
- turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God: Acts 26:18; Eph. 5:8.

- had the veil removed and can now see and reflect the glory of the Lord: 2 Cor. 3:16-18.
- become righteous through faith in Christ: 2 Cor. 5:17,21; Rom. 3:21-22, 4:24, 5:17.
  * Imputed righteousness: Christ's perfect righteousness is credited to the believer. Christ's righteousness is a free gift received by faith. The Cost: Free to you, but it cost Him everything. The Requirement: Simply "receiving" it through faith, rather than earning it.
- been made holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault: Col. 1:22; Eph. 5:27.
- stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds have put on the new man (new nature) and are being renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. Col. 3:9-10.
- been rescued from the curse pronounced by the law: Gal. 3:13.
- been delivered from justly deserved wrath and have come under the covenant of grace: Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:10; Rom. 6:14.
- been brought into a right relationship with God that comes by faith: Rom. 5:1; Gal. 2:16.
- peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us: Rom. 5:1.
- been brought into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand: Rom. 5:2.
- been brought into a new way of living in the Spirit: Rom. 8:1-4; Gal. 5:16, 25.
- been identified as his own because He gave you the Holy Spirit: Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:22.
  *Believers now belong to Christ.
- received everything Christ did on the cross. You have received the finished work! YAY! Jn. 19:30; Heb. 10:12-14; Col. 2:14

…and now you must continue in faith and to abide in Him, ongoing relationship:

- Continue in faith: Col 1:22–23, Acts 14:22, Heb 3:14.
- Add to your faith: 2 Pet. 1:5-10; Gal. 5:22-23; Phil. 4:8; Col. 1:9-10; 1 Tim. 4:7-8; Jas. 1:2-4.
- Growing in faith: 1 Pet. 2:2; Eph. 4:15; Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:10; 2:6-7; 2 Thess. 1:3; Heb. 6:1.
- Abiding in Him: Jn 15:4–5, 1 Jn 2:24, 1 Jn 2:28.
- Communion: Ongoing Relationship: Col 2:6, Gal 2:20, Jn 8:31.

➢ **Those who believe in Jesus Christ will:** (a list for homework)

- never thirst: Jn. 4:14; 6:35.
- never go hungry: Jn. 6:35
- have springs and rivers of living water flowing [continuous] from their innermost being. (Which is the Holy Spirit): Jn. 7:37-39; 4:14.
- be saved: Jn. 3:16; Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9.
- live and never die: Jn. 11:25-26.
- have abundant life. (To the full, till it overflows): Jn. 10:10.
- be overflowing (bubbling over) with hope: Rom. 15:13.
- become children of light: Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5; Jn. 12:36.
- do the same works Jesus has done, and even greater works: Jn. 14:12.

In the following studies, we will dive into all that is listed above starting the secret of Christ in us being revealed and Old Covenant v. New Covenant mindsets.

Homework:

Homework: Reaffirm the Treasure of the Holy Spirit in You

To reinforce what we learned today about "Christ in you" through the Holy Spirit (the amazing truth that He lives in every believer from the moment of faith), slowly read and meditate on these key passages. Let them remind you that you received the Holy Spirit the instant you believed—He is God's seal and guarantee inside you!

- **1 John 4:13-16** – God has given us His Spirit; we live in Him and He lives in us.
- **Ephesians 1:13-14** – You were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit the moment you believed.
- **Galatians 3:1-14** – You received the Spirit by faith, not by works.
- **2 Corinthians 1:22** – God put His seal on us by giving us the Holy Spirit as a guarantee.

"Finding Treasure in the Word" RiverLife Fellowship Life Link – Meeting 1 - 3/15/22
All studies with full notes in PDF format are available here:
https://christinyoustudymap.com/finding-treasure-in-the-word-bible-studies/

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Deeper study
The importance of **Col. 2:2-3** and **Jn. 16:12-15** and how they complement each other.

These two passages function like a divine "wealth management" system. Colossians identifies where the treasure is stored, while John explains the delivery method. Together, they show that the Christian life isn't about searching for *new* truths outside of Christ, but about the Holy Spirit unpacking the infinite truths already contained *within* Him.

1. The Warehouse: Christ as the Treasury (Colossians 2:2-3)
In Colossians, Paul describes Christ as the ultimate repository. By saying that **"all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"** are hidden in Him, Paul is making a massive claim: there is no "higher" knowledge or "secret" insight that exists apart from Jesus.

- **"Hidden" doesn't mean "unreachable":** In Greek, the word used for "hidden" (*apokryphos*) implies something stored up for safekeeping, like a treasure chest. It's hidden *for* us, not *from* us.
- **The Scope:** By saying "all," Paul leaves no room for external philosophies. If it is true wisdom, it originates in the person of Christ.
  2. The Pipeline: The Father, the Son, and the Spirit (John 16:12-15)
  If Colossians tells us *what* the treasure is, John 16 tells us how we get our hands on it. This passage outlines a beautiful "chain of custody" for divine truth:
- **The Source:** The Father owns everything.
- **The Heir:** The Son (Christ) has everything the Father has.
- **The Courier:** The Holy Spirit takes what belongs to the Son and "declares" (or reveals) it to the believer.

  See chart comparison below:

How They Complement Each Other

The synergy between these two passages creates a complete picture of spiritual growth. Here is how they interlock:

Concept	Colossians 2:2-3	John 16:12-15
The Content	The "Treasures" of wisdom and knowledge.	"All truth" and "All things the Father has."
The Location	Hidden in **Christ**.	Held by **Christ** (from the Father).
The Access	Found through "understanding" and "knowledge."	Delivered by the **Holy Spirit**'s guidance.
The Result	Full assurance and hearts encouraged.	The glorification of Christ in the believer.

The "Christ in You" Connection
The beauty of this connection is that the believer doesn't have to go on a pilgrimage to find this "treasure." Because the Holy Spirit dwells within the believer, and the Spirit's primary job is to take the riches of Christ and manifest them to us, the **treasure is now internal.**

You have the "Vault" (Christ) accessible through the "Key" (the Holy Spirit). When you read John 16, you see that the Spirit isn't bringing a *different* message; He is simply the one who opens the door to the "hidden" treasures Paul mentions in Colossians. He translates the infinite wisdom of Jesus into the specific, daily "full assurance" that a believer needs.

In short: Colossians 2 defines the **Wealth**, and John 16 defines the **Distribution**.

MEETING 02

The New Covenant - Part 1

The New Covenant – Part 1 (This is the good news!)

1. **Brief recap from last meeting.**
   a) Last meeting we went through an overview for this entire series of studies that we will be adventuring into. I introduced my study map and how its main purpose was to be a flow chart to the New Covenant and how the focus is Christ in you (the believer).
      - T**he Origin:** Study map ideas were born in 2016 during a mission trip to Ghana, Kenya, and Uganda.
      - **The Focus:** Understanding the New Covenant and our personal union with the Trinity and how "Christ in you" is the mystery that is revealed in the New Covenant for believers.
      - **The Method:** Reading the Word through the lens of the finished work of the cross and looking at full context.
      - **The Goal of this life group:** Finding "treasure" and joy in the Word through deeper digging.
2. **The secret that has been hidden for ages has now been revealed by the Holy Spirit.**
   a) What is the secret, what is the mystery? It is Christ in you, the hope of glory! **Col. 1:26-27**. This is where we are heading in future studies. However, before we dive into our union with Christ, we need to dive into the promised New Covenant to see what is there for us believers.
3. **Old Covenant v. New Covenant** (Hidden wisdom v. Spiritual wisdom)
   a) Let's read **Isa. 55:8-9 NLT**. His thoughts and ways higher than ours. Who can know His thoughts?
   b) Read **1 Cor. 2:9** and **2:16**. Note old covenant reference. Then read through full context: **1 Cor. 2:6-16**. Walk through it and explain old covenant in the new covenant text and not mixing them. Note the "but" in **v. 10-13** and in **vs 16** (New Covenant Mindset**)**.
   - Read **1 Cor. 2:10-13 (AMPC, AMP, ESV)** - Read **1 Cor. 2:16 (AMPC, AMP, ESV).**
     Also see **2 Pet. 1:4 (NKJV)** Believers may be partakers of His divine nature.
     <u>Note</u>: **In 2 Pet. 1:4,** the phrase *"may be partakers"* points to a dynamic, participatory relationship that is very similar to the "choice" of abiding in Christ. While your salvation (your legal standing before God) is a gift of grace, your participation in His nature is an ongoing experience that involves your active will. This also ties into intentionality that we will dig into in future studies.
4. **Old Covenant v. New Covenant** *(Punished for sin v. Christ took our punishment)*
   a) <u>Old Covenant: God punishes us for sin. Sin conscious</u>: **Psa. 39:9-11** (just one example)
      <u>New Covenant: Christ takes our punishment. God Conscious</u>: Those who believe in Him are delivered from deserved wrath of God.

- Dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. **(Rom. 6:8-11 NKJV/KJV)** (old man crucified with Christ, body of sin done away with/destroyed.)
- (Died once to sin. We did not die to sinning, we died to sin nature - new nature in Christ)
- The new way of faith: no longer righteous through obeying the law; now righteous through faith in Christ. **Phil. 3:7-9**.

5. **Old and New Covenant Mindsets**
   a) <u>Old Covenant mindset</u>: {Sin conscious > Law}
   Guilt, condemnation, shame, fear > Right where Satan wants us to stay.
   b) <u>New Covenant mindset</u> {God conscious > Relationship}
   Abundant life, joy, peace, right with God > Right where God wants us to stay.
   - I'm going to dive more into these two mindsets in our next study.

   c) Raised to new life with Christ. Set your mind on things above. **Col. 3:1-3 (AMPC).**
6. **Christ Took Our Punishment** *(Christ was the propitiation for our sin)*
   a) <u>New Covenant: Christ takes our punishment. God Conscious</u>: Those who believe in Him are delivered from deserved wrath of God. Christ is the "Propitiation" for our sins. **1 Jn. 2:2, 4:10; Rom. 3:21-26**.
   b) *"…Through the "propitiation" sacrifice of Christ, he who believes upon Him is by God's own act delivered from justly deserved wrath, and comes under the new covenant of grace."* ~ Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words.
   c) The New Covenant has provided a New Way of Faith. **Gal. 3:19-29**.
   d) *"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself."* **2 Cor. 5:19; cf. Col. 1:19–20;** fuller context: **2 Cor. 5:18–21.** Let's unpack this a little bit: (*Scriptures referenced below are for homework*). While God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself on the cross, this reconciliation—along with forgiveness of sins, right standing with God, adoption as children, and an eternal inheritance—**must be received through faith**.
   As **Rom. 3:25 (AMPC)** puts it: *"Whom God put forward as a mercy seat and propitiation by His blood [the cleansing and life-giving sacrifice of atonement and reconciliation],* ***to be received through faith****."*
   e) **For the Believer: Intimate Union with the Triune God**
   - Union with the Father through Christ and the Spirit
     Jn. 14:20; 17:21; Eph. 2:18; 4:6; 1 Jn. 1:3.
   - Union with the Son (Jesus Christ)
     Jn. 15:4–5; Rom. 6:5; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:3.
   - Union with the Holy Spirit (Indwelling and Fellowship)
     Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 2:22; 1 Jn. 3:24.
   - Union with All Three Persons of the Trinity
     Matt. 28:19; John 14:16–17, 23; Gal. 4:6; 1 Pet. 1:2.

f) **For the Unbeliever: Eternal Separation from God**
   - Those who do not believe remain under God's wrath and face eternal separation from His presence – **Matt. 7:23; 25:41, 46; Luke 16:26; John 3:36; 2 Thess. 1:8–9; Rev. 20:14–15; 21:8**.

To be continued…. next meeting we will dive into the New Covenant confirmed with Christ's blood and the glory of the New Covenant.

Homework:

Read through "For the Believer" and "For the Unbeliever" scriptures above.

Propitiation – [A-1,Verb,G2433, hilaskomai] – Strongs #2433

Propitiation – Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words
This is an in-depth study that dives into the Old Covenant sacrifices and offerings to help better understand and appreciate the New Covenant – The once and for all time perfect and acceptable blood sacrifice to God.

Rom. 3:1-5:21
Full context: Christ Took Our Punishment/Faith of Abraham/Faith brings joy.

Read through Gal. 3:1-4:7
Full context: The Law and Faith in Christ.

Rom. 6:1-23 (NKJV)
Full Context: Believers are now: Dead to Sin, Alive to God / From Slaves of Sin to Slaves of Righteousness / Power of sin broken.

MEETING 03

The New Covenant - Part 2

Finding Treasure in The Word

The New Covenant - Part 2

Forgiveness of sin/Power of sin broken/walk in newness of life

1. **A brief recap from our last meeting.**
   a) We talked about the contrast between The Old Covenant and The New Covenant. Sin conscious vs. God conscious, Law vs. relationship. Old Covenant Mind set vs. New Covenant mind set.
   b) We also talked about not mixing covenants when studying scripture and when walking out the Christian life in relationship with Christ in the New Covenant and not mixing mind sets law vs. grace.
   c) We also talked about how Christ took our punishment.
2. **Old and New Covenant Mindsets** (Let's go into this a little deeper)
   a) Last study we talked about Old Covenant Mind set vs. New Covenant mind set. Law vs. relationship. Notice the definition of the two mind sets:
      - <u>Old Covenant mind set</u>: {Sin conscious} [keeping the law]
        Guilt, condemnation, shame, fear > Right where Satan wants us to stay.
      - <u>New Covenant mind set:</u> {God conscious} [walking in newness of life]
        Abundant life, joy, peace, right with God > Right where God wants us to stay.
   b) I want to dig a little deeper with some good examples of Old Covenant thinking while living in the New Covenant as a believer.
   c) Let's read through **Phil. 2:12-13** (**KJV**, **AMPC)**. Let's note the contrast between **v. 12 & 13**. A good summation/paraphrase of these two verses together would be: *"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (a positive reverential awe and serious humility before God), but be encourage, **for** it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure."*
      - So, this should be encouraging because you're not on your own with working out your salvation with fear and trembling because God is working in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." This gives me hope that I am not alone in this relationship with Christ.
   d) Letting the Holy Spirit produce His good fruit in us (Gal. 5:22–23 NLT) is key to working out our salvation. We must be careful not to turn verse 12 into works-based salvation. Yet there is real intentionality on our part as we work out—and work on—our relationship with Christ. Scripture tells us to do many things: put off the old, put on the new, lay aside every weight, set our hearts and minds on things above, seek first the Kingdom of God, fix our gaze on Jesus, be steadfast, stand firm in the faith, add to our faith, and exercise our faith. All of this "working out and working on" flows from intentional cooperation with the Spirit—abiding in Christ and working out our relationship through humility, surrender, reverence, and awe.

I'll be diving much deeper into this "intentionality" in future studies.

- "Work out" = bring to expression what God has already worked in through the new birth, not "work for" what you do not yet have.
- "Fear and trembling" = reverent awareness of God's holiness and our dependence, not dread of punishment for those in Christ, especially when read with **1 Jn. 4:18** ("perfect love casts out fear").

e) "Working out" salvation is best understood as faith-filled participation in what God is already doing:
   - It is yielding to the Spirit rather than self-striving.
   - It is abiding in the Vine (John 15) rather than independent achieving.
   - It is cooperation with the Holy Spirit rather than fleshly effort.

f) Old Covenant mind set: Fear of punishment from God. Carnally minded.
   New Covenant mind set: Life and peace. Spiritually minded. It's about what He did for us, not what we do for Him. God's wrath was poured out on Jesus. **Isa. 53**.
   Rom. 8:5-6 (NKJV) is a perfect example of these two mind sets. *"Carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."*
   - What are you setting your mind and thoughts on? Fix your mind (thoughts) on these things: **Phil. 4:8.**
   - Raised to new life with Christ. Set your mind on things above **Col. 3:1-3 (AMPC).**

3. **The New Covenant (Let's see how wonderful it is)**
   a) Let's start with Old Covenant prophecies that spoke of a New Covenant that was coming.
   b) A new heart and a new spirit. **Jer. 31:31-34**
   c) The law put within us and written on our hearts. A new teacher, the Holy Spirit and right relationship with God. **Ezek. 36:26**
   d) His life made an offering for sin. What Christ did on the cross for us. **Isa. 53**
   e) The Holy Spirit, the comforter will teach all things and guide us into all truth. **Jn. 14:15-20, 26-27; 16:5-15**. Again, this is still old covenant when Jesus was teaching this. He was talking about the new covenant that was coming. The **Holy Spirit** is an important part of the New Covenant. There is no "in Christ" without the **Holy Spirit**.
   f) **Let's dive into the New Covenant: Heb. 4:14-16, 6:16-7:28, 8:6-8,13, 9:11-15, 20-28, 10:1-18; 1 Cor. 11:23-25; 2 Cor. 3:7-18; 1 Ptr. 3:18**.
   g) ...back to **2 Cor. 3**. We are to be ministers of the New Covenant. **2 Cor. 3:4-6**.
   h) God's free gift leads to our being made right with God. This free gift is forgiveness to many through Jesus Christ. **Rom. 5:8-21**.
4. **Benefits of the New Covenant** (Free from the power of sin)

a) We who believe in Him are united with Him in His death and are raised to new Life with Him. Dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Jesus Christ. Sin in no longer your

master. Believers no longer live under the requirements of the law. Now you live under the freedom of God's grace. **Rom. 6:1-18 (NKJV)**.

b) (Died once to sin. We did not die to sinning, we died to sin nature and now have a New nature in Christ) – Our Spirit is complete, our body and soul (mind) need to be renewed. **Rom. 12:2**. Our spirit does not need renewing, but our body and soul does. We still have "flesh" to deal with but we (believers), no longer have a sinful nature.
c) We who believe in Christ are no longer a slave to sin, no longer prisoner to sin, no longer locked up under the control of sin. We have died to our old life, no longer living for ourselves but for Christ **2 Cor. 5:14-15**. This is the benefit of the New Covenant, this new way of faith.
d) Prior to salvation, we are locked under sin, slaves to sin and <u>prisoners of sin</u>. Only then are we set free! We are set completely free into new life when we believe in Him.
e) We receive God's promise of freedom only by believing in Jesus Christ. **Gal. 3:21-22**.
f) Other translations of "prisoners of sin" in **Gal. 3:21-22.**
   (NIV, TLV) – Locked up under the control of sin.
   a. (AMP) – Imprisoned everyone [everything—the entire world] under sin.
   b. (NASB) – Shut up under sin. (TPT) – Under the power of sin.
   c. (NKJV) – Confined under sin. (KJV) – Under sin.
   d. (MSG) – Out of right relationship with God.
g) Died to old life, new life has begun, walk in newness of life. **2 Cor. 5:14-21**.
h) Died to the power of the law, new way of living in the Spirit. **Rom. 7:4-6.**
i) Died to the law, old self crucified, no longer I live but Christ lives in me. **Gal. 2:16-21**.
j) Before faith in Christ, you were dead, in prison and a slave to sin. After faith in Christ, we have new life and are a slave to righteous living! Free from the power of sin!
k) **This is the good news of the Gospel**: The New Covenant provides a new way of faith **Gal. 3:23-25 NLT** and now those who believe have full and complete access to His presence by the blood of Christ. (**Heb. 10:19-23 AMPC**).

To be continued…. next meeting we will dive into Jesus Christ being our High Priest and perfect sacrifice and what that actually means.

Homework:

Melchizedek Is Greater Than Abraham / Jesus Is like Melchizedek
Full context: **Heb. 5:1-10** and All of **Heb. chapter 7**

Christ Is Our High Priest
Full context: All of Heb. Chapters 4-8

Christ Is the Perfect Sacrifice
Full context: Heb. 9:11-28

Christ's Sacrifice Once for All
Full context: Heb. 10:1-18

Christ Took Our Punishment
Full context: Rom. 3:21-26

The Glory of the New Covenant
Full context: 2 Cor. 3:7-18

Sin's Power Is Broken
Full context: All of Rom. chapter 6

The work of the Holy Spirit and our union with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Read all of John chapters 14 – 17.

Believers are now: Dead to Sin, Alive to God / From Slaves of Sin to Slaves of Righteousness
Full Context: All of **Rom. chapter 6** (NKJV)

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Deeper study

Commentary on Galatians 3:21–22 (NLT) – (pulled from several commentaries)

*"**21** Is there a conflict, then, between God's law and God's promises? Absolutely not! If the law could give us new life, we could be made right with God by obeying it. **22** But the Scriptures declare that we are all prisoners of sin, so we receive God's promise of freedom only by believing in Jesus Christ."*

This brief passage is one of the sharpest distillations in Paul's letters of the radical shift from the Old Covenant (centered on the Law) to the New Covenant (centered on faith in Christ). Paul is defending the gospel of grace against those who insisted that Gentile believers must also keep the Mosaic Law to be fully right with God. The "stark difference" you identified—Law versus salvation by grace through faith—is exactly what Paul is driving home.

1. No Conflict Between Law and Promise (v. 21a)

Paul begins with a rhetorical question that anticipates an objection: *If the promises to Abraham are fulfilled in Christ (as Paul has argued in vv. 16–19), does that mean the Law given later through Moses is opposed to those promises?*

His answer is emphatic: **"Absolutely not!"** (Greek: *mē genoito*, a strong Pauline idiom meaning "May it never be!"). The Law and the promise are not enemies; they serve different purposes in God's single redemptive plan.

2. The Purpose and Limitation of the Law (v. 21b)

Paul states a counterfactual: **"If the law could give us new life, we could be made right with God by obeying it."**

- "Give us new life" (Greek: *zoōpoieō*) means impart spiritual vitality, regeneration, the power to live in true righteousness.
- "Made right with God" is Paul's key term *dikaiōsis* (justification)—being declared righteous in God's sight.

Paul's point is that the Law was **never designed** to do either of these things. It cannot impart life or justify. If it could, then righteousness would indeed come by works of the Law. But it cannot, so righteousness cannot come that way.

This directly undermines the Judaizers' claim that circumcision and Law-keeping are necessary for full acceptance by God. The Law is good and holy (Rom 7:12), but it is not salvific.

3. Universal Imprisonment Under Sin (v. 22a)

"But the Scriptures declare that we are all prisoners of sin…"

Paul appeals to the Old Testament itself (especially Ps 143:2; Deut 27:26; cf. Gal 3:10) to show that the Law's actual effect is to reveal and confine humanity under sin.

- The verb "shut up" or "imprison" (Greek: *synkleiō*) pictures the Law as a jailer that locks everyone in the prison of sin (cf. Gal 3:23; Rom 3:19; 11:32).
- "We are **all** prisoners" — Jew and Gentile alike, with no exceptions. No one escapes the verdict of guilt by their own performance.

The Law, rather than being the solution, functions as a diagnostic tool: it exposes the disease (sin) but does not cure it. It increases awareness of trespass (Rom 5:20; 7:7–13) and thereby heightens the need for rescue.

4. The Promise Received by Faith Alone (v. 22b)

"…so that we receive God's promise of freedom only by believing in Jesus Christ."

Here is the heart of the New Covenant contrast:

- The "promise" is the blessing originally given to Abraham (justification by faith, the Spirit, inheritance as sons; Gal 3:14, 16–18).
- It is received **only** (Greek: *ek pisteōs*, "out of faith") by believing in Jesus Christ.
- The result is **freedom**—release from the prison of sin and the curse of the Law (Gal 3:13; 4:5; 5:1).

Stark Contrast Summarized

Aspect	**Old Covenant (Law)**	**New Covenant (Grace through Faith)**
Means	Obedience to commandments	Believing in Jesus Christ
Power	Reveals sin, condemns, imprisons	Imparts life, justifies, liberates
Result for sinner	Conviction of guilt; no one is justified (v. 11)	Declaration of righteousness; freedom from sin
Role in God's plan	Temporary guardian until Christ (3:24–25)	Permanent fulfillment of the promise to Abraham
Who receives blessing	Only hypothetical perfect keepers (impossible)	All who believe, Jew and Gentile alike

Paul is not disparaging the Law; he is clarifying its subordinate and preparatory role. The Law drives us to despair of self-effort and to cling to Christ alone. The Old Covenant says, “Do this and live,” but no one does. The New Covenant says, “Believe in the One who did this perfectly in your place, and you will live.”

This passage, therefore, stands as one of the clearest biblical affirmations that justification is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone—apart from works of the Law.

Double bonus deep-dive into Philippians 2:12–13

Reference Notes: Philippians 2:12–13 and “Working Out” Salvation in New Covenant Context

1. The Built-In Tension in Philippians 2:12–13

Philippians 2:12–13 presents a balanced dynamic:

- “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” emphasizes intentionality, seriousness, and active response.
- “For it is God who works in you, both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (v. 13) grounds the entire process in God’s prior and empowering grace.

Key distinctions:

- “Work out” (Greek: katergazomai) means to bring to full expression or completion what God has already worked in through regeneration and the new birth—not “work for” salvation or rely on self-powered effort.
- The connecting word “for” (Greek: gar) shows that the believer’s response flows from God’s initiating and sustaining work.

When read alongside 1 John 4:18 (“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment”), the “fear and trembling” mentioned in Pil. 2:12 is not dread of punishment (which the cross has settled) but reverent awe before God’s holiness and complete dependence on His enabling power.

2. Healthy vs. Unhealthy Fear of the Lord

Scripture distinguishes two kinds of fear:

- Unhealthy fear: Expectation of punishment, anxiety about rejection, or humiliation. This produces hiding, pretense, and self-effort, aligning more with a law-based mindset. [Old Testament Mindset]

- Healthy fear: Reverent awe, deep seriousness about God's holiness, combined with trust in His goodness revealed in Christ. This draws the heart closer in humility and joyful dependence. [New Testament Mindset]

1 John 4:18 directly addresses the unhealthy side: fear involving torment (punishment) is incompatible with perfected love. At the cross, the punishment question is resolved, leaving a reverent awe that honors God's grace rather than treating it lightly.

3. Growth Trajectory: Fear → Humility → Delight

A progression in relating to God can be observed in Scripture:

1. Fear (initial stage) Many begin with fear centered on pain or punishment. While this can be a starting point, the gospel moves believers beyond tormenting fear into confident love, since judgment was borne by Christ.
2. Humility (trusting God's goodness) True humility agrees with God's verdict on His holiness and the believer's identity in Christ. It produces relational freedom: repentance becomes approaching the Father confidently rather than cowering.
3. Delight (mature humility and surrender) Delight represents humility at its deepest: loving and yielding to God's will because it is seen as good, pleasing, and perfect. Supporting passages include Psalm 40:8 ("I delight to do Your will"), Psalm 1:2 (delighting in the law as fulfilled in Christ), Psalm 37:4, Luke 12:32 ("Your Father delights to give you the kingdom"), and Hebrews 12:2 (Jesus enduring "for the joy set before Him").

This trajectory aligns with New Covenant reality: unhealthy fear (torment) is cast out by perfect love, while the Spirit cultivates humility and delight as believers mature.

4. Abiding in Christ as the Essence of "Working Out"

"Working out" salvation is best understood as faith-filled participation in what God is already doing:

- It is yielding to the Spirit rather than self-striving.
- It is abiding in the Vine (John 15) rather than independent achieving.
- It is cooperation with the Holy Spirit rather than fleshly effort.

Supporting connections:

- Colossians 2–3, Romans 8:13, 2 Peter 1:5–7, and Galatians 5:22–23 show that growth (putting sin to death, bearing fruit, adding virtues) occurs "by the Spirit" and through abiding, not rule-keeping.
- The contrast remains clear: effort "by the flesh" produces religion; dependence "by the Spirit" produces relationship.

5. Summary Statement on Philippians 2:12–13

"Working out" salvation is intentional response to God's inner work by His Spirit:

- A sober awareness that God Himself is present and active in the believer's heart ("holy ground").
- Paired with confidence that He is for us in Christ, not against us.
- Expressed through yielding, abiding, and cooperation—not gritting teeth or striving to earn acceptance.

Under the New Covenant, the remaining "fear" is reverent awe that leads to humility and delight, never a slavery-fear of punishment.

MEETING 04

The New Covenant - Part 3

Finding Treasure in The Word

The New Covenant - Part 3
Benefits of the New Covenant and Christ the Perfect Sacrifice Took Our Punishment
(Old Covenant Mind Set vs. New Covenant Mind Set)

1. **A brief recap from our last meeting.**
   a) *Last meeting, we talked about Christ being the "propitiation" for our sins. He took our place; He took our punishment.*
   We also talked about Old and New Covenant mind sets:
   b) Old Covenant mind set: {Sin conscious} [keeping the law]
   Guilt, condemnation, shame, fear > Right where Satan wants us to stay.
   c) New Covenant mind set {God conscious} [walking in newness of life]
   Abundant life, joy, peace, right with God > Right where God wants us to stay.
2. **The New Covenant** (Let's dive in deep and see how wonderful it is)
   a) *Last meeting we discussed what the New Covenant is and we went through old covenant prophecies about the new covenant that was to come through Jesus Christ and we started to talk about Christ being our high priest.*
   I wanted to back up and read this again: **Christ is our High Priest Heb. 4:14-16.**
   b) Now let's dive into Christ being our High Priest and what that means.
3. **The Priesthood of Jesus Is Superior to The Old Testament Law**
   a) **Heb. 6:16-7:28, 8:6-13** *(Jesus is like Melchizedek) – (see comm. on **Heb. 7:18** below)*
   b) **Heb. 6:16-7:28 –** God has given a promise and an oath, these two things are unchangeable! We who believe in Christ and have fled to Him for refuge have a strong and trustworthy hope that leads us through the curtain into the inner sanctuary. (AMPC) ..this hope… "it cannot slip and it cannot break down under whoever steps out upon it." ..The priesthood of Jesus. There is much to study here in regards to Jesus being like Melchizedek.
   c) **Heb. 8:6-13** – Jesus Christ is our high priest. What does this mean? Jesus who is our high priest has been given a ministry that is far superior to the old priesthood. He is the one who mediates for us a far better covenant with God based on better promises. Dig into this and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the importance of this to you.
4. **Christ Is the Perfect Sacrifice**
   a) **Heb. 9:11-15, 20-28, 10:1-18** *(Christ is the perfect sacrifice once and for all. Through His blood He has made salvation "available" to all. All who believe in Him will be saved. He made a way through the cross!)*
   b) **Heb. 9:11-15** – Christ is the perfect sacrifice. He entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever! **Heb. 9:11-15** is all about His blood and what that means for those who believe in Him!

c) **Heb. 9:20-28** – continues on the importance of the blood of Christ, of His perfect sacrifice. Note in vs. 28 "so also Christ was offered once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again, not to deal with our sins, but to bring salvation to all who are eagerly waiting for him." – The author of Hebrews here uses the word "many" instead of "all". ...to take away the sins of "many" people. He did not say "all" people. That is because you have to "believe" in Christ to "receive" this salvation. Your sins are not taken away if you do not believe in Christ.
d) **Heb. 10:1-8** – Christ's sacrifice once for all. ..." But our high priest offered Himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time... as opposed to the old system, the old covenant of sacrifices over and over and over again.

To be continued…. next meeting, we will dive into the free gift of salvation through faith and our union with Christ as a result.

Homework:

Rom. 8:5-6 (NKJV) What are you setting your mind on? - full context: **Rom. 8:1-17**. Note: when reading this remember that Paul is talking to believers and also believers who are going through persecution because of their faith in Christ.

1 Jn. 4:18 (NLT) Perfect love expels all fear.
Full context (Loving One Another) **1 Jn.7-21**.

Heb. 7:18 (AMP) "For, on the one hand, a former commandment is cancelled because of its weakness and uselessness [because of its inability to justify the sinner before God]"

Heb. 7:18 commentary from Bibleref.com does a great job explaining this:
https://www.bibleref.com/Hebrews/7/Hebrews-7-18.html
Read through the commentary and all the Bible references noted in the commentary.

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Below is a handy side by side comparison of Old Covenant vs. New Covenant

Aspect	Old Covenant (Old Testament Focus)	New Covenant (New Testament Focus)
Primary Mindset	Sin-conscious: constant awareness and reminder of sin and failure to keep the law perfectly	God-conscious / Righteousness-conscious: awareness of God's forgiveness, acceptance, and imparted righteousness
Core Requirement	Keeping the Law (Torah obedience and animal sacrifices) to maintain right standing	Walking in newness of life by grace through faith in Christ's finished work
Emotional / Spiritual State	Guilt, condemnation, shame, and fear — exactly where Satan wants believers to remain trapped	Abundant life, joy, peace, right with God: living in the reality of full acceptance and sonship
How Sin is Handled	Repeated animal sacrifices that covered sin temporarily but served as an annual reminder of sin (could never remove it permanently)	Christ's once-for-all sacrifice that completely removes sin and cleanses the conscience once for all
Access to God	Mediated through priests, temple, and rituals; fear and distance at Sinai (people trembled and asked Moses to speak for them)	Direct, bold access to God's presence through Jesus; no veil, no fear
Justification & Salvation	Attempted through perfect obedience to the Law and sacrificial system (impossible for fallen humans; brings curse if not perfectly kept)	By grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone — the new way of faith revealed in the New Testament; salvation is found in no one else
Key Bible Passages	• Hebrews 10:1-4 (law was a shadow; sacrifices reminded people of sins year after year) • Romans 3:20 (by works of the law no one is justified) • Romans 7:24 ("O wretched man that I am!") • Exodus 20:18-19 (people afraid at Sinai) • Galatians 3:10 (cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things written in the law) • Galatians 3:11 (no one is justified before God by the law)	• Romans 6:4 (walk in newness of life) • Romans 8:1 (no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus) • Hebrews 10:16-17 (sins remembered no more) • 2 Corinthians 5:21 (we become the righteousness of God in Him) • Hebrews 10:19-22 (boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus) • Romans 5:1 (peace with God through justification by faith) • 1 John 4:18 (perfect love casts out fear) • Ephesians 2:8-9 (saved by grace through faith, not works) • Galatians 2:16 (justified by faith in

Christ, not works of the law) • Galatians 2:20 (I live by faith in the Son of God) • Galatians 3:24-25 (law was guardian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith; now faith has come) • Acts 4:12 (salvation in no one else) • John 14:6 (Jesus: "I am the way, the truth, and the life")

MEETING 05

The New Covenant - Part 4

Finding Treasure in The Word

The New Covenant - Part 4
Christ's Blood: Sealing the Glorious Covenant and Our Freedom in Him

1. **<u>Christ Is the Perfect Sacrifice</u>** (recap)
   a) **Heb. 8:1 - 10:18** *(Christ is our high priest and is the perfect sacrifice once and for all. Through His blood He has made salvation "available" to all. All who believe in Him will be saved. He made a way through the cross!)*
2. **<u>A New Covenant Confirmed With Christ's Blood</u>**
   a) **1 Cor. 11:23-25 (Specifically vs 25) (NLT)** "…an agreement confirmed with my blood." **(AMPC)** *"the new covenant [ratified and established] in My blood"* - ratified = sign or give formal consent to (a treaty, contract, or agreement), making it officially valid. (For further study see also: **Mat. 26:26-29; Mrk. 14:22-25; Lk. 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:17-33; Jn. 6:47-58. Jn. 6:47-58** covers this best. (Full context: **Jesus Is the Bread of Life Jn. 6:22-58**) Feed on Jesus! It's important to note that just before **Jn. 6:22-58** we are told about the miracle of feeding thousands in **Jn. 6:1-15**. So, Jesus is now talking about spiritual food.
   b) **Also important to note:**
      - **<u>Old Testament Foundations</u>**: Passages like **Exodus 16** (manna) and **Isaiah 55:1-3** foreshadow Jesus as the ultimate provider, <u>contrasting temporary provision with eternal fulfillment</u>.
      - **<u>New Testament Parallels</u>**: **Jn. 4:13-14, 7:37-38; Mat. 5:6; 1 Cor. 11:23-29**
3. **<u>The Glory of The New Covenant</u>**
   a) **2 Cor. 3:7-18; 1 Pet. 3:18 (AMPC)**. (also refer to **Heb. 8:6-13** which also refers to **Jer. 31-34** which spoke of this new and glorious way that was to come and is now here because of Christ's sacrifice) *(Old way replaced by a new more glorious way)*
   b) …back to **2 Cor. 3**. We are to be <u>ministers of The New Covenant</u>. **2 Cor. 3:4-6**.
   c) Now let's read in full context: **2 Cor. 3:7-4:7**.
      - This new glorious way (The New Covenant) is God's "free" gift leads to our being made right with God. This "free" gift is forgiveness to many through Jesus Christ. **Rom. 5:8-21**. Through the cross, Jesus Christ made salvation "available" to all. **Rom. 5:17**: *"But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, <u>for all who receive it</u> will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ."*
      - Only those who believe in Jesus Christ will be saved. **Acts 16:31 (AMP)**. All who believe in Christ (those who receive Him) will be saved. *"…you and your household [if they also believe]."* When one believes in Christ, they receive the finished work of the cross.

d) This also ties into **1 Cor. 15:22-23 (NLT)**: *"Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back."*
   - All who belong to Christ is referring to believers. We will touch more on this in future studies.

4. **Benefits of The New Covenant**
   a) Those who believe in Jesus Christ are united with Him in His death, raised to new life with Him, dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Jesus Christ. Sin is no longer their master. Believers no longer live under the requirements of the law. Now they live under the freedom of God's grace. **Rom. 6:1-18 (AMPC)**. Those who have believed in Jesus Christ have been set free from the power of sin.
      - Notice that this scripture does not say *"you have been set free from sin."* It says *"you have been set free from the power of sin."* There is a difference. We still have flesh (and the temptation thereof) to deal with, see (**Jas. 1:13-15**). However, sin is no longer our master.

Next meeting: Benefits of The New Covenant continued.

Homework:

1 Jn. 4:7-21
Full context: **Those who believe in Christ Abide in Him and Him in them**.

Jn. 6:22-59
Full context: **Jesus is the bread of life, feed on Jesus!**

Jn. chapters 14 – 17
Full context: **The work of the Holy Spirit and our union with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Rom. 8:5-6 (NKJV) What are you setting your mind on? - full context: **Rom. 8:1-17**. Note: when reading this remember that Paul is talking believers who are going through persecution.

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Deeper study on Adam

A note on believers being in Christ. Universalists like to point to 1 Cor. 15:22 as all being in Christ. Such as just as all are in Adam all are in Christ. 1 Cor. 15:22 is not saying that, especially when you bring in vs 23 for more context. Let's read this in multiple translations:

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

1 Cor. 15:22-23 (KJV)

"Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back".

1 Cor. 15:22-23 (NLT)

"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ".

1 Cor. 15:22-23 (ESV)

"For just as [because of their union of nature] in Adam all people die, so also [by virtue of their [union of nature] shall all in Christ be made alive. But each in his own rank and turn: Christ (the Messiah) [is] the firstfruits, then those who are Christ's [own will be resurrected] at His coming".

1 Cor. 15:22-23 (AMPC)

We can see above that only those who belong to Christ will be raised to new life. Only believers "belong to Christ." All of humanity is in Adam, but only believers are in Christ. All of humanity is not automatically in Christ because of the finished work of the cross. As noted above, the finished work of the cross made a way all of humanity to come to Christ and to be in Christ but that only way is by believing in Christ and as a result receiving the finished work of the cross. Being in Christ is outcome of believing in Christ.

"Because mankind is in Adam, all of mankind die (both physically and spiritually). However, in Christ all who have believed in Him for eternal salvation shall be made alive (both physically and spiritually). Paul in this passage is referring only to the believers in the Church and not the unbelieving dead" (1 Cor. 15:22 – The Grace New Testament Commentary).

"Adam and Christ are presented as federal heads. This means that they acted for other people. And all who are related to them are affected by their actions. All who are descended from Adam die. So in Christ all shall be made alive. This verse has sometimes been taken to teach universal

salvation. It is argued that the same ones who die in Adam will be made alive in Christ, and that all will eventually be saved. But that is not what the verse says. The key expressions are in Adam and in Christ. All who are in Adam die. All who are in Christ shall be made alive, that is, only believers in the Lord Jesus Christ will be raised from the dead to dwell eternally with Him. The all who shall be made alive is defined in verse 23 as those who are Christ's at His Coming." (1 Cor. 15:22 Believer's Bible Commentary)

"As in the first Adam all men, that were in him, became subject both to temporal death, and all the afflictions and miseries of this life, which are so many little deaths, Rom. 8:36, and forerunners of natural death, or attendants upon it; and also to that eternal death, which is the consequent of the guilt of sin, Rom. 6:23: so in Christ, that is, through the merits of his death, and through his resurrection, all that are in him, being chosen in him, given to him, and by faith implanted into him, are not only spiritually made alive, (being passed from death unto life, 1 Jn. 3:14), but shall be raised from the dead unto eternal life. But though this text doth not prove the general resurrection, (being only intended of believers, that are members of Christ), yet it doth not oppose it. But that the all here mentioned is no more than all believers, appeareth not only from the term in Christ in this verse, but from the whole following discourse; which is only concerning the resurrection of believers to life, not that of the wicked to eternal condemnation." (1 Cor. 15:22 Matthew Poole's Commentary)

Now I want to take all I just said above regarding "in Adam" and" in Christ and break it down into a simpler and easier way to digest summary.

Here is my breakdown of 1 Cor. 15:22-23 highlighting the stark contrast between "In Adam" and In Christ" and who belongs to Christ:

In Adam (all who are "born" – natural birth) = Second death – the lake of fire; eternal separation from God.

In Christ (all who are "born again" by faith – new life) = Eternal life – no part in the lake of fire; forever belonging to God. All who belong to Christ (Belonging to Christ is conditional on belief)

Everyone begins "in Adam." However, only those who, by faith, receive Christ are transferred to being "in Christ", i.e. belong to Christ and are no longer separated. (**Rom 5:12–21; Jn. 1:12–13; Rom 8:1, 9; Gal 3:26–29**).

Why call it **second death** in lieu of just death? Great question—calling it the second death is deliberate and theologically crucial because Scripture itself uses that exact term four times in **Rev. 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8**. Here's why it matters:

There is already a **first death** – Everyone “in Adam” dies physically because of sin (Rom. 5:12; Heb 9:27). That’s the first death—the separation of body and soul. The **second death** is far worse. It is the final, eternal separation of the whole person (body and soul) from God in the lake of fire after the resurrection and judgment. **Rev. 20:14–15** and **21:8** make clear that death and Hades (i.e., the state of the unbelieving dead) are thrown into the lake of fire. That final casting is called “the second death.”

Believers are exempt from the second death: **Rev. 20:6**: *“Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power.”*
That’s why the contrast is so stark and comforting:

- **In Adam →** first death and second death.
- **In Christ →** first death only (physical), then resurrection to life; no second death.

Double bonus – even deeper into 1 Cor. 15:22-23

This is a significant passage in Pauline theology, specifically regarding **Federal Headship**—the idea that Adam and Christ represent two different "humanities."

Your focus on the phrase **"those who belong to Christ"** (Greek: *hoi tou Christou*) aligns with the majority of historical and grammatical commentaries. In this context, "all" does not necessarily mean every human being who ever lived, but rather "all who are within the sphere" of the person being discussed.

Here is a breakdown of commentaries and insights focused on your specific area of interest.

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1. The Greek "Possessive" Case

The phrase "those who are Christ’s" (*hoi tou Christou*) is in the genitive case in Greek, which denotes **possession or relationship**.

- **Gordon Fee (New International Commentary on the NT):** Fee argues that the "all" in verse 22 is qualified by the "in Christ" relationship. Just as "all" who are "in Adam" (his descendants) die, so "all" who are "in Christ" (believers) will be made alive. He notes that Paul’s focus here is not the general resurrection of all people, but the **soteriological** (salvational) resurrection of the church.
- **Insight:** The text implies a boundary. If you are not "of Christ," you are not included in this specific "rank" or "turn" of the resurrection of life.

2. The Concept of "Tagma" (Order/Rank)

Verse 23 uses the word *tagma*, a military term referring to a company of soldiers or a specific sequence.

- **The Pillar New Testament Commentary:** This commentary emphasizes that the "order" is strictly chronological and relational.

1. **The Commander:** Christ (the Firstfruits).
2. **The Troops:** Those who belong to Him (the Church).

- **Charles Hodge:** A classic Reformed commentator, Hodge points out that the resurrection of the wicked is not the subject of this chapter. Paul is writing to comfort believers about their future. Therefore, "those who belong to Christ" are the only ones in view during this specific sequence of the "harvest."

3. The Contrast of Representative Heads

To understand why "belonging" is the prerequisite for this life, commentators often look at the "Adam vs. Christ" parallel in verse 22.

- **David Guzik (Enduring Word):** Guzik highlights that being "in Christ" is a choice of faith, whereas being "in Adam" is a matter of birth. He notes: *"We don't have to do anything to be 'in Adam.' We are born into him. But we must choose to be 'in Christ.'"*
- **Albert Barnes:** Barnes' Notes on the Bible explains that the "all" who are made alive must be restricted to the same class of people who are "in Christ." He argues that if "all" meant every human in the second half of the verse, it would contradict the many other places where Paul speaks of the "perishing" of those who reject the Gospel.

Summary Table: "In Adam" vs. "In Christ"

Feature	**In Adam (Unbelievers)**	**In Christ (Believers)**
Relationship	By Natural Birth	By Spiritual Rebirth (Belonging)
Status	"All" who are in the flesh	"All" who belong to Him
Outcome	Death (Separation)	Life (Resurrection)
Timing	Not the focus of v. 23	At His Coming (*Parousia*)

Key Takeaway: The "belonging" is the defining characteristic. In the logic of 1 Corinthians 15, the resurrection to eternal life **is a benefit of the "New Covenant" relationship**. <u>If one does not</u>

belong to the "company" (rank) of Christ through faith, they are not part of this specific "harvest" described by Paul.

MEETING 06

The New Covenant - Part 5

Finding Treasure in The Word

The New Covenant - Part 5
Mind Renewal: Transforming Ourselves by Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus

1. Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed…
   - Jesus talking about the New Covenant which is established by His blood.
     1 Cor. 11:23-25 (AMP) *"This cup is the new covenant [ratified and established] in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in [affectionate] remembrance of Me."*
   - Jesus being the bread of life and how we are to feed on Him. **Jn. 6:22-58.**
   - Believers living in the New Covenant being ministers of the New Covenant.
     2 Cor. 3:4-6 and in full context: **2 Cor. 3:7-4:7**.
   - Through the cross Jesus Christ made salvation "available" to all who would receive Him. **Rom. 5:17** and in full context **Rom. 5:8-21**.
   - How **Heb. 8:6-13** which also refers to **Jer. 31-34**, spoke of this new and glorious way (The New Covenant) that was to come and is now here because of Christ's sacrifice) *(Old way replaced by a new more glorious way)*
   - All who believe in Christ (those who receive Him) will be saved. **Acts 16:31 (AMP).** *"… you and your household [if they also believe]."*
2. **Benefits of the New Covenant Continued…**
   a) Continuing where we left off in part 4 of this study, let's read through **Rom. 6:1-18 (AMPC)** again and discuss with a focus on v. 7 and v. 11.
   Rom. 6:7 (NLT) *"For when we died with Christ, we were set free from the power of sin.",* ***(NKJV)*** *"For he who has died has been freed from sin. "*
   Rom. 6:11 (NLT) *"So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus."* **(AMP)** *"Even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin [and your relationship to it broken], but alive to God [in unbroken fellowship with Him] in Christ Jesus."*
   - One of the benefits for the believer in the new covenant is the fact that when they believed in Christ, they died to the power sin; Note: they died to the power of sin, they did not die to "sinning." (*See Rom. 6:16 commentary below*). Believers have put their sin nature to death (Crucified with Christ **Rom. 6:6, Gal. 2:20, 5:24**), and now have a new nature "in Christ". The believer's spirit is now complete through their union with Christ (**Col. 2:10**). However, their body and soul (mind), need to be renewed.
     Rom. 12:1-2 (AMP). *"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* The spirit does not need renewing, but the body and soul do.
   - Our sinful nature was crucified with Christ, the penalty against us was nailed to the cross. **Col. 2:13–14**. Side note: I used to think it was our old sinful nature that was nailed to the cross, but what was nailed to the cross was the penalty against us. Our

sinful nature was crucified with Christ, that is different from what was nailed to the cross.

- Their new nature is Christ in them! The born-again believer does not have two natures inside of them fighting each other. However, they do still have flesh to contend with. Remember, when one believes in Christ, their sinful nature (the old man) was crucified with Christ, yet we still contend with the flesh and its temptations, requiring ongoing renewal of mind, body, and inner being through the Spirit. So, the old man (sinful nature), was crucified at salvation and is also an ongoing crucifying of the flesh. e.g. the process of sanctification, the becoming more like Christ. **2 Cor. 3:18 (NLT)** *"makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image."*

b) Let's look at **Rom. 1-2** which talks about this.
   - First, **Rom. 12:1**
     - **(AMPC)** *"make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice"*
     - **(NKJV)** *"that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God,"*
   - Second **Rom. 12:2**
     - **(NLT)** *"...let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think."*
     - **(AMPC)** *"...but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude]."*
     - **(KJV/ESV)** *"...be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."*

c) So how do we renew our minds? .... This is how we renew our minds.
   We daily fix our gaze, attention and thoughts on God...
   Rom. 12:1-2 (MSG) as noted above; **2 Cor. 4:18 (NLT)**; **Phi. 4:8 (ESV)**; **Prov. 4:25 (AMP)** and as noted in **Rom. 12:1** "by the mercies of God, to present your bodies [dedicating all of yourselves, set apart] as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God, which is your rational (logical, intelligent) act of worship." Daily present your bodies (all of yourself to God) as an act of worship.

d) Renewing our minds helps us "run with endurance the race God has set before us." **Heb. 12:1-2.** So how do we "run with this race endurance"? **Vs. 2** spells this out:
   (NLT) *"We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus."*
   (KJV/ESV) *"Looking unto Jesus."*
   (NASV) *"Looking only at Jesus."*
   (AMPC) *"Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus."*

e) **Rom. 12:1-2** and **Heb. 12:1-2** (No, that is not a mistake, just a coincidence that they are both references to 12:1-2, but they do complement each other). Both are referring to our focus and attention. Is our focus and attention on the world or on Jesus? Note that the beginning of **Rom. 12:1** it says; "Do not be conformed to this world". What is your attention on? What are your thoughts focused on? What are you conforming to?

f) This is how we renew our minds and run the race with endurance. We daily fix your gaze, attention and thoughts on God.

g) Along with fixing our gaze, attention and thoughts on God and looking unto Jesus we need to be sober, vigilant, alert and humbling ourselves under the mighty power of God and give all your worries and cares to God for He cares for you. (**1 Peter 5:6-11**). Adding to all of this, "Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil." **(Eph. 6:10-18)**. …and last but not least; "forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, pressing on to reach the end of the race". **(Phil. 3:12-14).**

h) Summarizing the above actions on our part:
   - Look away [from all that will distract] to Jesus and look unto Jesus instead.
   - Daily fix your gaze, attention and thoughts on God.
   - Present your bodies [dedicating all of yourselves, set apart] as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God.
   - Be sober, vigilant and alert, humble yourselves under the mighty power of God and give all our worries and cares to God for He cares for you.
   - Put on all of God's armor of God so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil.
   - Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, pressing on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

2. Receive His New Life!

a) Those who believe in Jesus Christ are no longer a slave to sin. We have died to our old life, no longer living for ourselves but for Christ. (**2 Cor. 5:14-15**). Note the phrase "Receive His New Life" (NLT) and "Those who Live" (NKJV). Those who *"have believed and received new life."* This is the benefit of the New Covenant, this new way of faith. **(Gal. 3)** Believe and receive!

b) **1 Jn. 4:13,15 (AMPC)** – *"By this we come to know (perceive, recognize, and understand) that we abide (live and remain) in Him and He in us: because He has given (imparted) to us of His [Holy] Spirit., Anyone who confesses (acknowledges, owns) that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides (lives, makes His home) in him and he [abides, lives, makes his home] in God."*. Greek for "**Abide**" is "**Meno**" – **To continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, not to depart, to be held, kept, to remain as one. (In union with).** The difference between those abiding in Christ and those not abiding in Christ is the different to the saved and unsaved / Those who believe in Christ and those who do not.

Next meeting, we will dive into being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise who is the guarantee of our inheritance and our union with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Homework:

What does Rom. 6:16 mean?
https://www.bibleref.com/Romans/6/Romans-6-16.html
Read through the commentary and all the Bible references noted in the commentary.
Full contest: Read all of **Rom. Chapter 6**.

Dig deeper into the with Biblehub's commentaries on Rom. 6:16
https://biblehub.com/commentaries/romans/6-16.htm

1 Jn. 4:1-21 - Full context: Discerning false prophets and loving one another.

1Jn. 5:1-12 - Full context: Faith in the Son of God.

Carefully dig through all of **Rom. 6:1-18**

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Commentaries:

Berean Study Bible Commentary on Rom. 6:11

So, you too must count yourselves dead to sin - This phrase emphasizes the believer's identification with Christ's death. In the context of Romans 6, Paul discusses the believer's union with Christ in His death and resurrection. The term "count" or "reckon" is an accounting term, suggesting a deliberate and conscious decision to consider oneself as having died to the power and penalty of sin. This is not a physical death but a spiritual reality that believers are to embrace. The concept of being "dead to sin" is rooted in the idea that through Christ's crucifixion, the dominion of sin over the believer's life has been broken. This aligns with Galatians 2:20, where Paul states, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."

But alive to God - This part of the verse highlights the transformation that occurs through salvation. Being "alive to God" signifies a new life that is oriented towards God and His purposes. This new life is characterized by righteousness and holiness, contrasting with the previous life dominated by sin. The imagery of life and death is prevalent throughout the New Testament, symbolizing the transition from the old self to the new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). This new life is empowered by the Holy Spirit, enabling believers to live in a way that pleases God.

In Christ Jesus - The phrase "in Christ Jesus" is central to Paul's theology, indicating the believer's union with Christ. This union is the basis for the believer's new identity and status before God. Being "in Christ" means that believers share in all that Christ has accomplished, including His victory over sin and death. This concept is foundational to understanding the believer's position and privileges, as seen in Ephesians 1:3-14, where Paul outlines the spiritual blessings in Christ. The phrase also underscores the exclusivity of salvation and new life through Jesus, affirming that it is only through Him that one can be reconciled to God and experience true life.

Rom. 6:16 - Believer's Bible Commentary
6:16 It is a simple fact of life that when we submit ourselves to someone as our master we become that person’s slave. Likewise, if we sell out to sin, we become slaves of sin, and eternal death lies waiting at the end of that road. If, on the other hand, we choose to obey God, the result is a holy life. Sin’s slaves are bound by guilt, fear, and misery, but God’s servants are free to do what the new nature loves. So why be a slave when you can be free?

Rom. 6:15-17 - Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament
15-17 Paul has just affirmed, "You are not under the law." Now he shows that this does not mean that believers are free from the demands of living according to righteousness. It would be strange if those who are under grace should evidence a manner of life inferior to the standard held by those who are under law. As a matter of fact, believers must face the fact that their salvation

actually means a change of bondage. As they once served sin, they are now committed to lives of practical righteousness.

At first glance, the opening question seems to repeat v.1. The difference, however, lies in the tense of the verb. In v.1 the question was "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?" Now the question is "Shall we sin [in any given case, or sin at all] because we are not under law but under grace?" Law is supposed to be a restraining influence. But if we move out from under that umbrella, will we not be exposing ourselves to the danger of committing sin even more than in our previous situation?

In answer, Paul appeals first of all to a fact familiar to all—whatever one submits to becomes his or her master (cf. Jn 8:34). To commit sin, then, puts one into bondage to sin, and the sequel is death (cf. 5:12; 8:13). The other option is a life of obedience resulting in righteousness (cf. 5:19). Paul is happy to acknowledge that his readers have renounced the service of sin and are now wholeheartedly obeying Christian teaching (v.17). Let us take special note of the way he puts the matter: "you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were committed." By virtue of becoming Christians, believers had obligated themselves to obey what we might call the law of Christ (Gal 6:2). Even though Paul had not founded the Roman church, he was confident that the Christians there had been taught the standard teaching of the apostles (see Ac 2:42). Just as the Gospel itself had certain ingredients (such as Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, as in vv.1-5; 1Co 15:3-4), so the teaching about the lifestyle of believers, derived from what Jesus and the apostles taught, was standard throughout the church. This is the point being made in the use of the word "form".

Deeper study on Rom. 12:1, Galatians 5:24 and Colossians 2:13–14:

Some commentary on Rom. 12:1 about "presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice"

Here is key Scripture cross-references connected to **Romans 12:1**'s call to "present your bodies as a living sacrifice." These passages emphasize that believers are freed from sin's dominion (enabling us to yield ourselves to God), yet we still contend with the flesh and its temptations, requiring ongoing renewal of mind, body, and inner being through the Spirit.

Freedom from Sin's Power, Enabling Us to Present/Yield Our Bodies

- **Romans 6:12-13, 18-19** — "Do not let sin reign in your mortal body... but present yourselves to God... present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification." (Direct parallel to Rom. 12:1's "present your bodies"—we're freed from sin's mastery, so we can actively offer ourselves, but we must choose not to let sin reign in the body.)

- **Romans 6:6-7, 14** — "Our old self was crucified with him… so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin… Sin will have no dominion over you." (Positional freedom from sin's power, as recapped in your study—sin is no longer master.)

Ongoing Contention with the Flesh/Temptation

- **Romans 7:18-25** → "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh… Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (The inner struggle persists in the flesh, even though we're delivered positionally.)
- **Galatians 5:16-17, 24** → "Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit… And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." (The flesh remains opposed, but we crucify it daily by the Spirit.)
- **James 1:13-15** → (As noted in your study: Temptation arises from our own desires in the flesh, which we must resist—sin isn't our master, but the pull remains.)
- **1 Peter 2:11** → "Abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul." (Fleshly desires actively war against us.)

Ongoing Renewal of Body, Mind, and Inner Being

- **Romans 12:2** — (Immediate context) "Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God." (Presenting the body involves mind renewal—ongoing transformation.)
- **Romans 8:12-13** — "Put to death the deeds of the body… by the Spirit." (Active renewal: the body needs mortifying despite freedom.)
- **2 Corinthians 4:16** — "Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day." (Daily inner renewal amid the decaying flesh/body.)
- **Ephesians 4:22-24** — "Put off your old self… be renewed in the spirit of your minds… put on the new self, created after the likeness of God." (Ongoing process of renewal in mind and character.)
- **Colossians 3:5, 9-10** — "Put to death therefore what is earthly in you… you have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator." (Earthly/fleshly parts need putting to death; new self progressively renewed.)

These tie directly into the New Covenant benefits from your study (Rom. 6 emphasis), showing the tension: we're positionally dead to sin and alive to God, but practically, the flesh lingers until full redemption (Rom. 8:23), so we offer ourselves daily as living sacrifices.

Note/Disclaimer: Below are some A.I. responses to my challenging questions and is pulling from the entire text of the Bible in these versions AMP, AMPC, ESV, KJV, NASB, NIV, as well as many commentaries, it is always wise to dig into the Word of God yourself and read the scriptures in full context while allowing the Holy Spirit to teach you as you dive in. Ask this same question yourself and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal truth as you dig into the word for the answers. Use the question and answer below for deeper study and a starting point for your own study.

Question:

What do I do with this passage that says: Galatians 5:24 New King James Version 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." But why, even after salvation and now with the Holy Spirit in me, is there still some struggle with the flesh? So, was this done at salvation and is ongoing as well?

Gemini Answer:

Galatians 5:24 can feel confusing if you expect salvation to immediately remove all sinful urges. However, biblical scholars and pastors emphasize that "crucifying the flesh" is both a

completed spiritual reality and a **daily practical struggle**.

Here is how to understand and handle this passage while still feeling the "struggle with the flesh":

- **Understand the "Already/Not Yet" Reality:** In a spiritual sense, your old nature was crucified with Christ the moment you believed. This broke the *power* of sin so it no longer owns you, but it did not remove the *presence* of sin or the physical body's capacity to feel temptation.
- **The Struggle is a Sign of Life:** If you didn't have the Holy Spirit, there would be no internal war—you would just follow your desires without conviction. Feeling the struggle is actually evidence that you belong to Christ and have a new nature fighting back.
- **Crucifixion is a Process:** Historically, crucifixion was a slow and painful way to die. Similarly, "putting to death" your old habits is rarely instantaneous; it is an ongoing daily decision to say "no" to old patterns and "yes" to the Spirit.
- **Don't Mix Salvation with Discipleship:** Galatians 5:24 is not a warning that you lose your salvation if you still struggle. It is a description of a disciple's lifestyle. You are saved by grace through faith alone; your struggle with the flesh is part of your growth (*sanctification*), not the requirement for being "Christ's".

- **Practical Steps for the Struggle:**
    1. **Reckon yourself dead to sin:** Actively consider your old self powerless.
    2. **Starve the flesh:** Avoid situations or "voices" that feed your specific temptations.
    3. **Walk in the Spirit:** Instead of just trying to "not sin," focus on Reading Scripture and prayer to fill your mind with Christ.
    4. **Confess quickly:** If you stumble, immediately acknowledge it and return to God's grace.

Grok Answer:

The passage in **Galatians 5:24** (NKJV) — "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" — is a powerful statement, but it can feel confusing when you still experience real struggles with sin after salvation. You're asking a very common and honest question that many believers wrestle with. Let me explain what the verse means and how it fits with the ongoing battle you're describing.

1. What the verse is saying

- The Greek verb for "have crucified" is in the **aorist tense**, which points to a **decisive, completed action**.
- Paul is describing something that has **already happened** for everyone who truly belongs to Christ.
- When you were saved, you were **united with Christ in His crucifixion** (see Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20). Positionally — in God's eyes and in your new identity — the old self dominated by the flesh was crucified with Christ. Its rightful power and condemnation over you were broken once for all.

So, Galatians 5:24 is stating a **fact of your new identity**: if you are Christ's, the flesh has been crucified. It no longer has rightful dominion over you.

2. Why there is still struggle after salvation

The New Testament is very clear that the crucifixion of the flesh is **not the end of the battle** — it is the **beginning of a new kind of fight**.

- Paul himself describes the ongoing tension in **Romans 7:14–25**, where even as a mature believer he cries out, "I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind… O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"
- Immediately after Galatians 5:24, Paul writes in **verse 25**: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." And earlier in **verse 17**: "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."

The flesh (our remaining sinful tendencies and habits) is **defeated but not yet eradicated**. It has been **dethroned** (no longer reigns as king), but it still **resists** and tries to regain influence. The indwelling Holy Spirit now empowers us to fight and win daily victories that were impossible before salvation.

3. Done once-for-all at salvation AND ongoing in practice

Yes — it is **both**.

- **Positional / Judicial (done at salvation)**:
  The moment you trusted Christ, God crucified your old self with Him. The flesh's authority was broken forever. You are no longer a slave to sin (Romans 6:6–7, 14). This is objective truth, true whether you feel it or not.
- **Practical / Experiential (ongoing)**:
  We are called to **live out** that crucifixion daily by reckoning ourselves dead to sin and yielding to the Spirit (Romans 6:11–13; Colossians 3:5 — "put to death therefore what is earthly in you"). This is progressive sanctification — the lifelong process of becoming in practice what we already are in position.

Galatians 5:24 is not commanding you to crucify the flesh yourself (as if you could do it in your own strength). It is declaring what Christ has already done for you, and on that basis you are now to **walk by the Spirit** (5:16, 25) so that you "will not gratify the desires of the flesh."

4. Practical takeaway

The lingering struggle is **normal**, not a sign that something is wrong with your salvation. It actually confirms you are alive in the Spirit — dead people don't fight. The presence of the fight shows the Spirit is at work in you, convicting and empowering.

Keep doing what Paul instructs:

- Walk by the Spirit daily (Gal 5:16).
- Put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit (Rom 8:13).
- Set your mind on things above (Col 3:1–4).
- Confess sin quickly, receive forgiveness, and move forward (1 John 1:9)

The full eradication of the flesh and its desires awaits our final glorification when we receive new bodies (Romans 8:23; Philippians 3:20–21). Until then, the victory is real, but it is fought one day at a time in dependence on the Spirit.

You're not alone in this tension — Paul felt it deeply, and every honest believer does. The good news is that the same Christ who crucified the flesh positionally will one day complete the work He began in you (Philippians 1:6). Keep trusting Him.

Below is me reconciling what was nailed to the cross. I used to think my old sinful nature was nailed to the cross, but after much study on this, what was nailed to the cross was the penalty against us. Our old sinful nature was crucified with Christ, but that is different from what was nailed to the cross at salvation for the below. Here is a good breakdown on this:

Question:
Reading through this passage: Colossians 2:13–14: *"13 And you who were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh (your sensuality, your sinful carnal nature), [God] brought to life together with [Christ], having [freely] forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 Having cancelled and blotted out and wiped away the handwriting of the note (bond) with its legal decrees and demands which was in force and stood against us (hostile to us). This [note with its regulations, decrees, and demands] He set aside and cleared [a]completely out of our way by nailing it to [His] cross."*

What specifically was nailed to the cross? Was it the new believers' old sinful nature that was nailed to the cross? And is it the new believer who is nailing it to the cross or is it Christ nailing it to the cross? V. 14 says *"He set aside and cleared [a]completely out of our way by nailing it to [His] cross."* He", being Christ. What did Christ nail to the cross?

Answer:
The passage you quoted is Colossians 2:13–14 (from the Amplified Bible). Here is a clear, direct answer to each of your questions based on the text and standard biblical interpretation.

What specifically was nailed to the cross?

The thing that was nailed to the cross is **the handwriting of the note (bond) with its legal decrees and demands** — in other words, the **certificate of debt** or **record of indebtedness** consisting of our transgressions and the legal accusations/condemnation that the law brought against us.

This is the written record of our sins and the corresponding legal charges that stood against us (hostile to us). It is often described in biblical scholarship as the "cheirographon" (Greek: a handwritten IOU or legal bond acknowledging debt). Christ canceled this debt-record by nailing it to the cross.

Putting it in a more simple to understand wording:
"What exactly was nailed to the cross? It was the full list of everything we've ever done wrong—like a giant "debt notice" that recorded all our mistakes and the punishment we owed for breaking God's rules. Jesus took that entire list of charges against us and nailed it to His cross, completely canceling the debt so it no longer counts against us."

Was it the new believer's old sinful nature that was nailed to the cross?

No. The passage does **not** say that the old sinful nature (the "flesh") was nailed to the cross.

- Verse 13 does mention the old condition: being "dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh (your sensuality, your sinful carnal nature)."
- But what is forgiven and canceled in verse 14 is the **legal record of transgressions** and the **decrees/demands that were against us**, not the sinful nature itself.

While other passages (e.g., Romans 6:6, Galatians 2:20, Galatians 5:24) speak of the old self or sinful nature being "crucified with Christ," that is a different image and emphasis. Colossians 2 focuses on the **legal cancellation of the debt** and the condemnation we faced, not on the crucifixion of the flesh itself.

Is it the new believer who is nailing it to the cross, or is it Christ?

It is **Christ** (through His work on the cross) who nails it. The believer does nothing to accomplish this cancellation — it is entirely Christ's doing on our behalf.

The text says: **"He set aside and cleared completely out of our way by nailing it to [His] cross."** The subject ("He") is Christ/God acting through the cross.

Clarification on "He"

Yes, "He" refers to Christ (or God acting in/through Christ). Verse 13 attributes the action to God ("[God] brought to life… having [freely] forgiven"), and verse 14 continues with "He" performing the nailing to "[His] cross." The cross is unmistakably Christ's, so the canceling and nailing are accomplished by Christ's sacrificial death.

In short: Christ, in His death on the cross, took the written record of our sins and the law's condemning charges against us and nailed them to the cross, thereby canceling them completely and removing them as an obstacle between us and God. The believer receives this forgiveness by grace through faith; we do not nail anything ourselves.

MEETING 07

Holy Spirit Guarantee

Finding Treasure in The Word

Holy Spirit is God's guarantee of Our Inheritance *(Sealed by the Holy Spirit/Identified as His own)*

1. **Benefits of the New Covenant.**
   a) Where we left off in the last meeting was on **1 Jn. 4:13, 15 (AMP)** - We (who believe in Him) Abide in Him and He in us. - Greek for "Abide" Meno – **To continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, not to depart, to be held, kept, to remain as one. (In Union With)** - The difference between those abiding in Christ and those not abiding in Christ is the difference between the saved and the unsaved / Those who believe in Christ and those who do not." I focused on vs. 15 in regards to "Abiding in Him". Now I want to focus on vs. 13 in regards to **"Abiding" because He has given us His Holy Spirit**. Let's read **1 Jn. 4:13 (AMPC)** - *"By this we come to know (perceive, recognize, and understand) that we abide (live and remain) in Him and He in us: **because He has given (imparted) to us of His [Holy] Spirit.**"* I want to dig into this and discuss:
   b) **Eph. 1:13-14 (NLT)** – vs. 14 "When you believed in Christ, **he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit.**" (Full context: **Eph. 1:3-14 NKJV)**. *"Identified you as His own by giving you the Holy Spirit. This is how we belong to Him. When we read scriptures that say "those who belong to Him"* such as: **Jn. 1:12, Rom. 14:7-9, Gal. 3:28-29, Eph. 1:6-8, 1 Jn. 3:1**. We need to read these scriptures understanding that we (believers) have been sealed with the Holy Spirit. Christ has identified us as His own because of the Holy Spirit. We belong to Christ because of the Holy Spirit! Wooo! Now back to **Eph. 1:13-14 (NLT). v. 13** *"…sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise who is the guarantee of our inheritance…"* What is the inheritance?
   c) The Holy Spirit is called a "seal" and "God's guarantee". A guarantee that we (believers) will receive the inheritance promised long ago. The inheritance is eternity in Heaven with the Lord. This is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit of which believers have. One commentary put it this way: "The believer's yet-to-be-received inheritance — eternity in heaven with the Lord — is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit."
   d) **2 Cor. 5:1-10 (NLT), specifically (vs 5 – new bodies in Heaven)**
   e) **1 Pet. 1:3-10 (NLT) –** Now we live with great expectation, we have a priceless inheritance.
   f) **2 Cor. 1:22 (NLT)** - The first installment that guarantees everything he has promised us.
   g) **Jn. 3:34-36 (AMPC)** - The Holy Spirit is given without limit and without measure to those who believe in Jesus Christ. – My notes on this: *"God gave the Son the Holy Spirit without limit, without measure and Christ is in those who believe in Him and those who believe in Christ are in Him (Christ), and are filled with the same limitless Holy Spirit without measure because Christ is in you and you (believer) are seated with Him in Heavenly places. You who believe in Christ have the Spirit without measure because Christ now lives in you which is the work of the Holy Spirit. This is how we can do greater works than Christ did. **Jn. 14:12**. Full context: all of chapter 14. Jesus said greater works we (believer's) will do because He was going to the Father. Jesus said this because the*

Holy Spirit would not come unless He ascended to the Father so the Holy Spirit could descend. When a believer fails to believe and trust in all of God's word, then he limits the Spirit in his life. One can limit the Spirit with his own unbelief. .... I believe and I receive!"

h) **Gal. 3:2-5 (NLT)** – Received the Holy Spirit because you believed. **V. 3:2 (AMPC)** *"you received the Holy Spirit by hearing [the message of the Gospel] and believing [it]"*

i) **Jn. 7:38-39 (NLT/AMPC)** – Those who believe in Christ have received (been filled with) the Holy Spirit.

j) The Holy Spirit is what makes Him abiding in you and you abiding in Him possible. Back to **1 Jn. 4:15 (AMPC)** one more time: *"15 Anyone who confesses (acknowledges, owns) that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides (lives, makes His home) in him and he [abides, lives, makes his home] in God"*. Christ in you (**Col 1:26-28**) because of the Holy Spirit. Those who believe in Christ are filled with the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit in you because of your faith in Christ. Believers abide in Him and He in them because of the Holy Spirit.

k) **Eph. 4:30-32 (NLT)** – *"Do not grieve the Holy Spirit by the way you live; He has identified you as His own, **guaranteeing that you will be saved**."* Full context of this verse is living as children of the light and living in the light **Eph. 4:17- 5-20**. – This will be a future meeting, just on this subject of living in the light. Read **Eph. 4:30-32** again in **(AMPC).**

Next meeting, we will dive into: True Faith

Homework:
The work of the Holy Spirit and our union with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Read all of **John chapters 14–17**.

Eph. 1:1-23
Full context: God purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son, God revealed to us His mysterious will regarding Christ, sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise who is the guarantee of our inheritance. Believers have received an inheritance.

Read all of **Heb. 10:19-39 (AMPC)**. We will discuss this at our next meeting.

Believer's Bible Commentary for John 3:34-3:36

3:34 Jesus was the One God has sent. He spoke the words of God. To support this statement, John stated that God does not give the Spirit by measure. Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit of God in a way that was not true of any other person. Others have been conscious of the help of the Holy Spirit in their ministry, but no one else ever had such a Spirit-filled ministry as the Son of God. The prophets received a partial revelation from God but “the Spirit revealed in and by Christ the very wisdom, the very heart of God to man with all its infinitude of love.”

3:35 This is one of the seven times in John’s Gospel where we are told that the Father loves the Son. Here that love is manifested in giving Him control over all things. Among these things over which the Savior has complete charge are the destinies of men, as explained in verse 36.

3:36 God has given Christ the power to grant everlasting life to all who believe on Him. This is one of the clearest verses in all the Bible on how a person can be saved. It is *simply by believing* in the Son. As we read this verse, we should realize that God is speaking. He is making a promise that can never be broken. He says, clearly and distinctly, that anyone who believes in His Son has everlasting life. To accept this promise is not a leap in the dark. It is simply believing what could not possibly be false. Those who do not obey the Son of God shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on them already. From this verse we learn that our eternal destiny depends on what we do with the Son of God. If we receive Him, God gives us eternal life as a free gift. If we reject Him, we will never enjoy everlasting life, and not only so, but God’s wrath already hangs over us, ready to fall at any moment.

Notice that there is nothing in this verse about keeping the law, obeying the Golden Rule, going to church, doing the best we can, or working our way to heaven.

MEETING 08

True Faith

Let's talk about faith. - True Faith, our faith, the gift of faith, the faith of God, faith in God, a measure of Faith and Saving Faith.

The last few studies we have gone through the benefits of the New Covenant which we "receive by believing in Christ". Here is a quick summary of what we received when we believed in Christ:

- We become United (in union) with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Our spirit is complete through our union with Christ.
- We abide Him and He in us and we are seated with Him in Heavenly places.
- We no longer have a sinful nature and therefore are no longer a slave to sin.
- We have been set free from the law.
- We have received and have been sealed by the Holy Spirit.
- We died to our old life and now walk in newness of life!
- We now have a new way of Faith as opposed to keeping the law.
- Christ Took Our Punishment and has taken away our sin. He is our propitiation for sin.
- Made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ.
- We now have complete access to His presence because of the blood of Christ.

Recap from last meeting: **Eph. 1:13-14 (NLT).** vs **13** *"…sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise who is the guarantee of our inheritance…"* What is the inheritance? The Holy Spirit is called a "seal" and "God's guarantee". A guarantee that we (believers) will receive the inheritance promised long ago. The inheritance is eternity in Heaven with the Lord. This is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit of which believers have. One commentary put it this way: "The believer's yet-to-be-received inheritance — eternity in heaven with the Lord — is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit."
Eph. 4:30-32 (NLT) – Do not grieve the Holy Spirit by the way you live; He has identified you as His own, guaranteeing that you will be saved. <u>Full context of this verse is living as children of the light and living in the light **Eph. 4:17- 5-20**</u>. – This will be a future meeting, just on this subject of living in the light.

1. **<u>Let's talk about true faith</u>**
   a) Before moving onto our union with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit I want to dive into **Heb. 10:19-39**. Let's read this through together in the (AMPC). The title for this section of scripture in my Bible is "A Call to Persevere." It is labeled this way because the writer of Hebrew is writing to believers who have gone through much persecution and trials. He is encouraging them to stay the course.
   b) Next, read through **Heb. 10:26** commentary (see attached).
   c) Also, to go along with vs. **Heb. 10:23 (AMPC)** in regards to holding fast without wavering let's read **Col. 1:23** (NLT) – Continue to believe, stand firm, don't drift away.
   d) Parable of the sower **Mat. 13:1-9**. And then the explanation of the parable in **Mat. 13:18-23** and talk about the 4 soils. Talk about the condition of the soils (our hearts) and how it ties into salvation. What drives the condition of the soils prior to salvation?

e) **Eph. 4:14 (AMPC)** – Discuss "children, tossed [like ships] to and fro between chance gusts of teaching"
f) **2 Tim. 4:3 (AMPC)** – *"For the time is coming when [people] will not tolerate (endure) sound and wholesome instruction…"*. I say this time is here. Talk about social media news bubble with people tailoring all their information that aligns with their beliefs, political leanings, biases, agendas, etc… How it ties in with **2 Tim. 4:3**.
g) This is my notes on this: "When people are spending more time listening to and reading what other people say about God's word rather than reading God's word for themselves, then they are at very high risk of "being like children, tossed [like ships] to and fro between chance gusts of teaching and wavering with every changing wind of doctrine" and at high risk of being the" [the prey of] the cunning and cleverness of unscrupulous men" - **Eph. 4:14** and **2 Tim. 4:3** noted above are very related to: all noted above: "A call to persevere, stay the course, continue to believe, stand firm, don't drift away" Also note: after **Heb. 10:19-39** the writer of Hebrews dives into the great examples of faith in Chapter 11. Let's read **Heb. 11:1-6** to get a taste.

2. **Our faith, the gift of faith, the faith of God, faith in God and a measure of faith.**
   a) What is faith? The simple version: **Heb. 11:1 (KJV)** *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* **(NLT)** *"Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see."* Through faith in Christ we are saved and thus preserve our souls. **Heb. 10:39 (AMPC)**. With faith we believe that Jesus has forgiven our sins, that God can and will heal people as we pray for the sick, that when we pray, He hears us and responds, that He will provide all our needs, add to the list… How does faith in Christ help us with our everyday lives? Do we believe that God is our provider and that he has a plan for our lives?
   b) Let's read **Eph. 2:8** (let's read in order **KJV, NLT, AMPC**): first **Eph. 2:8 (KJV)**, what is the "it" in this scripture? Now lets' read **(NLT)** it is even a bit clearer in the **(AMPC)** as to what the "it" actually is. The "it" is salvation, not faith. Salvation is the free gift; we receive this free gift of salvation through faith by believing in Jesus Christ. A gift of salvation received by faith, not by works. So, there is the "gift of salvation" that is "received by faith," what faith, you ask? The "measure of faith" given to all of humanity.
   c) Every person has been given a "measure of faith" (**Rom. 12:3**), enabling them to believe in Christ or reject Him through free will. This measure of faith allows us to trust in various things, such as believing a chair will support us when we sit. Alongside this faith, God has granted us free will, allowing us to choose whether to accept or reject Christ. God does not impose salvation on anyone; He provides each individual with the freedom to decide, using the measure of faith and free will He has given them.
   d) **Gal. 2:16** "we are justified by the faith of Jesus Christ." Or is it "faith in Christ"? Let's read **Gal. 2:16** in progression of **KJV, NLT, AMPC**. I spent a lot of time on this passage in full context. What I had to reconcile was the KJV translation of "faith of Christ" vs all

other English translations of "faith in Christ." I have finally reconciled this down to this: "It was the "faith of Christ" that made a way for our salvation. A way to be reconciled back to the Father (full context "**2 Cor. 5:14-21**"). His faithfulness to the Father all the way to the cross. It was the Faith of Christ that made a way to salvation **for all who would believe in Him**. - It is "our faith in Him" that allows us to "receive" that salvation. (Justified and made right with God because of Christ's sacrifice and through our faith in Christ "**Rom. 5:1-11 (NLT)**" (Note: "faith" in vs. 1-2")." – for fuller context of Rom. 5:1-11, we must go back to Rom. 1 and see who Paul is writing to. Let's read: **Rom. 1:5,8,12, 16-17**. – Rom. 1:5 (When we believe and obey, we bring glory to His name.) vs. 16-17 "*…the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes*".

e) Same goes for Gal. 2:20. "of God" vs. "in God." It's "in God" in all other English translations. - Gal. 2:20 let's read it in **(KJV)** "live by the faith of the Son of God" and then **(NLT)** "live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God" and then in **(AMPC)** "live by faith in (by adherence to and reliance on and complete trust in) the Son of God". I like to wrap this up into *"Having faith in the Son of God and having faith in the faith of the Son of God. And because of this faith in Christ, we now have the faith of God because He is in those who believe in Him."*

Homework:

Genuine faith – The testing of your faith will show if your faith is genuine:
Jas. 1:2-4; 1 Pet. 1:3-10; Rom. 5:3-4 ; Heb. 10:22-25 (AMPC)

Great examples of faith: **Heb. 11 -** The New Covenant provides a new way of faith: **Gal. 2:16-21, 3:23-25 (NLT), Phil. 3:7-9 (AMPC), Rom. 3:21-22, 4:16, 5:1-2 (NLT),** and complete access to His presence (**Heb. 10:19-25 AMPC**) because of the blood of Christ and our faith in Him!

"Finding Treasure in the Word" RiverLife Fellowship Life Link – Meeting 8 - 10/18/22
All studies with full notes in PDF format are available here:
https://christinyoustudymap.com/finding-treasure-in-the-word-bible-studies/

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

An in-depth study on Eph. 2:8

This article is a grammatical deep dive into Eph. 2:8. Highly recommend this article, but it must be read all the way through in one reading to grab a hold of what Eph. 2:8 is saying.
Is Faith a Gift from God According to Ephesians 2:8? A Grammatical Analysis by John F. Hart
Spoiler alert, the conclusion of this article supports that salvation is the gift, not faith.

Interpreting **Eph. 2:8** as faith being a gift of God is a Calvinistic and Reformed Theology interpretation, believing that you must be regeneration prior to believing and that God must give you the faith to believe prior to believing. The Bible does not teach this. See my article "Believe in Jesus Christ and Receive His Free Gift of Salvation" for a detailed walk through the scriptures and what they have to say regarding believing in Christ. In full context one must believe (with free will) in Christ to be saved. One can with free will choose to believe or choose to reject the truth. Salvation is the gift that is spoken of in **Eph. 2:8**.

"For it is by grace you are saved through faith — and this is (salvation) is not from yourselves, it (salvation) is the gift of God — not by works so that no one can boast."

The AMPC spells this out more clearly: Eph. 2:8 (AMPC) "*For it is by free grace (God's unmerited favor) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ's salvation) through [your] faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [of your own doing, it came not through your own striving], but it is the gift of God;*"

I also recommend this in-depth video teaching regarding **Eph. 2:8** using John F. Hart's article noted above as a reference:

Is Faith a Gift from God? - Detailed Analysis of Ephesians 2:8-9 by Alex Shatterstar

Deeper study on Gal. 2:16 and 2:20

The difference in Galatians 2:16 and 2:20 between the KJV ("faith of Jesus Christ" / "faith of the Son of God") and nearly all modern English translations ("faith in Jesus Christ" / "faith in the Son of God" or similar phrasing) comes down to how translators handle a specific Greek genitive construction, not to any theological agenda.

The Greek Phrase

The original text uses πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (pisteōs Iēsou Christou) in Galatians 2:16 and πίστεως υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (pisteōs huiou tou theou) in 2:20. Πίστεως is the genitive form of πίστις ("faith" or sometimes "faithfulness"). In Greek, when one noun in the genitive follows another noun, it can be read in two legitimate ways:

- **Objective genitive**: "faith **in** Christ" — Christ is the object toward whom our faith is directed (i.e., we believe in Him).

- **Subjective genitive**: “faith/faithfulness **of** Christ” — Christ is the one doing the believing or being faithful (i.e., His perfect faithfulness or obedience).

Both interpretations are grammatically valid because there is no preposition (like εἰς “in/into” or ἐν “in”) to lock it one way or the other.

Why the KJV Says “Faith **of**”

The 1611 KJV translators followed the pattern of earlier English Bibles (Tyndale, Coverdale, Geneva) that rendered these genitives literally with “of.” In older English, “the faith of Christ” naturally carried the sense of “the faith that belongs to Christ” or “Christ’s own faith/faithfulness.” This was simply a straightforward way to translate a genitive chain without adding words. The same construction appears consistently in the KJV in other Pauline passages (Romans 3:22, 26; Galatians 3:22; Philippians 3:9).

Why Modern Translations Say “Faith **in**”

Virtually all contemporary translations (NASB, ESV, NIV, NLT, CSB, etc.) choose “in” because:

- The immediate context of Galatians repeatedly stresses **personal believing** as the means of being justified (Galatians 2:16 says three times that “we have believed in Christ Jesus”; see also 3:22).
- Adding “in” makes the meaning clearer to modern readers and better reflects what most scholars see as Paul’s primary emphasis here: our act of trusting Christ.
- The objective genitive (“in”) fits the flow of Paul’s argument more smoothly in English.

Both Readings Can Work Together

Many biblical scholars see truth in both genitives without forcing a choice:

- The “faith/faithfulness **of** Christ” points to Jesus’ perfect obedience and trust in the Father all the way to the cross — that is what accomplished redemption and opened the way for anyone to be justified (see the broader context in Romans 5:18–19; 2 Corinthians 5:14–21).
- Our “faith **in** Him” is how we personally receive and appropriate that finished work.

Here is a summary of my notes in section 2.d) and 2.e) in the study above:

- “It was the ‘faith of Christ’ that made a way for our salvation… His faithfulness to the Father all the way to the cross.”
- “It is ‘our faith in Him’ that allows us to ‘receive’ that salvation.”
- “Having faith in the Son of God and having faith in the faith of the Son of God. And because of this faith in Christ, we now have the faith of God because He is in those who believe in Him.”

This is a balanced, biblical way to hold both aspects together.

MEETING 09

Trials and Testing

Problems, trials, testing of faith producing genuine faith and where does faith come from?

Recap – Last meeting we talked about the importance of faith and being careful not to drift away and to hold fast without wavering to hope. Believe and continue to believe! **Heb. 10:23 (AMPC); Col. 1:23 (NLT).** We dug into **Heb. 10:19-39 (AMPC)** which addressed the Apostate but had good news at vs. 39 (*But you true believers are not like that*). We talked about the four soils explained in **Matt. 13:18-23**. Soil 1 = Don't understand or receive. Soil 2,3 = Receive but does not remain or take root, bares no fruit. Soil 4 = Those who truly hear and understand. True believers produce a harvest much more than what was planted. We had some good discussion about what conditioned the soil of our hearts prior to salvation. Now I want to dig a bit more into faith.

1. **<u>Problems, trials and testing of faith</u>**
   a) In the middle of **Rom. 5:1-11** discussed above we have this section in **Rom. 5:3-4 (NLT)** that talks about rejoicing when we run into problems? Why should we rejoice about trials and problems? Because they build endurance and strength of character and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. **Rom. 5:3-4 (AMPC)** explains it better: **"…** *pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance. Endurance develops <u>maturity of character</u> (approved faith and tried integrity) and this character produces [the habit of] joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation."*
   b) **Testing of your faith will show if your faith is genuine.** - Let's read through **Jas. 1:2-4 (AMPC)** and **1 Pet. 1:3-10 (AMPC)** and see how they line up with **Rom. 5:3-4**. Also, in **Heb. 10:22-25** we see a way to make it through these trials. Note the "*seize and hold fast and retain without wavering*" in **Heb. 10:23**. And to go along with this: **Col. 1:23 (NLT)** – *"Continue to believe, stand firm, don't drift away."*
2. **<u>Where does this faith come from?</u>**
   <u>Author</u> and <u>finisher</u> of our faith. **Heb.12:2 (KJV/AMPC).** Read and discuss…
   a) <u>Author of our faith</u> [giving the first incentive for our belief] – He is the creator of our faith. We hear the good news about Christ dying on the cross for our sins and it gives us an incentive to believe in Him. Hearing creates faith. **Rom. 10:17 (NLT)** *"Faith comes by hearing the good news about Christ."* I see this as the measure of faith we all have been given from God our creator from birth then when we hear the good news about Christ we can access this faith to believe in or reject Jesus Christ. God wants all men to be saved and he wants them to believe in His son. (**1 Tim. 2:3-4**). And there is also the Father in Heaven drawing us to the Son (**Jn. 6:44 AMPC**) giving us a measure of faith and the "first incentive for our belief". The Father wants us to choose/believe in the Son so we can receive salvation.
   b) <u>Finisher of our faith</u> [bringing it to maturity and perfection] - being conformed to the image of Christ after salvation.
   c) **Rom. 10:9-10 (AMPC)**. With <u>faith</u> we <u>Confess with our mouth</u> and <u>believe with your heart</u> that Jesus is Lord. With our <u>heart we believe</u> (adheres to, trusts in, and rely on Christ) and

as a result are justified (declared righteous, acceptable to God). With our mouth we confess (declares openly and speak out freely our faith) and confirms [our] salvation.

d) **Rom. 15:13 (NLT)** – Paul's prayer for believers: *filled completely with joy and peace and overflowing with confident hope*.
e) **Eph. 3:16-19 (AMPC)** – Paul's prayer for believers: *strengthened and reinforced with mighty power in the inner man by the Holy Spirit. Christ dwelling in your hearts through your faith. To fully understand the breadth, length, height and depth of God's love and to really come to know the love of Christ which far surpasses mere knowledge and to become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself*.
f) **Rom. 12:12 (NLT)** - "Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying." Believers have a confident hope.
g) **2 Thes. 2:16-17 (NLT)** - Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope. The prayer by Paul in vs. *17 (AMPC) – "May God Comfort and encourage your hearts and strengthen them [make them steadfast and keep them unswerving] in every good work and word."*
h) **1 Jn. 5:11-13 (NLT)** – Those who believe in Christ have eternal life.
i) **Eph. 1:16-21 (AMPC)** – Another prayer of Paul's for believers: that He may grant you a spirit of wisdom and revelation, insight into mysteries and secrets, deep and intimate knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your heart flooded with light, so that you can know and understand the hope to which He has called you, that you can know and understand what is the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of His power in and for us who believe, as demonstrated in the working of His mighty strength.

Where will be heading next in our upcoming meetings:
Our union with Father, Son and Holy Spirit because we believe in Christ
and
The Finished Work of the Cross (what was finished? What was the work?

Homework: Read through the following scriptures on faith:
Mark 1:15; **John** 3:1-8,16-17,36, 4:10-14, 5:24, 6:29,40,47,63, 10:28, 11:25-26, 14:6, 15:15, 17:3, 20:31; **Acts** 3:19, 4:12, 16:17,31; **Romans** 3:23-24, 5:1-2,15, 6:23, 10:3, 9-13, 17, 15:13; **1 Corinthians** 1:30, 3:14; **Galatians** 2:16; **Ephesians** 1:13-14, 2:8-10, 2:13-15, 3:12; 2 **Timothy** 1:9; **Titus** 3:5; **Hebrews** 11:1-6; **1 John** 4:15, 5:4-5.
See also these two articles I have written that go along with faith. Something to slowly digest: "Believe in Him".

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Deeper Study:

This is a breakdown of the homework noted above.

No, not all of these passages explicitly use the words "faith" or "believe," but every single one relates directly to the biblical theme of faith—either by teaching it outright, showing its object (Jesus Christ), contrasting it with works, or describing its results and implications.

Here's a quick breakdown to show the connection:

Directly mention "faith," "believe," or equivalent (confess, trust in Christ for salvation):

- Mark 1:15 (believe the gospel)
- John 3:16-17, 36; 5:24; 6:29, 40, 47; 11:25-26; 20:31 (all center on believing in Jesus for eternal life)
- Acts 16:31 (believe in the Lord Jesus)
- Romans 5:1-2 (justified by faith); 10:9-13, 17 (believe/confess, faith comes by hearing); 15:13 (hope through believing)
- Galatians 2:16 (justified by faith in Christ)
- Ephesians 1:13-14 (believed and sealed); 2:8-10 (saved by grace through faith, not works); 3:12 (bold access through faith in Him)
- Hebrews 11:1-6 (classic definition and examples of faith)
- 1 John 4:15 (confesses Jesus); 5:4-5 (whoever believes Jesus is the Son overcomes the world)

Do not use the word "faith" or "believe" explicitly but clearly tie into the faith message:

- John 3:1-8 (born again by the Spirit—regeneration that accompanies true faith)
- John 4:10-14 (Jesus offers living water leading to eternal life—points to receiving Him)
- John 6:63 (the Spirit gives life; Jesus' words are spirit and life—context is believing His hard teaching)
- John 10:28 (eternal security—no one can snatch believers from His hand)
- John 14:6 (Jesus is the only way to the Father—salvation is through Him alone)
- John 15:15 (Jesus calls believers friends, revealing the Father—intimacy that flows from faith/abiding)
- John 17:3 (eternal life is knowing God and Jesus—true faith results in relational knowledge of God)
- Acts 3:19 (repent and turn to God—repentance is the flip side of faith)
- Acts 4:12 (salvation in no other name—implies trusting in Jesus alone)
- Acts 16:17 (proclaims the way of salvation—context of believing)

- Romans 3:23-24 (all sin, justified freely by grace—sets up faith vs. works)
- Romans 5:15 (grace gift through Christ)
- Romans 6:23 (wages of sin vs. gift of eternal life in Christ)
- Romans 10:3 (failing to submit to God's righteousness—contrast to faith)
- 1 Corinthians 1:30 (Christ became our righteousness, sanctification, redemption)
- 1 Corinthians 3:14 (works tested; reward for what endures—built on the foundation of faith in Christ)
- Ephesians 2:13-15 (brought near by Christ's blood, made one new man—reconciliation received by faith)
- 2 Timothy 1:9 (saved by grace, not works)
- Titus 3:5 (saved by mercy and washing of regeneration, not works)

Overall, this is an excellent curated list for a study on faith. The passages that don't use the exact word still reinforce the core gospel truth: salvation and eternal life come by grace through faith in Christ alone, not by human effort, and faith produces fruit like knowing God, security, and overcoming. None of them are off-topic—they all illuminate different facets of what faith means and how it operates.

Even Deeper study:

Note/Disclaimer: Below is an A.I. response to my challenging question and is pulling from the entire text of the Bible in these versions AMP, AMPC, ESV, KJV, NASB, NIV, as well as many commentaries, it is always wise to dig into the Word of God yourself and read the scriptures in full context while allowing the Holy Spirit to teach you as you dive in. Ask this same question yourself and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal truth as you dig into the word for the answers. Use the question and answer below for deeper study and a starting point for your own study.

To go along with our study, I asked A.I. to reconcile **Jas. 1:2-4 (AMPC)** and **1 Pet. 1:3-10 (AMPC)** with **Rom. 5:3-4; Heb. 10:22-25** and **Col. 1:23 (NLT).**

A.I.'s answer:

This is a powerful collection of scriptures that creates a comprehensive "roadmap" for the Christian experience of trials. When you lay these passages side-by-side, they form a clear progression: the **purpose** of the trial, the **internal result** of the trial, and the **practical strategy** for navigating it.

Here is a summation and reconciliation of these texts.

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1. The Purpose: Refining the "Gold" of Faith

While **James 1** and **Romans 5** focus on the internal character built by trials, **1 Peter 1** explains the "why" behind the intensity.

- **1 Peter 1:6-7 (AMPC):** Peter compares faith to gold. Just as gold is put into a furnace to burn away impurities, our faith is tested by "trials of various kinds." The goal isn't destruction, but proof of genuineness.
- **The Reconciliation:** James and Paul (in Romans) pick up where Peter leaves off. If the trial is the "furnace," then the resulting "patience" and "character" are the pure gold that remains.

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2. The Process: The Chain Reaction of Growth

There is a striking mathematical-like precision in how James and Paul describe the progression of a trial. They essentially argue that a trial is not a dead end, but a starting line.

Scripture	The Starting Point	The Process	The Final Result
James 1:2-4	Trials of many kinds	Testing of faith Endurance/Patience	Completeness, lacking nothing.
Romans 5:3-4	Tribulation/Pressure	Patience Character/Experience	Hope that does not disappoint.

The Summation: Both authors agree that the "joy" mentioned in James 1:2 isn't about the pain itself, but about the **guaranteed output.** We can be "full of joy" because we know the "machinery" of God’s grace takes the "raw material" of trouble and turns it into "mature character."

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3. The Strategy: How to "Hold Fast"

You noted **Hebrews 10** and **Colossians 1**, which move the conversation from *theology* to *action*. If James, Paul, and Peter describe the "process," these verses describe our "posture" during that process.

Seize and Hold Fast (Hebrews 10:22-25)

The AMPC uses the word "seize." This implies a "violent" or intense grip. When trials create "wavering" (the feeling of being tossed by waves), Hebrews gives us three anchors:

1. **The Vertical:** Draw near with a "true heart" (v. 22).
2. **The Internal:** "Seize and hold fast" your confession (v. 23). This is a mental and verbal refusal to let go of God's promises.
3. **The Horizontal:** "Stir up" and "assemble" (v. 24-25). You cannot "hold fast" in isolation; the community provides the extra strength to keep you from drifting.

Stand Firm and Don't Drift (Colossians 1:23)

The NLT phrasing here is the perfect bookend. If Hebrews tells us to *clutch* the truth, Colossians tells us where to *plant our feet*.

- **"Continue to believe":** This is the intellectual decision.
- **"Stand firm":** This is the emotional/spiritual stability.
- **"Don’t drift away":** This acknowledges that drifting is often subtle. We don't usually jump away from hope; we slowly leak it until we find ourselves far from the "Good News."

The Synthesis: A Unified View

Reconciling these verses gives us a "Full Cycle of Faith":

The Trial (1 Pet 1) tests the quality of your faith **The Pressure (Rom 5)** produces a refined patience **The Endurance (Jas 1)** leads to a finished, mature character **The Strategy (Heb 10 / Col 1)** is to actively seize the promise and lean on the community so that you don't drift before the process is complete.

The "seizing" in Hebrews 10 is what allows the "patience" in James 1 to finish its work. Without the active "holding fast," we might exit the "furnace" of the trial before the gold is fully refined.

MEETING 10

The Believers Union with The Father Son and Holy Spirit - Part 1

The Believer's Union with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – Part 1

Recap – Last meeting we discussed several aspects of faith and the testing of our faith and how the testing of our faith produces maturity of character and shows that your faith is genuine. We discussed where faith comes from. (Christ being the author and finisher of our faith. **Heb.12:2 (KJV/AMPC)**. We discussed true believers having a confident hope that will not be shaken in times of trouble or persecution. We discussed the immeasurable, unlimited and surpassing greatness of His power in and for those who believe in Him. I want to briefly go over again the proving and testing of our faith and what it (the testing) produces.

- Pressure, affliction, hardship, trials, testing and proving of your faith brings out endurance, steadfastness, patience and maturity of character. **Rom. 5:3-5** (AMPC) .
- **1 Pet. 1:3-7 (AMPC),** I want to specifically point out again the following in verses **3-4**; *"Born anew (through genuine saving faith) into an inheritance which is beyond the reach of change and decay [imperishable]"* and in vs. **6-7**; *"the genuineness of your faith being tested"*. Verses **4 & 5** is why you should be glad as noted in vs. **6**. Let's read through these in **1 Pet. 1:3-7 (AMPC).**
- Read *"Believer's Bible Commentary by William McDonald"* for vs. 1:7. (See below).

1. **This testing and proving of our faith, produces the ability to stand without wavering in the confident hope of eternal salvation we have in Christ.**
   a) **Heb. 10:23 (AMPC)** "Our union with Father, Son and Holy Spirit because we believe in Christ"
   b) I want to talk about our union with Christ and our ongoing relationship with Christ.
   c) Those who believe in Christ are "In Christ"/"abide in Christ and He in them"/"are in union with Father, Son and Holy Spirit". **Note on abiding in Christ**: We will discover in future studies that abiding in Christ is something that happens at salvation, e.g. the believers position changes to now being "in Christ" and at the same time is an ongoing process/choice through intimate relationship with Christ, similar to a believer having been sanctified (set apart) at salvation and is being sanctified, an ongoing process.
   d) "<u>Being in Christ</u>" and "<u>abiding in Christ</u>" are closely related concepts in John's Gospel, often used interchangeably to describe the <u>vital union between Jesus and true believers</u>, but some interpretations make a subtle distinction in their practical application. **Example:**
   e) **Being in Christ (John 14:19-20):** Jesus says in **Jn. 14:20**, *"On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."* This speaks to a permanent, secure spiritual union that all true believers enter into at salvation through the Holy Spirit. It is a statement of our position in Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which is the foundation of the Christian life. It is a completed work of God that makes a person righteous and gives them eternal life.

f) **Abiding in Christ (John 15:4-7):** In the very next chapter, the "Vine and Branches" passage (John 15:4-7) uses the term "abide" (Greek menō, meaning to stay, remain, or dwell) to describe an active, ongoing, and intimate fellowship with Christ. While all true believers are "in Christ" positionally, Jesus' command to "abide in me" is an invitation to a deep, conscious, moment-by-moment dependence on Him for spiritual vitality and fruitfulness. In this application abiding is an ongoing daily choice. Abide in Christ or wither.

2. **More on our union that happens at salvation as a result of faith in Christ:**
   a) **Col. 1:25-28 (NLT) vs. 25** *"God's entire message."* **(AMPC)** *"make the Word of God fully known"*; What is God's entire message that Paul want to make fully known? **Christ in you!**
   b) Let's dig through **Rom. 8:1-16 (AMPC)** note the following:
   v. 3: the definition of *"flesh" "[the entire nature of man without the Holy Spirit]."* and *"all who accept His sacrifice."*
   v. 6: *"mind of the Holy Spirit."*,
   v. 8: *"The Spirit of God [really] dwells within you [directs and controls you]."*
   v. 9: "*but*", *"however"*.
   v. 11: *"the Spirit of Him Who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you."*
   v. 15: *"For [the Spirit which] you have now received."*
   v. 16: *"Holy Spirit testifies with our Spirit"*, **NLT** says "*His Spirit joins with our spirit.*"
3. **A continued list of the believers amazing union with the Father, Son, and The Holy Spirit**
   a) **Heb. 3:12-14 (AMP) "**Partakers of Christ", *"firm and unshaken to the end"*.
   2 Pet. 1:3-4 (NLT) *"Partakers of His divine nature."*
   Gal. 2:19-21 (AMP) *"Christ lives in me."*
   3:26-28 (AMP) *"Spiritual union with Christ."*
   Eph. 3:17-19 (AMP) *"Christ dwelling in your heart through faith"*, *"completely filled and flooded with God Himself."*
   Jn. 14:20, 26-28); **Eph. 1:13-14 (NLT)** *"Identified us as His own by giving us the Holy Spirit, He purchased us." (we belong to Him)*
   1 Cor. 6:19-20 (NLT) *"You (believer) are the temple of the Holy Spirit, you do not belong to yourself, you have been bought with a high price!"*
   2 Cor. 1:22 (NLT) *"He put His seal upon us (believers) by giving us the Holy Spirit."*
   Jn. 7:37-39 (NLT) *"Holy Spirit given to everyone who believes in Christ."*
   Gal. 3:1-4 (NLT) You *"receive"* the Holy Spirit when you believe.
   Eph. 3:14-19 (AMPC) *"May Christ through your faith [actually] dwell (settle down, abide, make His permanent home) in your hearts" ..." the [Holy] Spirit [Himself indwelling your innermost being and personality]."*
   1 Cor. 6:17 (NLT) *"But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him."*
   Barne's notes on the Bible: "<u>The true Christian, united by faith to the Lord Jesus</u>"
   b) Our union and fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is only possible because we (believers) have the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God, this same Spirit, the Holy Spirit living in us (those who believe in Christ).

Excerpt from the "Believer's Bible Commentary by William McDonald" for vs. 1:7.

"There is further comfort for suffering saints in knowing that their sufferings are neither purposeless nor fruitless. The suffering of the ungodly are only a foretaste of the pangs of hell which they will endure eternally. This is not true for the Christian (The Believer). One of the many beneficial purposes of afflictions in this life for the child of God is to test the genuineness of his faith. Peter contrasts our faith with gold. Of all the substances known to man, gold is one of the most imperishable. It can be subjected to intense heat and might seem to be indestructible. But the truth is that gold parishes through use, pressure and fire. True faith is indestructible. The believer may undergo severe tests and trials, but instead of destroying his faith, they become food for faith to feed on.
... The genuineness of faith can be proved only by fire. When prevailing conditions are favorable it may be easy to be a Christian. But when public confession of Christ brings persecution and suffering, then the casual followers drift away and are lost in the crowd. A religion that costs nothing is worth nothing. Faith which refuses to pay the price is spurious (Fake of false). It is the kind of say-so faith that James condemns. *(See James 2:14-26 "Faith Without Works Is Dead", In full context, James is talking about a dead faith in this passage, not faith + works.)*
Genuine faith will result in praise, honor, and glory when Jesus Christ is revealed. This simply means that God will reward every instance of faith that stood the test."

Homework:

Read/study **John chapters 14-17**.

Slowly dig into **Rom. 8:1-16** and the **continued list** of the believers amazing union with the Father, Son, and The Holy Spirit noted above.

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Deeper study:

In Rom. 8:1-17, Paul describes in these verses (no condemnation, life in the Spirit, adoption, inheritance, intimate union with God) is given to "those who accept that sacrifice" (Rom 8:3 AMPC)—<u>that is, to everyone who, by faith, receives</u> Jesus as Lord and Savior. V. 3 is crucial to this entire passage! This is not something believers gradually earn or grow into; it is a definitive, instantaneous reality received at the moment of salvation. *"those who accept that sacrifice."*

1. The Foundation: Union with Christ by Faith Alone

The entire chapter rests on the phrase in verse 1: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are **in Christ Jesus**." Being "in Christ" is Paul's favorite way of describing the believer's new position. The moment a person trusts Christ's death and resurrection as the full payment for their sin, God unites that person to Jesus in a profound, unbreakable way.

- This union means everything that happened to Christ now legally and spiritually applies to the believer:
    - Christ died for sin → the believer has died to sin's penalty and power (Rom 6:2–7; 8:3).
    - Christ was raised → the believer is raised to new life (Rom 6:4; 8:11).
    - Christ is seated at God's right hand → the believer is already seated with Him in the heavenly places (Eph 2:6).

Verse 3 is the hinge: God condemned sin **in the flesh** of Jesus, and everyone who accepts that sacrifice immediately receives the benefits—freedom from condemnation and the power of sin broken. The non-believer remains under condemnation (John 3:18) because they have not accepted the sacrifice; they are still "in the flesh" (Rom 8:8–9) and outside of Christ.

2. Union with the Holy Spirit: The Indwelling and Seal

At the very instant of faith, the Holy Spirit takes up permanent residence in the believer.

Key verses:

- Romans 8:9 – "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, **if the Spirit of God really dwells in you**. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him."
- Romans 8:11 – "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you."

This indwelling is not gradual or partial; it is total and immediate. The Spirit is the down payment and guarantee of full future redemption (Eph 1:13–14; 4:30). The non-believer has none of this; they are spiritually dead and do not have the Spirit (Jude 19).

The Spirit also unites the believer to Christ (1 Cor 6:17: "He who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him") and enables the believer to live out the righteous requirements of the law that the flesh could never achieve (Rom 8:4).

3. Union with the Father: Adoption and Intimacy

Through the work of the Son and the indwelling of the Spirit, the believer is brought into the very family of God.

- Romans 8:15 – "You have received the Spirit of **adoption as sons**, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'"
- Romans 8:16 – "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are **children of God**."
- Romans 8:17 – "and if children, then **heirs**—heirs of God and **fellow heirs with Christ**."

"Abba" is an Aramaic term of deepest familial intimacy, like "Daddy." No Old Testament saint ever addressed God this way; it is a privilege unique to those in the New Covenant who are in Christ. The Spirit gives the believer an inner assurance of sonship and direct access to the Father (Eph 2:18: "through him [Christ] we both have access in one Spirit to the Father").

The non-believer remains outside this family—still an object of wrath (Eph 2:3) and alienated from God (Col 1:21).

Summary: What the Believer Receives at Salvation

At the moment of genuine faith:

- You are **placed into Christ** (union with the Son).
- The **Holy Spirit permanently indwells** you (union with the Spirit).
- You are **adopted as a child** of the Father with full inheritance rights (union with the Father).

This is often called the believer's **mystical union** with the Trinity, or simply "union with Christ" (since Christ is the mediating person of the Godhead). It is irreversible (Rom 8:38–39), complete from day one, and the basis for every spiritual blessing (Eph 1:3). Sanctification (growing in holiness) flows out of this union, but the union itself is not something we grow into—it is received by faith alone, the instant we accept Christ's sacrifice.

Non-believers have none of this. They remain in Adam (the old humanity under sin and death), not in Christ (the new humanity with life and righteousness). Until they repent and trust Christ, they are not yet in union with the Trinity.

MEETING 11

The Believers Union with The Father Son and Holy Spirit - Part 2

Union and Fellowship with the Father, Son and The Holy Spirit - Part 2

1. **A brief recap from our last meeting.**
   a) Last meeting we discussed how those who believe in Christ are "In Christ", "abide in Christ and He in them" and as a result are "in union with Father, Son and Holy Spirit". That when you believe in Christ you are filled with the Holy Spirit and it is the Holy Spirit that makes this mysterious union possible. **Col. 1:25-28 (NLT) v. 25** *"God's entire message is Christ in You, the hope of glory!"* Union! No longer any separation for those who believe in Christ! Heb. 3:12-14 (AMP) "Partakers of Christ, "firm and unshaken to the end" and **2 Pet. 1:3-4 (NLT)** "Partakers of His divine nature".
   b) We also discussed how when Pressure, affliction, hardship, trials, and testing come our way we can pass the test because of this union! The Holy Spirit is the rivers of living water: Let's read the following in order: **Jn. 7:37-39; Isa 55:1-2; Rev. 22:16-17 (AMPC).** The result of this living water is abundant spiritual joy! **Jn. 10:7-10.** Jesus is the door, believe in Him, receive the Holy Spirit and because of the Holy Spirit, Christ is in you (who believe)!
   Dig deeper: Read Believers Commentary on **Jn. 7:38** and **Isa. 55:1**. (See below)
2. **Union continued… The Holy Spirit That You (Believers) Received from The Father through Christ Lives Permanently in You**
   a) Let's take a deep dive into **1 Jn. 2:20-28**. Let's start with **1 Jn. 2:20**.
      - **1 Jn. 2:20 (KJV)** *"But ye have an unction (5545) from the Holy One, and ye know all things"*.
      - **1 Jn. 2:20 (NKJV)** *"But you have an anointing (5545) from the Holy One, and you know all things"*.
      - "Unction/Anointing" is the Holy Spirit, "Holy One" is Jesus Christ. The "you" is "believers". Believers have the Holy Spirit who was sent from Jesus Christ (The Holy One), who is from the Father.
   b) χρῖσμα (chrisma) - Strong's Greek 5545: An unction/anointing. From chrio; <u>the special endowment of the Holy Spirit</u>. *(Receiving the Holy Spirit, being filled with the Holy Spirit)*.
   c) ~ Read "Believer's Commentary" *for **1 Jn. 2:20***.
      - You (believer) have been "given" the "Holy Spirit" who is from the Father that was sent from the Son. Discuss: **Jn. 15:26** and **Jn. 14:16-17 (AMPC).**
      - Note: In the scriptures the Holy Spirit is referenced to as the "Spirit of Christ" and the "Spirit of God". Interesting when you consider **Jn. 15:26** above. But that takes us back to **Jn. 10:30** (I and the Father are one). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Son and The Father because they are one. But then the Holy Spirit is one with the Father and The Son as well. 😊 This is a glorious mystery!

- Belonging to Christ: **Rom. 8:9 (NKJV)** *"But you (believers) are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the "Spirit of Christ" (The Holy Spirit), he is not His (Christ's). Notice the last phrase of "he is not His"*.
    - **Note:** Belonging is a big part of being "in union" with, "in fellowship with" the Trinity. We cannot "belong to Christ" without the Holy Spirit. Those who believe in Christ are filled with the Holy Spirit and as a result belong to Christ, are in union with Christ, are in Christ and Christ in them and are seated with Him in Heavenly places because of this union. Those who have not believed in Christ are not filled with the Holy Spirit and do not yet belong and are net yet in union with. i.e. "not His".

d) **1 Jn. 3:24 (AMPC)** *"He [really] lives and makes His home in us: by the [Holy] Spirit Whom He has given us"*. The "us" here is "believers".

e) Now let's jump forward to **1 Jn. 2:26-27 (KJV)** and note the same use of "χρῖσμα (chrisma)" noted above: – *"26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. (False teachers) 27 But the anointing (Strong's 5545) (The Holy Spirit) which ye have received of (from) him (Jesus Christ) abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing (Holy Spirit) teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him (Christ). 28 And now, little children, abide in him (Christ); that, when he (Christ) shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him (Christ) at his coming"*.

f) Let's read **1 Jn. 2:27 AMPC.** (Note: abides permanently in you "the believer")

g) ~ Read "Believer's Commentary" *for **1 Jn. 2:26,27***.

h) Charles Spurgeon on vs. 28 - Abiding in Jesus (living in Jesus) is not a passive thing; it is an active thing. We must give ourselves, mentally and spiritually, to living in Jesus. "We abide in him, not by a physical law, as a mass of iron abides on the earth; but by a mental and spiritual law, by which the greatness of divine love and goodness holds us fast to the Lord Jesus." Yet, not only are we called to abide in Him; but we also know that He abides in us. It is a two-way relationship. "You are to take care that you abide in Christ as much as if all depended upon yourself; and yet you can look to the promise of the covenant, and see that the real reason for your abiding in Christ lies in the operation of his unchanging love and grace." – WoW!

i) Now let's read **1 Jn. 2:20 -28 (NLT)** to tie it all together.

Next meeting, we will dive into a series on the finished work of the cross.

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Commentaries:

Excerpt from the "Believer's Bible Commentary by William McDonald" for vs. Jn. 7:37-39 and Isa. 55:1.

Jn. 7:37 (NLT) *"On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me!" – Commentary:* 7:37 "Though not mentioned in the OT, the Jews had a ceremony of carrying water from the Pool of Siloam and pouring it into a silver basin by the altar of burnt offering for each of the first seven days of the feast of tabernacles. On the eight day this was not done, which made Christ's offer of the water of eternal life even more startling. The Jewish people had gone through the religious observance, and yet their hearts were not satisfied because they had not truly understood the deep meaning of the feast. Just before they departed for their homes, **on the last day, the great day of the feast Jesus stood and cried** out to them. He invited them to **come** to Him for spiritual satisfaction. Pay particular attention to the words. His invitation was extended to anyone. His Gospel was a universal Gospel. There was no one who would not be saved if he would simply come to Christ.
But notice the condition. The scripture says, "**If anyone thirsts**." "Thirst" here speaks of spiritual need. Unless a person knows he is a sinner, he will never want to be saved. Unless he realizes he is lost, he will never desire to be found. Unless one is conscious of a great spiritual lack in his life, he will never want to go to the Lord to have that need supplied. The Savior invited the thirsting soul to come to Him – Not to the church, the preacher, the waters of baptism or the Lord's table. Jesus said "**Let him come to me**." No one or nothing else will do. "**Let him come to me and drink**." To "**drink**" here means to appropriate Christ for oneself. It means to trust Him as Lord and Savior. It means to take Him into our lives as we would take a glass of water into our bodies.

Jn. 7:38 (AMPC) *"He who believes in Me [who cleaves to and trusts in and relies on Me] as the Scripture has said, from his innermost being shall flow [continuously] springs and rivers of living water."* - or - *"…Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from the heart of anyone who believes in me." – Commentary:* 7:38 "Verse 38 proves that to come to Christ and drink is the same as to *believe* on Him. All who believe on Him will have their own needs supplied and will receive **rivers** of spiritual blessing that will **flow** out of them to others. All through the OT it was taught that those who accept Messiah would be helped themselves and would be channels of blessing to others (e.g. Isa. 55:1). The expression "**out of his heart will flow rivers of living water**" means out of the persons inward parts or inner life would flow stream of help to others. John R.W. Stott points out that we drink in small gulps or sips, but these are multiplied into a mighty confluence of flowing streams. William Temple warns: No one can be indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God and keep the Spirit to himself. Where the Spirit is, He flow forth; if there is no flowing forth, He is not there.

Jn. 7:39 (AMPC) "*But He was speaking here of the Spirit, Whom <u>those who believed (trusted, had faith) in Him were afterward to receive</u>. For the [Holy] Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (raised to honor).*" – *Commentary:* 7:39 "It is clearly stated that the expression "living waters" refers to the Holy Spirit. Verse 39 is very important because it teaches that all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ also receive the Spirit of God. In other words, it is not true, as some claim, that the Holy Spirit comes to indwell people sometime after their conversion. This verse clearly and distinctly states that all who believe on Christ receive the Spirit. At the time the Lord Jesus spoke these words, the **Holy Spirit** had **not yet** been **given**. It was not until the Lord Jesus went back to heaven and **was glorified** that the Holy Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost. From that moment on, every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has been dwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Isa. 55:1 (AMPC) *"Wait and listen, everyone who is thirsty! Come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Yes, come, buy [priceless, spiritual] wine and milk without money and without price [simply for the self-surrender that accepts the blessing]."* – *Commentary:* 55:1 "The Spirit of God sends out the evangelistic invitation to Israel to return, and at the same time invites **everyone** everywhere to the Gospel feast. All that is necessary is conscious of need (thirst). The blessings are the **waters** of the Holy Spirit, the **wine** of joy, and the **milk** of the good Word of God. They are the free gift of grace, **without money and price**.

MEETING 12

The Finished Work of the Cross - Part 1

The Finished Work of The Cross (What was finished? What was the work?) – Part 1

1. **Recap (expanded) from last meeting; we discussed…**
   a) The believer's union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We went over scripture that talked about receiving the Holy Spirit when you believed in Christ. (Not progressive, received all at once when you believed). **Gal. 3:14 (NLT)** *(In more context below)*.
   b) Belonging to Christ when you believe. **Rom. 8:9 (AMP)**. "*He (The Holy Spirit) lives and makes His home in believers*". **1 Jn. 3:24 (AMPC).**
   c) The "anointing" and the "unction" noted in **1 Jn. 2:27** as being the Holy Spirit that abides permanently in believers. Let's read again through **1 Jn. 2:27 (AMPC).** Christ being "in believers" because of the Holy Spirit. We cannot "belong to Christ" without the Holy Spirit. Those who believe in Christ are filled with the Holy Spirit and as a result <u>belong to Christ</u>, are <u>in union with Christ</u>, are <u>in Christ</u> and <u>Christ in them</u> and <u>are seated with Him in Heavenly places because of this union</u>. More on seated with Him in Heavenly places below. **Eph. 2:4-6 (AMP)**. Those who have not believed in Christ are not filled with the Holy Spirit and do not yet belong and are net yet in union with. i.e. "not His".
   d) *"Children of God through faith in Jesus Christ"*. **Gal. 3:24-25 (NLT)**. This ties in with belonging to Christ. …and when you are a child of God you now have an inheritance which is the Holy Spirit! **Eph. 1:13-14 (AMP)** *"when you heard the word of truth, the good news of your salvation, and <u>[as a result] believed in Him</u>, <u>were stamped with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit</u>"*
   e) This is our incentive to share the good news of the Gospel, so that those who are lost will believe and be saved. **Acts. 16:17, 31 (NLT). A quick note on 16:31** "along with everyone in your household." **– Commentary:** *"The offer of salvation by faith in Jesus was offered to the jailer, and to his whole household. The message of salvation was proclaimed to the jailer, and his whole household. This offer is not for him alone, however, but for his whole household as well. If they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, they will be saved as well. The promise is not made that if he, as the head of the household believes, his entire household is saved by his faith. "You cannot be saved by someone else's faith."*
   f) "Saved by His grace <u>when you believed</u>." **Eph. 2:8-9 (NLT).**
2. **The Finished Work of the Cross (Part 1)**
   a) **Jn. 19:30 (AMP)** "it is finished" – Greek "Tetelestai" – **Paid in Full**. Note on **Jn. 19:30** "This wording implies that Jesus voluntarily and sovereignly released His spirit from His body in submission to God's plan."
   b) <u>What was paid in full</u>? - *(The penalty of sin)*

c) <u>What was finished</u>? - (*"The Old Covenant"*, *"The requirement of the law" and "The power of sin and Satan")*. What Christ did on the cross finished the Old Covenant of law keeping *(The end of the law for righteousness"*. *Rom. 10:4)* and brought in the New Covenant of being made right with God through faith alone, the new way of faith. **Eph. 2:8-9 (AMP). Believe and receive salvation.**

d) <u>Believers are</u>: *"no longer under law but under grace"*, *"no longer bound to the law"*, *"no longer a slave to sin"*, *"no longer separated from God"*.

e) <u>What was the work Jesus came to do</u>? - *(To seek and save the lost)*
Discuss…

f) **Gal. 3:11-14 (NLT)** - When Christ was hung on the cross, he took upon Himself the curse for our wrongdoing. <u>He redeemed us from the curse of the law and provided a new way of faith</u>. * (*Read **Gal. 3:13-14** Commentaries – see below*).

g) **Mat. 5:17-18; Rom. 8:3-4** - Christ fulfilled the law and the Prophets. - There are three hundred prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. <u>All fulfilled by Jesus</u>.

h) **Lk. 19:10 (NLT) -** Christ came to seek and save those who are lost.

i) **Jn. 1:9-10 (NLT)** - The true light was coming into the world. And indeed, Christ came into the world and became flesh, suffered, and died on the cross so that "*all who believe in and call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved."* **Rom. 10:13** and made a way to be saved through faith and not works. *"For by grace you have been saved through faith. .. not of works, lest anyone should boast."* **Eph. 2:8–9**.

j) **Rom. 3:12-31 (NLT)** – Christ took our punishment. Christ sacrifice freed us from the penalty for our sins. Provided atonement for all who would believe in Him**.** <u>Atonement</u>: the reconciliation of God and humankind through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. He was the Propitiation for our sins. **1 Jn. 2:2, 4:10; Rom. 3:21-26**.

As a result of all above *(…and what we will cover in next meeting*) , we are seated with Him in Heavenly places. **Eph. 2:4-6 (AMP)**. Where are these Heavenly places? Let's back up to **Eph. 1:18-21 (AMP)**. Far above ALL. *"Above all rule and authority and power and dominion [whether angelic or human], and [<u>far above</u>] every name that is named [above every title that can be conferred], not only in this age and world but also in the one to come."* - This is where we stand as believers and because of what Christ did on the cross for us., because of His finished work. When we believe in Jesus Christ, we receive the finished work of the cross.

Homework:

Dig into the following.

The New Covenant provides a new way of faith: **Gal. 2:16-21, 3:23-25 (NLT), Phil. 3:7-9 (AMPC), Rom. 3:21-22, 4:16, 5:1-2 (NLT)**, and complete access to His presence **(Heb. 10:19-25 AMPC)** because of the blood of Christ and our faith in Him! **1 Tim. 4:9-11** is an interesting passage to dig into. This passage says *"God is the savior of all men… especially those who believe."* The first part is referencing Christ dying on the cross making a way for all men to be saved, the second part is referring believers being saved through faith in Christ. Many confuse the first part to mean all humanity is saved. That is not what the Bible teaches is full context. Here are some important commentaries on this passage:

The Believer's Bible Commentary by William MacDonald explains **1 Tim. 4:10** noted above perfectly: *"God is the savior of all men in the same sense that He preserves them in the daily providences of life. But He is also the savior of all men in this sense:* ***He has made adequate provision for the salvation of all men****. He is the savior of those who believe in a special way because they availed themselves of His provision.* ***We might say that He is the potential savior of all men and the actual savior of those who believe.****"*

In other words, God the Father made a way for salvation through Christ's sacrifice on the cross and that way and only way, is by believing in His Son, Jesus Christ: **Mk. 1:15; Jn. 3:1-8, 16-17, 36, 5:24, 14:6, 20:31; Acts 4:12, 16:17,31; Rom. 10:4-17; Gal. 2:16; Rom. 10:9-13, 17: Eph. 1:13-14, 2:8-10; 2 Tim. 1:9. Jn. 3:1-8 Heb.11:1; 1 Jn. 4:15, 5:4.** *(a short list)*

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Deeper study:

I also recommended this excellent breakdown of **Tim. 4:9-11** from Precept Austin commentaries. 1 Tim. 4:9-11 Commentary. Here is an excerpt about "of all men." - Of all men - this phrase has led to fruitless discussions that God saves "all men", but even this passage specifies "believers". If that is not sufficient, there are many passages that clearly teach God while being able to save all men, actually saves only those who place their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on Calvary. For example Jesus declared... *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."* (**Jn. 5:24**). The apostle John adds that... *"The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning His Son. And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life."* (**1 John 5:10-13**).

Excerpt from the "Believer's Bible Commentary by William McDonald" **for Gal. 3:13-14.**

3:12 The law does not ask men to believe. It does not even ask men to *try* and keep the commandments. It calls for strict, complete and perfect obedience, as was so clearly taught in Leviticus. It is a contrary principle to faith. The law says: "Do and live." Faith says: "Believe and live". Paul's argument then is this: The just person shall live by faith. A person under **law** does **not** live by **faith**. Therefore, he is not just before God. When Paul says : "The man who does them shall live by them," he is stating a theoretical axiom or ideal but one that is impossible to attain.
3:13 To redeem is to buy back, to deliver by paying the price. The curse of the law is death – the penalty for breaking it's commandments. Christ has delivered those under the law from paying the penalty of death demanded by the law. (Paul is undoubtedly speaking primarily of believing Jews when he uses pronoun **us**.) "But Christ has rescued (**us believers**) from the curse pronounced by the law."
Cynddylan Jones says: "The Galatians imagined that Christ only half purchased them, and that they had to purchase the rest by their submission to circumcision and other Jewish rights and rituals. Hence their readiness to be led away by false teachers and to mix up Christianity and Judaism. Paul says here: (according to the Welsh translation) "Christ hat wholly purchased us from the curse of the law."

Christ redeemed men by dying in their place, enduring the dreadful wrath of God against sin. The **curse** of God fell on Him as man's substitute. He did not become sinful in Himself but man's sins were placed upon Him.

Christ did not redeem men **from the curse of the law** by keeping the ten commandments perfectly during His lifetime. Scripture does not teach that His perfect obedience to the law is reckoned to us. Rather He delivered men from the law by bearing its dreadful curse in death. Apart from His death there could be no salvation. The law taught that when condemned criminals were hanged on a tree, it was a sign of their being under the curse of God. (Deut 21:23). Here the Holy Spirit see in that passage a prophecy of the manner in which the Savior would die to bear the curse of His creatures. He was hung between Heaven and earth as though unworthy of either. In His death by crucifixion, He is said to have been hanged **on a tree** (Acts 5:30; 1 Pet. 2:24).
3:14 God had promised to bless Abraham and to bless all the world through Him. **The blessing of Abraham** is really salvation by grace through faith. The penalty of death required by God must first be paid. So the Lord Jesus was made a curse in order that God might reach out to both Jews and Gentiles in grace. Now in Christ (a descendant of Abraham). The nations are blessed.

God's promise to Abraham in Gen. 12:3 does not mention the Holy Spirit. But Paul tells us here, by inspiration of God, that the gift of the **Holy Spirit** was included in God's unconditional covenant of salvation with Abraham. It was there in embryo. The Holy Spirit could not come as long as the law was in the way. Christ had to die and be glorified before the Spirit could be given. (Jn. 16:7).

MEETING 13

The Finished Work of the Cross - Part 2

The Finished Work of The Cross (What was finished? What was the work?) Part 2

1. **Extended recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   a) We talked about what was finished when Christ died on the cross. When he said "*it is finished*" in **Jn. 19:30**, it meant "paid in full". **What was paid in full?** The penalty of sin. Christ took our place. (Propitiation).
   b) **What was finished?** The law as not finished but, *the requirement of the law* was. - As we discussed in our last meeting. The "law" did not end with Christ, (He fulfilled it), but we who believe are no longer under "requirement of the law." **Rom. 6:14**. Remember, the "you" in these references is "believers."
   Now for more context, let's read **Rom. 6:14-18 (NLT), (AMP).**
   { Read **Rom. 6:14** and **Rom. 6:14-16** commentaries below}.*
   c) **Rom. 7:4-6 (NLT)** "*Died to the power of the law when you died with Christ.*" When did you die with Christ? When you believed in Christ. *"…now released from the law."*
      - Because of what Christ finished on the cross, we do not have to keep the law to be saved and made right with God (made righteous). The New Covenant is a new way of faith. Made right by faith alone in Christ. **Rom. 3:20-31** (NLT), The new way of faith, New Covenant.
      - **Rom. 5:1** (NLT) - "Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we (believers) have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us."
2. **The Finished Work of the Cross (Part 2)**
   a) First, let's start with Christ fulfilling the law. – **Mat. 5:17-20 (ESV)** "Christ did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfil it."
   b) In Christ's fulfillment of the law, he did the following: **Heb. 10:9 (NKJV)** - Christ said: *"Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second.*" He cancels the first (Old Covenant) in order to put the second (New Covenant) into effect. - For full context, let's read through **Heb. 10:1-18** (NLT) (Christ's Sacrifice, Once for All) - Christ's Death Fulfills God's Will. For full context read all of **Heb. Chapters 9 & 10** with a punch line in **Heb. 10:39**. "But we (believers) are not like those who turn away from God to their own destruction. We are the faithful ones, whose souls will be saved." Christ's Sacrifice, Once for All so that all can be saved. He made a way for all to be saved through faith. To help better understand **Heb. 10:1-18**, you have to back up to **Heb. 9:28 (NLT)** "*so also Christ was offered once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of **many** people. He will come again, not to deal with our sins, but to bring salvation to all who are eagerly waiting for him." Note the word "many."* Not all are saved. Not all will be saved. Only believers in Christ are saved and will be in Heaven. Also, who are "*all who are eagerly waiting for him"?* Those are the believers.

c) Some important scriptures that tie into **Heb. 9:28** noted above:
1 Thess. 4:16-17 (NLT) *"For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died (the dead "in Christ") will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we (believers) who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever."* Christians (alive and dead) will meet the Lord in the air and will then be taken to Heaven." We see this second part in **Jn. 14:2-3** which teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ will receive the resurrected members of the church to Himself and then be escorted by the Lord back to His Father's house in heaven. Believers have this confident hope: **Ro. 12:12, 15:13; Heb. 3:6, 6:19, 11:1; 1 Pe. 1:3; Col. 1:27; Tit. 2:13**.

d) **1 Cor. 15:23** also ties into **Heb. 9:28** & **1 Thess. 4:16-17.**
1 Cor. 15:23 (NLT) *"But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; <u>then all who belong to Christ</u> will be raised when he comes back."* - "belong to Christ" refers to true believers in Christ. – This also begs the question of: **What about those who died before Christ came?** - A Matt Slick quote from Carm.org covers this well in his commentary: "The people who died before Christ was crucified were saved the same way as those who die after the crucifixion, by faith. The people of the Old Testament time looked forward to the coming Messiah. They trusted God according to the knowledge that they had – as would all people everywhere who were to have faith in God. But we who are alive after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, and who also have the New Testament documents, are at a great advantage. We can read the Scriptures with far more clarity and understanding than those in the Old Testament times. We know about the work of Christ on the cross. Those who died before Jesus never had the opportunity to trust in him because his crucifixion hadn't happened yet, but they were saved by faith the same as we are."

e) Believers' commentary on **1 Cor. 15:23**: "The first resurrection does not include all who have ever died, but only those who have died with faith in Christ."

f) See also our resurrected bodies. **1 Cor. 15:53 (NET/ESV)** *"For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality."* - Full context: **The Resurrected Body" 1 Cor. 1:35-58 (NLT)**.

g) <u>The New Covenant</u> is "righteousness based on faith" rather than establishing personal righteousness through law keeping. As noted above in **Rom. 6:14**, We who believe in Christ are no longer under the <u>*requirement of the law*</u> but are <u>*under grace*</u>. Even after the cross, those who do not believe in Christ are still under the law. Only Christ can justify, and not by law <u>but by his finished work and promise of the Holy Spirit **received by faith.**</u> The Bible does not teach universal salvation. One must believe in Christ to "receive" His finished work. Those who "believe in Christ" are

saved. <u>Saved from what</u>? From judgment, from Hell. Hell is real and the unbelieving and faithless are going there. The punishment for rejecting Christ: **Mat. 13:41,50; Rev. 20:11-15; 21:8 (AMPC)**. A note on justification from a CARM.org article: *"Salvation includes justification. Justification is a legal standing before God where we are declared righteous before God regarding his holy law. This is possible because Jesus bore our sins in his body on the cross (**1 Pet. 2:24**). When we trust in Christ by faith, His righteousness is reckoned to our account (**Phil. 3:9**). So, we are justified by faith (**Rom. 5:1**)."*

h) **Continuing "what was finished on the cross".**
<u>*The end of the law for righteousness"*</u>**. Rom. 10:4 (NKJV), Rom. 10:3-5,9 (AMPC) – Then read through Rom. 10:1-15 (NLT)** *{*Read **Rom. 10:4** Believer's Bible commentary – see below}.* **Rom. 10:6-8** is referencing **Deut. 30:11-14** about law but Paul is also tying it into New Covenant faith. Let's read **Deut. 30:11-17** (NLT). *{*Read **Deut. 30: 11-14** Believer's Bible commentary – see below}.*

i) <u>*Through Christ, God did what the law could not do*</u>. - **Rom. 8:3 (NKJV)** - *"What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,"* – Let's dive into this: Let's read **Rom. 8:3 in (NKJV)**, **(AMPC)** and **(AMP).** In fuller context: **Rom. 8:1-11 (NKJV)**. **Vs. 11** is 🔥 !

j) **Gal. 3:23–25 (NLT)** "*Before the way of faith in Christ was available to us, we were placed under guard by the law until the way of faith was revealed. … now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian."*

k) **Gal. 2:16 (NLT)** *"we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law."* – Again, back to **Rom. 6:14** "We (new Covenant believers) are no longer under the requirement of the law but are under grace.

l) **Phil. 3:8-9 (NLT)** *"…no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ."*

Next study: **What was accomplish on the cross?** Propitiation, Atonement and Reconciliation.

Homework: What is the "new nature" of the believer? We will dive into this on future studies. 😊

The new nature you received when you believed in Christ:
From darkness to light: Eph. 5:8; Acts 26:18.
Put on your new nature: Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:10-12.
Our spirit one with and complete in Christ: 1 Cor. 6:17; Col. 2:10.
Put on the Lord Jesus Christ: Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27.
Walk in the light: Jn.8:12.
Created anew in Christ Jesus: Eph. 2:10.
Dead in Adam, alive in Christ: 1 Cor. 15:22.
You get the idea: A NEW CREATION, A NEW LIFE!! - Born again Jn. 3:3–7, 2 Cor. 5:17; Titus 3:5; 1 Ptr. 1:3; 1 Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1–4, 18). ...and the believer does not just become a new creation but also becomes child of God. Jn. 1:12–13 indicates that being "born again" also carries the idea of becoming "children of God" through faith and trust in Jesus Christ. And an inheritance comes with being a child of God. You receive the promise of the Holy Spirit. You receive the finished work of the cross!

Faith Brings Joy **Rom. Chapter 5** / Sin's Power Broken **Rom. Chapter 6.**
No longer bound by the law: **Rom. Chapter 7**. / Live In the Spirit **Rom. Chapter 8**

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Commentaries referenced in study above:

BibleRef.com commentary on **Rom. 6:14**
6:14 - "The context of this passage is the spiritual condition of those who are saved. Paul's remarks here are about those who have expressed saving faith in Christ, not to the entire human race (**Rom. 5:1**). Paul concludes his commands to not allow sin to tell us what to do. He again reminds the reader that sin has no authority in our lives any longer. Those without Christ, standing on their own merits apart from God, are compelled to sin. As we once were, they are slaves to sin. Because Christ rescued us, that's not who we are any more. Sin is not the boss of us. Now Paul adds a surprising thought. We are not under sin's authority because we are not under the law. In some sense, being under the law revealed how powerless we were against our own desires to sin. Instead, Paul writes, we are under grace. Because of God's grace, we are no longer compelled to sin."

Believer's Bible Commentary on **Rom. 6:14-16**
6:14 - "Now another reason is given why **sin shall not have dominion over** us as believers. The first reason was that our old man was crucified with Christ (6:6) The second reason is that we are **not under law but under grace**. Sin does have the upper hand over a person who is under law. Why? Because the law tells him what to do but doesn't give him the power to do it. And the law stirs up dormant desires in fallen human nature to do what is forbidden. It's the old story that "forbidden fruit is sweet." **Sin** does **not have dominion over** the person who is under grace. The believer has died to sin. He has received the indwelling Holy Spirit as the power for holy living. And he is motivated by love for the Savior, not by fear of punishment. **Grace** is the only thing that really produces holiness.

6:15 - Those who are afraid of **grace** insist that it gives license for sinning. Paul meets this error head-on by asking the questions, then flatly denying it. We are free from the law, but not lawless. **Grace** means freedom to serve the Lord, not sin against Him. In 6:1 the question was, "Shall we continue to sin? Here the question is, "**Shall we sin** just a little**?**" The answer in both cases is a horrified "**Certainly not!**". God cannot condone any sin at all. **6:16 -** It is a simple fact of life that when we submit our selves to someone as our master, we become that person's slave. Likewise, if we sell out to sin, we become **slaves** of sin, and eternal **death** lies waiting at the end of that road. If, on the other hand, we choose to obey God the result is a holy life. Sin's slaves are bound by guilt, fear, and misery, but God's servants are free to do what the new nature loves. So why be a slave when you can be free?

Believer's Bible Commentary on **Rom. 10:4,6 - 10:4** - If they had only believed on **Christ**, they would have seen that He is **the end of the law for righteousness**. The purpose of the law is to

reveal sin, to convict and condemn transgressors. It can never impart righteousness. The penalty of a broken law is death. In His death, Christ paid the penalty of the law which men had broken. When a sinner received the Lord Jesus Christ as his savior, the law has nothing more to say to him. Through the death of his substitute, he has died to the law. He is through with the law and with the futile attempt to achieve righteousness through it.

10:6 - In order to show that the language of faith is quite different from that of the law, Paul first quotes from Deut. 30:12-13, which states: "It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' 13 Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?'" The interesting thing is that, in their setting in Deuteronomy, these verses are not referring to faith and the Gospel at all. They are speaking about the law, and specifically the commandment to "turn to the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul". (Deut. 30:10b) God is saying that the law is not hidden, distant, or inaccessible. A man does not have to go up to **Heaven** or cross the sea to find it. It is near at hand and waiting to be obeyed.
Believer's Bible Commentary on **Deut. 30:11-14** which ties in with **Rom. 10:4,6** noted above.
30:11-14 – Moses reminded the people that the covenant was not too hard for them to understand (mysterious), nor was it far off (inaccessible). They where not required to do the impossible to find it. The Lord had brought it to them, and their responsibility was to obey it. These versus are used by Paul in **Rom. 10:5-8** (see commentary above) and are applied to Christ and the Gospel. The covenant was not easy to keep, but God had mad provisions in case of failure. The people where then required to repent and to bring the appointed sacrifices. Since the sacrifices where types of Christ, the lesson is that those who sin should repent and put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Deeper Study on 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16:

Who are the dead in Christ in 1 Thessalonians 4:16?

1 Thessalonians 4:15-16 Precept Austin Commentary

BibleRef Commentary - What does 1 Thessalonians 4:16 mean?

This is part of one of Scripture's most often-quoted passages. The event referred to here is called "the rapture," a moment when Jesus Christ will call all Christians—living and dead—away from the earth to be with Him. Paul's description here is given as part of his reassurance to the Thessalonian Christians. Earlier verses comforted them with a reminder that believers who have already died will also be raised to life in Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:14). Unlike unbelievers, Christians have a hope of seeing loved ones again, in the presence of Jesus.

Paul assures his readers that Jesus, our Lord, will come in person for Christians. This will be accompanied by a loud command, the voice of an archangel, and a trumpet blast. Whether these are three separate incidents, or three ways of describing the same basic sign, is difficult to tell. The archangel mentioned here might be Michael (Jude 1:9), though Paul does not specify. Combined with the description given in the next verse, this event will apparently be sudden, dramatic, and extremely obvious.

At that time the bodies of departed Christians will rise in resurrection glory and become immortal (1 Corinthians 15:54). The inclusion of the words, "in Christ," indicates that only Christians will experience resurrection at the rapture, because only Christians have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). The phrase, "in Christ," never occurs in the context of Old Testament believers. They will be resurrected at Christ's second coming to establish His kingdom on earth (Daniel 12:1–3).

The "cry of command" will likely be Jesus' command to departed Christians. When Jesus summoned Lazarus to come out of the tomb, He specifically called Lazarus by name: "Lazarus, come out" (John 11:43). A common quip suggests that if Christ had simply said, "Come out," the bodies of all the dead would have left their burial places.

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1 Thes. 4:16 *"...First, the believers who have died (the dead "in Christ") will rise from their graves. "*, brings up the question: How were people who died before Christ saved? There is a great article on this by Matt Slick found on the Carm.org website that covers this well.
[How were people who died before Christ saved?]

A much deeper dive into Rom. 6:14, Rom. 7:4-6 regarding believers no longer being under the law but under grace.

Note: Below is an A.I. response to my challenging question and is pulling from the entire text of the Bible in these versions AMP, AMPC, ESV, KJV, NASB, NIV, as well as many commentaries, it is always wise to dig into the Word of God yourself and read the scriptures in full context while allowing the Holy Spirit to teach you as you dive in. Ask this same question yourself and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal truth as you dig into the word for the answers. Use the question and answer below for deeper study and a starting point for your own study.

My Question:

Rom. 6:14, Rom. 7:4-6 talk about how those who believe in Jesus Christ in the New Covenant are no longer under the requirement of the law. Explain how even though we believers now live under grace and now under the law, "it is through faith in Christ alone that we are made right with God, not by keeping the law", there is still God's law to keep, but believers now do that through the power of the Holy Spirit such as the Spirit producing good fruit in believers Galatians 5:22-23 and how God is working in believers: Philippians 2:12-13 (NKJV) "12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." In Philippians 2:12 we are told to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, but then there is the good news for believers in V. 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Part of both to will and to do for His good pleasure is keeping His laws, but this is now done through the power of the Holy Spirit that is in believers vs. the hard toil of keeping the law to be made right.

Grok 4's Answer:
Believers in Jesus Christ, under the New Covenant, are indeed no longer "under the law" in the sense that the law is no longer the basis or means of being made right with God (justification). Romans 6:14 declares, "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace." Romans 7:4-6 further explains that we have "died to the law through the body of Christ" and are now "delivered from the law," so that we "serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter." The law's role as a condemning power and as a system for earning righteousness has ended for those who are in Christ. Justification—being declared righteous before God—is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (Romans 3:21-24; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9). No amount of law-keeping can contribute to our right standing with God; it is entirely Christ's finished work on the cross that secures it.

However, this freedom from the law as a means of justification does not mean the abolition of God's moral standards or that believers are now lawless. The law still reflects God's holy character and His righteous will for human life (Romans 7:12: "the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good"). Jesus Himself said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17), and He summarized the law as love for God and love for neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40). Paul echoes this by saying that love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:8-10).

What has radically changed in the New Covenant is **how** believers relate to God's commands. Instead of striving in our own strength to keep the law in order to be accepted by God (which only exposes sin and brings condemnation—Romans 7:7-11), believers are now indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to live out God's will from the inside out.

This is vividly illustrated in the passages you cited:

- **Galatians 5:22-23** describes the "fruit of the Spirit"—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Notice that Paul adds, "against such things there is no law." The Spirit's fruit naturally fulfills the moral intent of the law (e.g., love fulfills "you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder," etc.—see Romans 13:9-10). This is not self-effort producing legalistic obedience, but the Spirit producing Christlike character in us.
- **Philippians 2:12-13** (NKJV) beautifully balances human responsibility and divine enabling: "work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." Verse 12 calls believers to active, serious obedience—to "work out" (not "work for") the salvation already received. But verse 13 immediately gives the good news: the power and even the desire ("to will") come from God Himself working in us through the Holy Spirit. Obedience, including keeping God's moral commands, is no longer a burdensome toil to earn favor; it is God energizing us to delight in and do what pleases Him (see also Ezekiel 36:26-27, where God promises under the New Covenant to put His Spirit within us and cause us to walk in His statutes).

In summary:

- We are justified by faith alone, apart from works of the law.
- The moral will of God (summarized in love and reflected in the law's commands) remains our standard for holy living.
- The crucial difference in the New Covenant is that obedience is now Spirit-empowered rather than flesh-driven. We do not grit our teeth and try harder in our own strength; we yield to the Spirit who produces in us both the desire and the ability to live for God's pleasure.

This is the glorious freedom of grace: no longer slaves to sin or to futile self-effort, but liberated to bear fruit for God through the indwelling Holy Spirit (Romans 7:6).

MEETING 14

The Finished Work of the Cross - Part 3

The Finished Work of The Cross (What was finished? What was the work?) Part 3

1. **Expanded recap from last meeting; we discussed… (and going a little deeper)**
   - The New Covenant being *"The end of the law for righteousness"*. **Rom. 10:4 (NKJV)**. The New Covenant is "righteousness based on faith" rather than the Old Covenant system of "establishing personal righteousness through law keeping" or "by works". The New Covenant is the new way of faith. **Gal. 3:23–25 (NLT).** Vs 25 in (NKJV) *"But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor"*. (* read **Gal. 3:25** commentary – see below)
   - We who believe in Christ are *"no longer under the requirement of the law but are under grace"*. **Rom. 6:14**. The unbeliever is still under the law, still has a sinful nature and is a slave to sin.
   - Through Christ, God did what the law could not do. **Rom. 8:1-11 (NKJV).** The very first vs. is very important. No condemnation - for those who are "in Christ" or other translations "belong to Christ". Let's dive into this a bit.
   - Jesus said in **Jn. 8:24** *"if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."* No unbeliever will be cast into the lake of fire solely because of his sins (which Christ paid for); the condemning issue is **unbelief**… *"if you do not believe"* … If you will die in your sins because you did not believe in Christ as Jesus said, then you never "received" the forgiveness that was taken care of on the cross and are still condemned. Hence the reference: "no condemnation for those who are "in Christ". Those who do not believe are not "in Christ" and are still condemned and still a slave to sin. * *More clarity on this below*.
   - It is clear that Jesus removed the sins of the world as noted in **Jn. 1:29 & 1 Jn. 2:2**. However, for the unbeliever who never believes in Jesus Christ for everlasting life; his name is not in the Book of Life (**Rev 20:15**) and never receives this free gift of forgiveness of sins and thus will be cast into the lake of fire. *(Homework)* **Mat. 13:41,50, 24:31-46; Jn. 3:36, 5:28-29; Rev. 20:11-15; 21:6-8**. One must believe in Christ to receive the finished work of the cross. For those who do believe in Christ, there is no condemnation and their names are written in the book of life (**Rev. 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12**).
   - Again, we see here particularly in vs. 2 that we believers **are free from the law**. vs 2 "*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death*." - "…no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ." **Phil. 3:8-9 (NLT).**
   - Christ fulfilling the law. – **Mat. 5:17-20 (ESV)** *"Christ did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfil it."* – Christ met all the requirements of the law. The law's demands have been fully satisfied by Christ's redemptive work. (* commentary for **Mat. 5:17-18** - see below)

- *When you believed in Christ: "You (believers) <u>died to the power of the law</u> when you died with Christ. And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead."* **Rom. 7:4-6 (NLT)**.

2. **What was accomplish on the cross?** <u>Propitiation, Atonement and Reconciliation</u>**.** Christ made a way for all to be saved and that way is through faith alone and not by works. All of humanity was not saved when Christ died on the cross. One must believe in Jesus Christ to be saved.
   a) I would like to start by reading **Jn. Chapter 17.** This is right after Jesus tells the disciples about the work of the Holy Spirit and just before being betrayed by Judas and being arrested. It is also the longest prayer Jesus prayed recorded in the Bible. Here Jesus is praying for the disciples (believers) and for all who will ever believe Jesus through their message about the good news. ***Jesus finished the work He came to do and it brought glory to the Father.*** Let's read through **Jn. 17 (NLT).** Yes, the entire chapter. ~ Discuss.
   b) **Rom. 3:12-31 (NLT)** – <u>Christ took our punishment</u>. Christ sacrifice freed us from the penalty for our sins. Provided atonement for all who would believe in Him**.** <u>Atonement</u>: the reconciliation of God and humankind through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. He was the Propitiation for our sins. **1 Jn. 2:2, 4:10; Rom. 3:21-26 (NKJV)**. He made salvation and forgiveness available to all through faith. Those who "believe" in Christ "receive" atonement and His righteousness. i.e. salvation. ~ Discuss.
   c) Let's dive into some cross-reference scriptures for **Rom. 3:12–31**:
      - **2 Cor. 5:21 (NLT)** "For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ."
      - **Eph. 1:7 (NLT)** "He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins."
      - **Gal. 3:13 (NLT)** "But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing."
      - **1 Pet.2:24 (NLT)** "He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed."
        Note: The word "healed" (Greek: iaomai—to heal or make whole) in this passage refers primarily to salvation. In 1 Peter 2:24, "healed" signifies not just physical wellness, but spiritual healing and deliverance from the penalty and power of sin. This was achieved through Jesus's substitutionary death, where He bore our sins on the cross to break sin's dominion and make us alive to righteousness. In doing so, He freed us from condemnation and restored our relationship with God. His wounds represent the suffering He endured to pay for our sins, allowing us to be made whole and forgiven.

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Extended Homework:

The Law of Faith in Christ – **Gal. 3:1 – 4:31**
Through faith in Christ the believer has: Freedom in Christ – **Gal. 5:1 – 26**
and is made alive with Christ – **Eph. 2:1-22**
and to the believer …
God's mysterious plan has been revealed through the Holy Spirit. – **Eph. 3:1 - 21**

Commentaries:
Bibleref.com Commentary for Gal. 3:25 - "In the previous verse, Paul described the useful purpose the law of Moses served in Israel, between the time of the exodus from Egypt and the earthly ministry of Christ. He compared the law to a servant in Greek families called a pedagogue. This person served the family by caring for the children from the age of 6 until late adolescence. The pedagogue disciplined, protected, and steered the children until they became independent adults.

When Christ came, Paul now insists, the need for the pedagogue ended. The law had fulfilled its purpose. Through it, God had steered Israel through all the false religions, empty philosophies, and gross immorality of the other nations of the world. The law itself could not set people free from sin, only guide them through the minefield of sin until true freedom came. Now that Christ, the Savior, had arrived to set people free from sin through faith in Him, the guardian was no longer necessary."

Believer's Bible Commentary for Mat. 5:17-18 – "The law is that system of legislation given by God through Moses to the nation of Israel. The entire body of the law is found in Exodus 20-31, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, though its essence is embodied in the ten commandments.

The law was not given as a means of salvation (Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:20a; Gal.2:16, 21; 3:11); it was designed to show people their sinfulness (Rom. 3:20b; 5:20; 7:7; 1 Cor. 15:56; Gal. 3:19) and then drive them to God for His gracious salvation. It was given to the nation of Israel, even though it contains moral principles which are valid for people in every age (Rom. 2:14,15). God tested the people of Israel under the law as a sample of the human race, and Israel's guilt proved the worlds guilt (Rom. 3:19).

The law had attached to it the penalty of death (Gal. 3:10); and to break one command was to be guilty of all (Jas. 2:10). Since people had broken the law, they were under the curse of death. God's righteousness and holiness demanded that the penalty be paid. It was for this reason that Jesus came into this world: to pay the penalty by His death. He died as a substitute for guilty law breakers., even though He Himself was sinless. He did not wave the law aside; rather He met the full demands of the law by fulfilling its strict requirements in His life and His death. Thus, the

gospel does not overthrow the law; it upholds the law and shows how the law's demands have been fully by Christ's redemptive work.

Therefore, the person who trusts in Jesus is no longer under the law; he is under grace (Rom. 6:14). He is dead to the law through the work of Christ. The penalty of the law must be paid only once; since Christ paid the penalty, the believer does not have to. It is in this sense that the law has faded away for the Christian (the believer) (2 Cor. 3:7-11). The law was a tutor until Christ came, but after salvation (through faith), this tutor is no longer needed (Gal. 3:24-25).

Yet, while the Christian is not under the law, that does not mean he is lawless. He is bound by a stronger chain than law because he is under the law of Christ (1 Cor. 9:21). His behavior is molded, not by fear of punishment, but by a loving desire to please his Savior. Christ has become his rule of life (Jn. 13:15; 15:12; Eph. 5:1, 2; 1 Jn. 2:6; 3:16).

…The ministry of the law to unsaved people has not ended: "but we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully" (1 Tim. 1:8). Its lawful use is to produce the knowledge of sin and thus lead to repentance. But the law is not for those who are already saved: "The law is not made for a righteous person" (1 Tim. 1:9)."

Back to my comments. The saved person; the one who has believed in Christ, has the righteousness of Christ and is therefore righteous and no longer under the law but under grace. The unbeliever is still under the law. i.e. the righteousness of Christ has been ***imputed*** to the believer not the unbeliever.

GotQuestions.org commentary for Christ's righteousness being imputed to believers.
https://www.gotquestions.org/imputed-righteousness.html "On the cross, Jesus took our sin upon Himself and purchased our salvation. We have "been justified by his blood" (Romans 5:9), and part of that justification is an imputation of His own righteousness. Paul puts it this way: "For our sake [God] made [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus is righteous by virtue of His very nature—He is the Son of God. By God's grace, "through faith in Jesus Christ," that righteousness is given "to all who believe" (Romans 3:22). That's imputation: the giving of Christ's righteousness to sinners.

Having Christ's righteousness imputed to us does not mean we automatically do what is right—that will come through the process of sanctification. What it does mean is that we are positionally righteous; even though we still sin, we are forensically or legally righteous. God has credited the righteousness of Christ to our account, and He did this when He saved us. In grace, the holiness of Jesus Christ is ascribed to us. Christ "has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).

By having the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, we can be seen as sinless, as Jesus is sinless. This is amazing grace! We are not righteous in ourselves; rather, we possess Christ's righteousness applied to our account. It is not our perfection but Christ's that God sees when He brings us into

fellowship with Himself. We are still sinners in practice, but the grace of God has declared us to have righteous standing before the law.

MEETING 15

The Finished Work of the Cross - Part 4

The Finished Work of The Cross (What was finished? What was the work?) Part 4

1. **Extended recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   - We dove a little deeper into **Rom. 8:1-11 (NKJV).** The very first vs. is very important. No condemnation …for those who are "in Christ" or other translations "belong to Christ. We discussed again how only those who believe in Christ are "in Christ" and "belong to Christ". This happens at salvation when one believes in Christ and becomes a new creation which allows the believer to walk in newness of life and be in union with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. *(Homework)* **2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:20, 6:15; Eph. 2:15, 4:22-24; Col. 3:10; Rom. 6:4, 7:6**. Believe in Him and you abide in Him and He in you! Also note in **Rom. 8:4 & 8:9** and how it relates to **Col. 2:11-14 (NLT/AMPC)** what we received when we believed, a Spiritual circumcision. A cutting away of our old sinful nature and **Gal. 3:27 (AMP)** baptized into Christ.
   - Jesus said in **Jn. 8:24** "*if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."* So here we see that because of unbelief the free gift of forgiveness of sins is not yet "received" for the unbeliever. It is clear in **Jn. 1:29 & 1 Jn. 2:2,** that Jesus removed the sins of the world. However, the unbeliever remains a slave to sin, is condemned in their sins and will die in their sins (**Jn. 8:24**). All noted above is to get better context of **Rom. 8:1 (AMP)** *"Therefore there is now no condemnation [no guilty verdict, no punishment] for those who are in Christ Jesus [who believe in Him as personal Lord and Savior]."*
   - One must believe in Christ to receive the finished work of the cross. For those who do believe in Christ, there is no condemnation and their names are written in the book of life (**Rev. 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12**). Let's look specifically at Rev. 3:5 in the Amp version. **Rev. 3:5 (AMP)** *"He who overcomes [the world through believing that Jesus is the Son of God] will accordingly be dressed in white clothing; and I will never blot out his name from the Book of Life, and I will confess and openly acknowledge his name before My Father and before His angels [saying that he is one of Mine]."*
   - Two areas of the scripture I would like to highlight. 1.) We overcome this world by believing in Jesus Christ. 2.) The believer's name will never be blotted out from the book of life. 3.) And Jesus will openly declare the believer's name to the Father and before His angels saying that this believer is one of mine. Again, "those who believe in Christ, who belong to Christ".
2. **What was accomplish on the cross?** Propitiation, Atonement and Reconciliation**.** (Continued) Picking up where we left off: (**We have a lot of Bible reading to do in this study*).

   a) **Acts 13:38-39 (NLT) –** *"Through Christ there is forgiveness of your sins. Everyone who believes in him is made right in God's sight—something the law of Moses could never do."* Let's read **Acts 13:38-39** in the **(AMPC).**

b) **Col. 2:6-14 (NLT)** *"He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross."*
c) **2 Cor. 5:18-20 (NKJV) & (AMPC)** – *"For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself."* * (Read **2 Cor. 5:18-21** Believers Commentary).
d) **Jn. 5:30, 6:38, Rom. 6:1-11.** – "*Christ's suffering was finished, God's will for Jesus was accomplished, the power of sin was finished."*
e) **Isa. 53:5-6** - *But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.*
f) **Isa. 53:10 (NLT), 2 Cor. 5:21 (NKJV) & (AMPC)** - His life was made an offering for sin.
g) **1 Peter 3:18, Rom. 5:6-8** - *Christ suffered for our sins once for all time*. Christ made a way for all to be saved and that way is faith in Him.
h) **Gal. 1:4** - *He gave His life for our sins to rescue us from this evil world*.
i) Made right in God's site by the Blood of Christ in unbroken fellowship with Him. **Rom. 6:8-11 (AMPC)** and brought near by the blood of Christ! **Eph. 2:13 (AMPC).**

In our next study we will be diving into…
The new nature you received when you believed in Christ

Homework:

The new nature you received when you believed in Christ:
From darkness to light: **Eph. 5:8; Acts 26:18.**
Put on your new nature: **Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:10-12.**
Our spirit one with and complete in Christ: **1 Cor. 6:17; Col. 2:10.**
Put on the Lord Jesus Christ: **Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27.**
Walk in the light: **Jn.8:12.**
Created anew in Christ Jesus: **Eph. 2:10.**
Dead in Adam, alive in Christ: **1 Cor. 15:22.**
You get the idea: A NEW CREATION, A NEW LIFE!! - Born again: **Jn. 3:3–7, 2 Cor. 5:17; Titus 3:5; 1 Ptr. 1:3; 1 Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1–4, 18**). …and the believer does not just become a new creation but also becomes child of God. **Jn. 1:12–13** indicates that being "born again" also carries the idea of becoming "children of God" through faith and trust in Jesus Christ. And an inheritance comes with being a child of God. You receive the promise of the Holy Spirit. You receive the finished work of the cross!

Shine brightly for Christ: **Phil. 2:12-16**

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Believer's Bible Commentary for 2 Cor. 5:19-21 – before diving into this commentary I want to make a note here about **2 Cor. 5:18-20**. *"God who has reconciled "us" to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given "us" the ministry of reconciliation."* Receive reconciliation and then go out and ministry the good news of this reconciliation for all who believe in Christ. To understand this in full context you must read all of chapter 2 **Cor. 5**. **Vs. 11-21** is talking about believers being God's ambassadors. To go out and ministry and share that this reconciliation is available to all who believe in Christ. The "us" being used in vs. 18 is speaking of "believers". Paul is writing to believers in this passage. Vs. 14 *"Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life"*. The "we" here is believers. This is not saying that all humanity has died to their old life, this is saying **believers have died to our old self**. We can see this better in vs. 15 *"He died for everyone so that those **who receive his new life** will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them."* Here we see the phrase "**receive His new life**". Who's life? Christ's life. How do we receive Christ's life? By believing in Him. When one believes in Christ, they "receive His new life" and become a new creation. Vs. 17 *"This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"* Again, we see this phrase "**belong to Christ**". We talked about this above. Those who believe in Christ now belong to Christ and because of this have now become a new person, a new creation. And then in vs. 18 *"And all of this is a gift from God, who brought "us" back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him."* Again, we see the word "us", the "us" her is again speaking of believers. Those who believed in Christ have been reconciled back to God through Christ and now they have been given the task to tell others about the good news of this reconciliation and that they can receive this reconciliation through faith in Christ. OK, now onto the commentary for **2 Cor. 5:19-21.**

Believer's Bible Commentary for 2 Cor. 5:19-21

"5:19 Not imputing their trespasses to them. At first reading, it might seem that this verse teaches universal salvation, that all men are saved through the work of Christ. But such teaching would be completely in disagreement with the rest of the word of God. God has provided a way in which men's trespasses might not be imputed to them, but while that way is available to all, it is effective to only those who are "in Christ." (Those saved through faith in Christ. Only believers are "in Christ"). The trespasses of unsaved men are definitely reckoned to them, but the moment these men trust the Lord Jesus as savior, they are reckoned righteous in Him, and their sins are blotted out.

In addition to His reconciled work, God has also committed to His servants the word of reconciliation. In other words, He has entrusted them with the marvelous privilege of going forth and preaching this glorious message to all men everywhere. Not to angels did He give such sacred charge, but to poor, feeble men.

5:20 In the previous verse the apostle said he has been given the message of reconciliation. He has been sent forth to preach this message to mankind. We would like to suggest that from 5:20 through 6:2 we have a summary of the word of reconciliation. In other words, Paul lets us listen to the message which he preached to the unsaved as he went from country to country and continent to continent. It is important to see this. Paul is not here telling the Corinthians to be reconciled to God. They are already believer in the Lord Jesus. But he is telling the Corinthians that this is the message which he preaches to the unsaved wherever he goes.

5:21 This verse gives us the doctrinal foundation for our reconciliation. How has God made reconciliation possible? How can He receive guilty sinners that come to Him in repentance and faith? The answer is that the

Lord Jesus has effectively dealt with the whole problem of our sins, so now we can be reconciled to God through faith.

In other words, God made Christ to be sin for us – Christ who knew no sin – that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

We must beware of any idea that on the cross of Calvary the Lord Jesus actually became sinful Himself. Such an idea is false. Our sins were placed on Him, but they were not in Him. What happened is that God made Him to be a sin-offering on our behalf. Trusting in Him, we are reckoned righteous by God. The claims of the law have been fully satisfied by our Substitute.

What a blessed truth it is that the one who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we who knew no righteousness might become the righteousness of God in Him. No mortal tongue will ever be able to thank God sufficiently for such boundless grace.

Go deeper

I have placed more commentaries below on **2 Corinthians 5:19-21** for deeper study

2 Corinthians 5:19-21 (AMPC) *"It was God [personally present] in Christ, reconciling and restoring the world to favor with Himself, not counting up and holding against [men] their trespasses [but cancelling them], and committing to us the message of reconciliation (of the restoration to favor). So, we are Christ's ambassadors, God making His appeal as it were through us. We [as Christ's personal representatives] beg you for His sake to lay hold of the divine favor [now offered you] and be reconciled to God. For our sake He made Christ [virtually] to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in and through Him we might become [endued with, viewed as being in, and examples of] the righteousness of God [what we ought to be, approved and acceptable and in right relationship with Him, by His goodness]."*

In 2 Corinthians 5:19–21 , the Apostle Paul outlines the dual nature of reconciliation: the objective work completed by God through Christ for the entire world, and the subjective requirement for individuals to receive it through faith.

This passage emphasizes God's initiative in providing reconciliation through Christ's atoning work. The reconciliation is offered to "the world" (all humanity), with sins not imputed provisionally to all, making salvation available to everyone. However, this reconciliation and righteousness are received personally only through faith in Jesus Christ—individuals must respond by believing the gospel and accepting the appeal to "be reconciled to God." Christ's death made a way for all to be saved, but it is applied through faith, not automatically or universally without response.

Below are relevant commentaries from the several commentaries, focusing on this theme. I prioritize excerpts that explicitly address the universal provision ("the world," non-imputation available to all) versus the necessity of personal faith for reception of this reconciliation.

Precept Austin (Aggregated Commentaries)

https://www.preceptaustin.org/2-corinthians-5-commentary

This resource compiles verse-by-verse notes from many conservative commentators (e.g., David Guzik, Murray Harris, William MacDonald, Charles Swindoll, Michael Andrus, James Smith, Paul Barnett, G. Campbell Morgan,

Charles Spurgeon).

Key excerpts on the theme:

- On v. 19 ("reconciling the world… not counting their trespasses"): "God was reconciling a world at enmity… The scope is interpreted as all mankind, with 'the world' (kosmos) indicating universal provision for all humanity… However… applying through faith… 'by grace are you saved through faith' (Romans 4:16)." (Multiple commentators; e.g., MacDonald: "God has provided a way by which men's trespasses might not be imputed to them, but while that way is available to all, it is effective only in those who are in Christ… the moment these men trust the Lord Jesus as Savior, they are reckoned righteous in Him.")
- David Guzik: "Our trespasses were imputed to Jesus. The justice our sin demanded is satisfied, not excused."
- On v. 20 ("be reconciled to God"): "To be reconciled to God requires that a person ask God for the forgiveness he has provided in the death of his Son… friendship has to be accepted. People don't initiate it, but they must respond to it." (Paul Barnett; Michael Andrus: "God makes His appeal to lost people through us!… We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.")
- On v. 21: "Through faith alone in the person and work of Jesus Christ, we become the righteousness of God… A real transfer occurs at the Cross: We trade our guilt for His innocence." (Charles Swindoll)

Overall view: Provision is universal ("available to all"), but effectual only "in Christ" through faith.

BibleRef.com

- Verse 19: https://www.bibleref.com/2-Corinthians/5/2-Corinthians-5-19.html "God is not counting the sins of those who are 'in Christ' against them… Christ removed the obstacle by paying the price for each believer's sin with His death… Now all who trust in Christ can be reconciled to God."
- Verse 20: https://www.bibleref.com/2-Corinthians/5/2-Corinthians-5-20.html "Paul implores all readers to be reconciled to God through faith in Christ… God does not hold the sins of those who come to Him through faith in Christ against them."
- Verse 21: https://www.bibleref.com/2-Corinthians/5/2-Corinthians-5-21.html "Those who come to God through faith in Christ are given credit for Christ's righteous, sinless life… by His gift of grace and through our faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:8–9), God receives Christ's death as payment for our sin and gives us credit for Christ's righteousness."

BibleRef clearly states the provision is available universally but received "through faith in Christ."

Blue Letter Bible

- Chuck Smith Commentary (Calvary Chapel): https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/smith_chuck/c2000_2Cr/2Cr_005.cfm "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them… the provision is universal—'God so loved the world' and 'died for all'… However, reconciliation requires personal response: 'Be ye reconciled to God,' as rejection of Christ's love is the unforgivable sin… salvation is by grace through faith, not works (Ephesians 2:8-9)."

- David Guzik's commentary is also hosted here (Enduring Word): https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david/study-guide/2-corinthians/2-corinthians-5.cfm (aligns closely with quotes in Precept Austin above, emphasizing imputation to Jesus and reception through faith).

GotQuestions.org

- Primary article on the ministry of reconciliation (covering vv. 18-21): https://www.gotquestions.org/ministry-of-reconciliation.html "God provides reconciliation for the world through Christ... 'reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them' (v. 19)... However, reconciliation is received personally through believing the gospel: individuals must repent of sin and place faith in Christ to be made right with God... 'in him we might become the righteousness of God' (v. 21)."
- Related: https://www.gotquestions.org/reconciliation.html (echoes the same: provision through Christ, received by faith).

Bible Hub Commentaries

The requested page lists classic commentaries (e.g., Pulpit Commentary, Ellicott's, Benson, Cambridge Bible, Gill's Exposition, Guzik, etc.). Many affirm the universal offer ("the world" as all mankind, non-imputation as provisional) but stress personal appropriation through faith (e.g., common notes on the appeal in v. 20 and imputation "in Him" in v. 21). For full texts:

- Direct link for v. 19: https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/5-19.htm
- v. 20: https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/5-20.htm
- v. 21: https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/5-21.htm

Easton's Bible Dictionary

Entry on "Reconciliation": Originating with God, it consists in the removal of His merited wrath through Christ's atonement (referencing 2 Corinthians 5:18-19). The provision is through the blood of Christ, making peace available, but applied to those who receive it (standard entry across sites, e.g., https://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/eng/ebd/r/reconciliation.html or similar). Related entry on "Imputation": Sins imputed to Christ, righteousness imputed to believers by faith.

These sources consistently teach that Christ's work provides a way for all to be saved (universal in scope and sufficiency), but salvation and reconciliation are received through personal faith in Him.

MEETING 16

The New Nature You Received When You Believed in Jesus Christ - Part 1

The New Nature You Received When You Believed in Jesus Christ – Part 1

1. **Extended recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   - We talked about those who are "in Christ" and those who "Belong to Christ." Believers are "in Christ" and now "belong to Christ." Unbelievers are not yet "in Christ," are "not His" and are not yet forgiven of their sins. **Jn. 8:24** – "*unless you believe that I Am who I claim to be, you will die in your sins.*" One must believe in Christ to "receive" the finished work of the cross.
   - We discussed what was accomplished at the cross and what was "made available" for all who would believe in Christ. We receive Christ's righteousness only through faith in Him. **Rom. 3:21-31 (NLT/ESV)** – "*God has shown us a new way to be made right with Him*" and that new way is faith in His Son." *He makes sinners right in His sight when they believe in Jesus Christ." This righteousness is not based on keeping the law, but is based on faith in Christ alone."*
   - We also read through **Rom. 5**. Let's read **Rom. 5:1-11 (NLT)** and keep in mind what **Rom. 5:1-2 (NLT/AMPC)** says: *"We have been made right in God's sight by faith. Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand…"* To understand **Rom. 5:8-11**, this must be read in full context by bringing in what is mentioned in **Rom. 5:1-2** regarding *"our faith in Christ"*. We "receive the power of Christ's blood" His finished work, through faith.
     We also read through **Rom. 6:1-18** which talks about sin's power being broken for those who believe.
2. **What you received when you believed: Let's talk about our new nature.**
   a) **What is the "new nature" of the believer?** Scripture says those who believe in Christ through faith have been renewed, regenerated, born again [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed and sanctified], **Gal. 3:26 (NKJV/AMP)**, Note: The believer has been sanctified and is also being sanctified throughout their entire life, an ongoing process. We will dig into this in a future study. **Heb. 12:14 (NKJV/AMP)**.
     Those who believe in Christ through faith have also become a new creation **2 Cor. 5:17**, have become a child of God through faith **Gal. 3:26-29,** and are now in union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit **Rom. 8:16-17 (NLT); 1 Cor. 2:11-12, 6:17 (NKJV/AMPC); Gal. 2:20 (NKJV/AMPC); Eph. 3:17; Col. 1:27.**
   b) The believer "receives" a washing away their sins **Acts. 22:16 (AMP)**, giving them a new birth and a new life through the Holy Spirit **Rom. 6; 1 Pet. 1:3-5, 23; Jn. 3:1-5**. This is a new nature that replaces the old nature and this happened the moment you believed in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.
     Important phrases to remember regarding your new nature is "In Christ" and "Belong to Christ," those are both part of your new nature.

Note in **Rom. 8:9 (NLT/AMP)** it says *"But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him [and is not a child of God]"* and in (**NKJV)** is says "*Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His."*

c) **When you believed, you were reborn:** When you believed in Christ, you become a child of God and are born again, you were given the right to become a child of God and you were reborn, born of God, a birth that comes from God, a divine and supernatural birth. Notice these three important words; All who believe, accept, and receive Him. With this new birth comes a new nature: **Jn. 1:12-13 (NLT/ESV/AMPC).**

d) Let's dive a little deeper into this **new birth that comes from God**. – One must be born again to see the Kingdom of God. Born again into a Living Hope, those who are born again will not "practice" unrighteousness. Those who believe in Christ have been reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, and set apart for His purpose
Jn. 3:1-6; 1 Jn. 3:9-10, 1 Pet. 1:3-9 (ESV); 1 Jn. 5:1-21 (AMP).

e) **Comparing our old nature with the new:**
"Old nature: "works of the flesh, will not inherit the Kingdom of God".
"New Nature: "Reborn, washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit and have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires, now live and walk by the Holy Spirit.."
1 Cor. 6:9–11 (AMP) (vs. 9-10 is our old sinful nature / vs. 11 is our new nature).
Gal. 5:19–25 (AMP) (vs. 19-23 is our old sinful nature / vs. 24-25 is our new nature).
The believer has been delivered/rescued from the control of darkness and transferred into the Kingdom of His Son. Was once full of darkness, but now has light from the Lord. Has received forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith. **Col. 1:13-14; Eph. 5:8 (NLT); Acts 26:16-18 (NKJV).**
Old Nature/Old Man = Dead in your sin <> New Nature/New Man = Alive in Christ!

Homework:

For more context read all of **Rom. 8:9-11 (NKJV/NLT/NASB/AMPC)**

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

For deeper study:

Rom. 8:9 Believer's Bible Commentary
8:9 When a person is born again, he is no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit. He lives in a different sphere. Just as a fish lives in water and a man lives in the air, so a believer lives in the Spirit. He not only lives in the Spirit, but the Spirit lives in him. In fact, if he is not indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. Though there is a question whether the Spirit of Christ here is the same as the Holy Spirit, the assumption that they are the same seems to fit best in the context.

In fuller context:
Rom. 8:9-11 Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament
9-11 Turning now to his readers, Paul reminds them of the basic difference between themselves and those he has been describing. As believers, they have, in the Spirit, an antidote for the sinful human nature ("the flesh"; see comment on 7:4-6). Furthermore, the Spirit of God "lives" in them (the word "if" here presupposes the truth of the statement). Previously (v.2) the Spirit has been called "the Spirit of life" because of his regenerating and renewing power; here he is "the Spirit of God" and "the Spirit of Christ," indicating that he carries out the purposes of God and applies the fruits of Christ's redemptive mission to the lives of believers (cf. Gal 4:6).

No one who lacks the Spirit belongs to Christ. Everyone who trusts Christ has the Spirit (Eph 1:13). The title "Spirit of Christ" is made meaningful by the deliberate way in which Paul says essentially the same thing about both the Spirit and Christ in relation to believers: the Spirit lives in you (v.9) and Christ is in you (v.10). The presence and fullness of Christ are realized in a Christian's life by means of the indwelling Spirit (Eph 3:16-17).

Paul's observation (v.10) about those in whom Christ lives—" your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness"—has proved difficult for interpreters. The NIV and most leading modern translations make "spirit" refer to the spirit of the Christian rather than to the Spirit of Christ. But it seems preferable to see *pneuma* ("spirit"; see comment on vv.5-8) here as referring to "the Spirit of God," for three reasons. (1) It is unlikely that Paul, having consistently referred to *pneuma* as the Spirit of God, would give this word a different frame of reference in this one instance. His use of the word "body" here, not the word "spirit," refers to the entire human person. He maintains that sin necessitated our dying with Christ. (2) The phrase about the *pneuma* being alive because of righteousness relates back to "the Spirit of life" at the beginning of the chapter (v.2). (3) The first part of v.11 refers to the living presence of the Spirit in believers; Paul seems there to be repeating what he said at the end of v.10 in order to present a further observation—namely, that the same Spirit will provide resurrection life in due season. The close of

v.10 teaches, therefore, that the Spirit who is life in himself brings life to those in whom he lives only because they have already been granted God's righteousness (through their justification).

In v.11 the Spirit is given yet another title: "the Spirit of him [i.e., God; cf. 4:24] who raised Jesus from the dead." The Spirit's future work on behalf of the saints will be to "give life" to their mortal bodies. This accords with Paul's description of the glorified bodies of believers as "spiritual" (1Co 15:44). The life bestowed by the Spirit in that coming day is beyond the power of death or any other agency to vitiate or destroy. It is the very life of God, blessedly spiritual and indestructibly eternal.

MEETING 17

The New Nature You Received When You Believed in Jesus Christ - Part 2

Finding Treasure in The Word

The New Nature You Received When You Believed in Jesus Christ – Part 2
Spiritual Circumcision: Crucified with Christ and One Spirit with Him

1. **Extended recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   - Last meeting, we talked about the new nature that the believer has, that is the new nature the believer received at salvation. What is that new nature? The believer has been renewed, regenerated, born again [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, sanctified], has become new creation and a child of God. The believer is now in union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The believer "receives" a washing away their sins, giving them a new birth and a new life through the Holy Spirit. The believer is now righteous, in right standing with God having been given the righteousness of Christ. The righteousness of God received through faith: **Rom. 3:20-26 (AMPC).**
   - We talked about the importance of the phrase "in Christ" and "those who belong to Christ." Only believers are in Christ and belong to Christ.
   - We also touched on our old nature vs. our new nature.
   - We only made it halfway through this study so this is a part 2 of that same study.
2. **What you received when you believed: Let's talk about our new nature. Continued…**
   a) When you came to Christ, (when you believed in Him) <u>Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature</u> **Col. 2:11-12 (NLT)** and replaced it with a new birth and new nature as mentioned in our previous study.
   b) Our old sinful selves [our human nature without the Holy Spirit] were crucified with Christ, it was nailed to the cross with Him when we believed in Christ: **Rom 6:3-6; Gal. 2:20 (AMP).** The baptism in **Rom. 6:3-4** is speaking of baptism into Christ. The baptizing work of the Holy Spirit. (**Read Rom. 6:3-4 Grace New Testament commentary**)
   c) Consider yourselves to be dead to sin [and your relationship to it broken], but <u>alive to God [in unbroken fellowship with Him] in Christ Jesus</u>: **Rom. 6:10-11 (AMP)**.
   d) Our spirit one with and complete in Christ: **1 Cor. 6:17; Col. 2:9-10 (AMP).**
   Col. 2:3 connects well to **Col. 2:9-10** – putting the two together: *"In Him all the treasures of [divine] wisdom (comprehensive insight into the ways and purposes of God) and [all the riches of spiritual] knowledge and enlightenment are stored up and lie hidden. And in Him you have been made complete [achieving spiritual stature through Christ], and He is the head over all rule and authority [of every angelic and earthly power]."* – This is referring to our Spirit. Our Spirit is joined with Lord and has been made complete. Although, our body and mind still need renewing and will not be complete until we are in Heaven and receive our new bodies. **Rom. 12:2** "*Renewing of your mind*" being one example. Question for discussion: Does a new mind come with our new bodies in Heaven?

e) These passages also are related to our spirit becoming one with God's Spirit: Eph. 1:13-14 (sealed with the Spirit as a guarantee), Rom. 8:9-10 (Spirit dwelling in you, Christ in you), and 1 Cor. 12:13 (baptized by one Spirit into one body). This union signifies becoming a new creation, empowered by God's presence within for a transformed life. Empowered with the indwelling Holy Spirit!

f) **Indwelling & Union**:
   - **1 Cor. 6:17**: "But whoever is united with the Lord is one spirit with the Lord".
   - **Rom.8:9-10**: "You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you... if Christ is in you...".
   - **1 Cor. 3:16**: "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?"

Rom. 6:3-6 Grace New Testament commentary

6:3 Many interpreters see water baptism here. But we know that baptism by the Holy Spirit was a doctrine profoundly significant to Paul. It is what forms the body of Christ. (**1 Cor. 12:13**). Thus, our spiritual union with Jesus Christ is affected by the Holy Spirit's baptism, and it is precisely to our union with Him that the following verses in Romans appeal.

Moreover, in no NT passage is water baptism unambiguously referred to as baptism into Christ Jesus. (= baptism into the body of Jesus Christ). Where water baptism is linked explicitly to Jesus Christ, it is always in His name. (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48;19:5; 1 Cor. 1:13, 15 [by inference]).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit means that believers **have been baptized into His death**. This union with Christ in **His death** is in fact the key to a new life experience.

6:4 Our spiritual union involves immersion into Christ's death. Immersion into His death effectively purifies inner man from sin, rendering him dead to it. (see Rom. 6:5-11; Titus 3:4-7). The Christian has been united with Christ in His death so that he may also share in His resurrected life (**Walk in newness of life**).

As Paul will go on to point out, especially in **8:1-13**, this glorious resurrection power is precisely what will enable the believer to surmount (overcome) the impediment (obstacle) of his sinful body.

The issue before Paul's mind both here and up to **8:13**, is how those who are alive from the dead can live like it. In other words, how can people walk in newness of life?

6:5-6 Paul is not discussing our future resurrection from the dead. On the contrary, he is discussing walking "in newness of life".

Inasmuch as **we are united with** Christ in the **likeness of His death** by means of **the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit**, it follows that we can also expect a similar union with Christ **in the likeness of His resurrection**.

We know, Paul affirms, **that our old man has been crucified with Him**. The reference to our old man can only be a reference to our inner self, which, "lived" inside our physical bodies prior to our union with Jesus Christ. The "old self" has died.

This truth applies that a “new man” (that is a “new inner self”) has replaced this old man (**7:22** “my inward man”). The “old man/new man” terminology also occurs in **Eph. 4:20-24**, where the idea that Christians should not “wear” their old self, but their new self.

When we speak of regeneration and of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we are talking about spiritual events that radically alter the inward reality of our being. When we believe in Christ for eternal life, the inward man is reborn with that life. And when we are baptized at the same moment by the Holy Spirit, we are united with the spiritual body of Christ and thus are also united with Him in His death, burial and resurrection.

Paul’s point here is this. Our union with Christ in His death has as its purpose that this body of sin might be nullified, so that we may no longer serve sin. The body of sin (and by extensions, the physical body itself) has lost its unbreakable dominion over us. Now this slavery no longer exists.

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Two more commentaries for deeper study:

Rom. 3:25 Believers commentary
God set forth Jesus as a propitiation. A propitiation is a means by which justice is satisfied, God's wrath is averted, and mercy can be shown on the basis of an acceptable sacrifice.
Three times is the NT Christ is spoken of as a propitiation. Here in Rom. 3:25 we learn that those who put their faith in Jesus Christ find mercy by virtue of His shed blood. In 1 Jn. 2:2 Christ is described as the propitiation for our sins, and for those of the whole world. His work is sufficient for the whole world but it is only effective for those who put their trust in Him. Finally, in 1 Jn. 4:10, God's love was manifested in sending His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
The word propitiation also occurs in Heb. 2:17 "Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." Here the expression "to make propitiation" means to put away by paying the penalty.
The OT equivalent of word propitiation is mercy-seat. The mercy-seat was the lid of the ark. On the day of atonement, the high priest sprinkled the mercy-seat with the blood of a sacrificial victim. By this means errors of the high priest and of the people were atoned for or covered. When Christ made propitiation for our sins, He went much further. He not only covered them but did away with them completely.
Now Paul tells us in 3:25 that God set Christ forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith. We are not told to put our faith in His blood; Christ Himself is the object of our faith. It is only a resurrected and living Christ Jesus who can save. He is the propitiation. Faith in Him is the condition by which we avail ourselves of the propitiation. His blood is the price that was paid.

A note that come up in our meeting regarding the statement above: "We are not told to put our faith in His blood" - We had some discussion on this and yes, we Christins should certainly believe in the power of the blood of Jesus. This statement is saying that we are not told to believe in the blood for salvation, only believing in Jesus Christ can save. The power of His blood is what we receive when we believe. I do believe in the power of Christ's blood, however there is only salvation by believing in Christ and receiving salvation though His finish work by faith. As a result of this salvation through faith in Christ is receiving the power of His blood in our lives. There is so much discuss in the Bible on Christ's' blood. I will just put two scriptures here for an example:

Eph. 1:7-8 (ESV) *"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight." – Again, to emphasize faith in this passage: which he lavished upon us (those who believe).*
Heb. 9:22 (ESV) *"Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." - Again, to emphasize faith in this passage:*

Without faith in Christ, there is no salvation and receiving the power of the blood which is forgiveness of sins.

One more example here: **Jn. 8:24 (ESV)** *"I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." – Here we see for the unbelievers there is no forgiveness of sins because he (the unbelievers) has not yet received or appropriated salvation and forgiveness of sins because he has not yet believed in Jesus Christ. Believe in Christ and receive salvation and forgiveness of sins.*

Now back to 3:25 commentary.

The finished work of Christ declares God's righteousness for the remissions of sins that are past. This refers to sins committed before the death of Christ. From Adam to Christ, God saved those who put their faith in Him on the basis of whatever revelation He gave them. Abraham, for example, believed God and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. (Gen. 15:6). But how could God do this righteously? A sinless substitute had not been slain. The blood of a perfect sacrifice had not been shed. In a word, Christ had not died. The debt had not been paid. God's righteous claims had not been met. How then could God save believing sinners in the OT period?

The answer is although Christ had not yet died, God knew that He would die, and saved men on the basis of the sill-future work of Christ. Even if OT saints did not know about Calvary, God knew about it, and He put all the value of Christ's work to their account when they believed God. In a very real sense, OT believers were saved on credit. They were saved on the bases of a price still yet to be paid. They looked forward to Calvary; we look back to it.

Rom. 3:25 Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament

25 "God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement." The emphasis on faith in this verse suggests that the force of "presented" is in the proclamation of the Gospel that makes Christ's saving work central—a proclamation emphasizing that Christ, under God, has become "a sacrifice of atonement." This phrase renders the Greek *hilasterion*. In LXX the first occurrence of this word is in Ex 25:17, where it refers to the lid on the ark of the covenant ("atonement cover"; KJV "mercy seat"). The only other occurrence of this word in the NT (Heb 9:5) also alludes to this atonement cover. Does Ro 3:25 have the same frame of reference? Perhaps not, for Hebrews is filled with references to the sanctuary and its ritual, whereas Romans is not. But the contrast should not be overdrawn (cf. Ro 12:1). And although the ark of the covenant was withheld from public view and access, Heb 9 emphasizes that the death of Christ opened up what had formerly been concealed and was inaccessible to the people. The word "presented" here in Romans is a signpost suggesting a similar concept here. God's atonement has been set up before the eyes of the entire world. Christ has become the meeting place of God and humankind where the mercy of God is available because of the sacrifice of the Son.

The idea of atonement also relates to the context of Romans up to this point. The first main section of the book (1:18-3:20) is permeated with the concept of the divine wrath (cf. 1:18; 2:5, 8; 3:5), along with an emphasis on judgment. It would be strange for Paul to state the remedy for human sin and unrighteousness without indicating that this wrath of God has been satisfactorily met by his own provision. There is no other term in 3:21-26 that can convey this idea besides *hilasterion*.

The phrase "through faith in his blood" (v.25) poses a problem. This translation suggests that the believer's faith is to be placed in the blood of Christ, and the sequence of terms favors this. However, Paul nowhere else calls for faith in a thing rather than in a person. Thus an alternative suggestion is to place a comma after "faith," separating the clauses and making both of them dependent on *hilasterion*.

The remainder of v.25 deals with the necessity of Christ's propitiation in terms of God's "justice" (the same word in the original as "righteousness"). God's character needs justification for him to pass over "sins committed beforehand"—i.e., in the ages prior to the cross. His "forbearance" must not be thought of as sentimentality or weakness but as an indication that meeting the demands of his righteous character would be accomplished in due season. This happened at the cross. The full penalty for sin was not exacted earlier, in line with God's forbearance.

MEETING 18

The New Nature You Received When You Believed in Jesus Christ - Part 3

The New Nature You Received When You Believed in Jesus Christ – Part 3
Union: One Spirit with the Lord and the Indwelling Holy Spirit

1. **Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   - We focused on our new nature in Christ. The new nature that we received when we believed in Christ. We talked about the spiritual circumcision, the cutting away of our sinful nature that happened when we believed in Christ and that the old sinful nature was replaced with a new nature. That new nature is Christ in us and us in Christ!
   - We also started to touch on our union with Christ being united and <u>joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him</u>. (**1 Cor. 6:17 AMP**). In this study we are going to dive deeper into this oneness and what it means for us who believe in Christ. We also talked about being baptized into Christ.
2. **What you received when you believed: Let's talk about our new nature. Continued…**
   a) **1 Cor. 6:14-20 (AMP).** In the middle of this passage talking about fleeing from sexual immorality we are given a picture of being <u>united and joined to the Lord and being one spirit with Him</u> - vs 17. This passage also refers to the church and to believers individually being a temple of the Holy Spirit and that we are not our own.
   <u>Strong's for "He which is joined":</u> κολλάω - 2853 kollaó (kol-lah'-o):
   - **kollaó = Glue** - to glue, unite. To bond (cleave), adhere to (literally, "glued together"); to cleave, join to; (figuratively) intimately connected in a soul-knit friendship. Wow!

   This passage is focusing on the body (the church and the individual) so the next couple of scriptures are in this same direction.

   b) **1 Cor. 3:16 (NKJV/AMPC)** – You, the believing church, and individual believers, are now the temple of God. <u>God's Spirit has His permanent dwelling in you [to be at home in you, collectively as a church and also individually]</u>.

   c) **1 Cor. 6:19-20 (NLT/AMPC)** – *"your body is the temple (the very sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you Whom you have received [as a Gift] from God. <u>You are not your own</u> …God bought you with a high price. So, you must honor God with your body." Note: "you are not your own"* – you (believer) now belong to the Lord and are His!

   d) **Rom. 12:1-2 (KJV/AMPC)** – *"<u>present your bodies a living sacrifice</u>, holy, acceptable to God, (make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God,)…do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind…"* We are familiar with *"do not be conformed to the world and be transformed by the renewing of your mind"*, but sometimes we glance over **v. 1** *"<u>present your bodies a living sacrifice</u>"* and how it ties in with us being a temple of God. Also note and discuss: KJV/NKJV – "<u>a living</u> sacrifice" – NIV/ESV/NASB/AMP/AMPC "<u>as a living</u> sacrifice"

Note: *"As a Living Sacrifice"* (NIV/ESV/NASB/AMP/AMPC)
This is a functional equivalence (thought-for-thought) translation. Translators add the word *"as"* to clarify the capacity in which you are presenting yourself.

- The Concept: This phrasing emphasizes Function or Comparison. It helps the modern reader understand the metaphor. In the Old Testament, a worshiper would present a lamb as a sacrifice. Paul is saying: "In the same way a Jew once brought a literal animal, you should now bring your whole life."

e) In previous studies we focused on being born again and what that meant. One of the main benefits of being born again is the Holy Spirit coming into your spirit. There is a union that takes place at salvation. Let's talk more about this union.

f) **Rom. 8:16-17**
(NKJV) "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ"
(NASB) "the Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ"
(NLT) "For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs."
(AMPC) "The Spirit Himself [thus] testifies together with our own spirit, [assuring us] that we are children of God. And if we are [His] children, then we are [His] heirs also: heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ [sharing His inheritance with Him]"

- His Spirit joins with our spirit. Let's talk about that for a minute.

g) Let's keep the thought of "His Spirit joining with our spirit" in mind while reading this scripture:
1 Cor. 2:11-12 (NKJV/AMPC) – "*For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? …no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. …We have not received the spirit of the world but the Holy Spirit who is from God.*"

- Now when you think of having received the Holy Spirit through faith add to that His Spirit being joined with our spirit. Then think about understanding spiritual things because you have received the Holy Spirit, are joined with Him, have a new nature, and now have the mind of Christ. Now think about God unveiling and revealing deep mysteries to us through the Holy Spirit.
  Now let's read this in full context: **1 Cor. 2:6-16 (NASB)** (Spiritual Wisdom).
  (see **1 Cor. 2:14-16** Believers Bible Commentary below).*
- **1 Jn. 2:27** ties into this same theme. **1 Jn 2:27 (ESV)** "*But the anointing [The Holy Spirit] that you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. …*" i.e. spiritually discerned as we just read in **1 Cor. 2:6-16.**

h) A quick review of scriptures previously discussed on union for homework.

- **Col. 1:27** – "Christ in you, the hope of glory."
- **Rom. 8:10** – "And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

- **Gal. 2:20** – "no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me."
- **Gal. 3:26-27** – "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
- **Eph. 3:17** – "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."
- **2 Cor. 13:5** – "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?"
- **Jn. 14:20** – "At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." (At that day = coming of The Holy Spirit) - Full context (Indwelling of the Father and the Son) **Jn. 14:19-31**.
- **Gal. 4:19** – "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you," – I like to think of this as His Spirit in us spilling over into our body and soul.
- **2 Cor. 4:10-11** - (NKJ) "the life of Christ made manifest in our mortal flesh."

i) We are a spirit who has a soul that lives in a body.
- **Spirit** (the inner-most part of your being, the center of who you are).
- **Soul** (mind, will and emotions) and **Body** (5 senses).
- We want His Spirit which is one with our spirit to flood our body and soul. I believe this is the "Christ being formed in you" part.

j) **Rom. 8:6 (NKJV/AMPC)** *"For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the spirit is life & peace."* Spiritually minded… remember we have the mind of Christ as noted above.

k) <u>How do we walk in this new spiritual nature as it says in **Gal. 5:16-25 (AMPC)**</u>? Your spirit communicates between you and God. You want your spirit to lead and guide your soul and body to act and operate within the will of God. We believers want our will, emotions and intellect to be guided by our spirit and how it lives in the world. This is walking in the spirit.

l) **Eph. 1:13 (NLT)** "<u>he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit</u>", (NASB) "you were sealed <u>in Him with the Holy Spirit</u>", (AMP) "were stamped with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit [the One promised by Christ] <u>as owned and protected [by God]</u>."

m) We believers were dead but now have <u>been made alive in Christ</u>. **Eph. 2:1-10 (AMP)** (pay close attention to vs 3 in **Eph. 2:1-10**)

n) **2 Cor. 5:17 (AMP)**. We believers have been <u>joined to Him by faith in Him as Savior</u>, a new creature [**reborn and renewed by the Holy Spirit].** Note again here: If anyone is "In Christ" (ESV/AMP/NASB) or "belongs to Christ" (NLT).

o) We talked a lot about being "born again" in our last study but I want to touch on this one more time from a different angle. This is in the context of not loving the world, a warning about the antichrist and having received the Holy Spirit can now know the difference between truth and lies, all of which is a result of being born again. Let's read

through **1 Jn. 2:15-27 (NLT/AMP)** and then back up to **1 Jn. 2:20**.
*(*See **1 Jn. 2:20** Believers Bible Commentary below)*.

p) I find this scripture very encouraging; it ties in with His spirit in our spirit spilling over into our body and soul. Christ being formed in us!
Rom. 8:10-11 (AMPC) – "…He Who raised up Christ Jesus from the dead will also restore to life your mortal (short-lived, perishable) bodies through His Spirit Who dwells in you."

1 Cor. 2:14-16 Believers Bible Commentary

2:14 – Not only is the gospel divine in its revelation and divine in its inspiration, but now we learn it can only be received by the power of **the Spirit of God**. Unaided, **the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit. They are foolishness to him**. He cannot possibly understand them **because they** can only be **spiritually** understood.

2:15 – On the other hand, the man who is illuminated by the Spirit of God can discern these wonderful truths even though **he himself** cannot be **rightly judged** by the unconverted. Perhaps he is a carpenter, or plumber, or fisherman; yet he is an able student of the Holy Scriptures. "The Spirit-controlled Christian investigates, inquiries into, and scrutinizes and comes to an appreciation and understanding of its contents. To the world he is an enigma. He may never have been to college or seminary, yet he can understand the deep mysteries of the word of God and perhaps even teach them to others.

2:16 – The apostle now asks with Isiah the rhetorical question: **Who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?** To ask the question is to answer it. God cannot be known through the wisdom or power of men. He is known only as He chooses to make Himself known. However, **those who have the mind of Christ**, are able to understand the deep truths of God.

To review then, first there is revelation. (vv. 9-12). This means that God revealed previous unknown truths to men by the Holy Spirit. These truths were made known supernaturally by the Spirit of God.

Secondly, there is inspiration. (v. 13). In transmitting these truths to others, the apostles (and all other writers of the Bible) use the very words which the Holy Spirit taught them to use.

Finally, there is illumination (vv. 14-16). Not only must these truths be miraculously revealed and miraculously inspired, but they can only be understood by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit.

1 Jn. 2:20 Believers Bible Commentary

But this raises the question: "How can a young believer (or a longtime believer for that matter) know what is true and what is falsehood?" The answer is that we **have an anointing from the Holy One, and … know all things**, and this **anointing** refers to the Holy Spirit and **is from the Holy One**, the Lord Jesus Christ. When a person is saved, he received the indwelling Holy Spirit, and He enables the believer to discern between truth and error. When John tells his young readers "you

know **all things**" he does not mean this in an absolute sense. It is not that they have perfect knowledge, but rather that they have the capacity to recognize what is true and what is not. Thus the youngest, simplest believer has the capacity of discernment in divine things that an unsaved philosopher would not have.

Where we are heading: (Homework to dig into)

…and just what does the believer do with this new nature?

- We are to "live as children of light" and "Love One Another": Eph. 4:17-32: 1 Jn. 3:1-23, 3:7-21.
- We should "Not Love This World": 1 Jn. 2:15-27.
- We "believers" are to "live in the light": Eph. 5:1-14.
- We "believers" are to be "living by the power of the Holy Spirit": Eph. 5:15-20.
- We "believers" are to "walk in the light": Jn. 8:12.
- "Believe and trust in the Light [have faith in it, hold on to it, rely on it], so that you may become sons of Light [being filled with Light as followers of God]." Jn. 12:35-36.
- Even though we received a new nature when we believed in Christ, scripture tells us to "put on our new nature": Eph. 4:20-24 (AMP); Col. 3:10-12.
- We "believers" are to "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ": Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27.
- We "believers" are to "put on the full armor of God": Eph. 6:10-18.
- A Call to holy living: 1 Pet. 1:13-25.
- We "believers" are to "Clothe ourselves" with humility, humble yourselves before God, be alert and of sober mind. Resist the enemy and stand firm in the faith: 1 Pet. 5:5-11.
- We "believers" are to "be a living sacrifice": Rom. 12:1.
- We "believers" are to "walk in love": Eph. 5:1-21
- We "believers" are to Shine brightly for Christ: Phil. 2:12-16 and don't hide the light: Mat. 5:15-16.
- Make every effort to enter that rest [of God, to know and experience it for ourselves]: Heb. 4:11.
- We are to continue in the faith: Col. 1:21-23.
- stripping off every unnecessary weight and the sin which so easily and cleverly entangles us - run with endurance and active persistence the race that is set before us - looking away from all that will distract us and focusing our eyes on Jesus: Heb: 12:1-2.
- Be sober-minded, watchful, alert, vigilant and self-disciplined because that enemy of yours, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion [fiercely hungry], seeking someone to devour. Resist him, be firm in your faith [against his attack—rooted, established, immovable]: 1 Peter 5:8-9.

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Two more commentary for deeper study:

Rom. 12:1 Believers Bible Commentary

12:1 Serious and devout consideration of **the mercies of God**, as they have been set forth in chapters 1–11, leads to only one conclusion—we should **present** our **bodies** as **a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God**. Our **bodies** stand for all our members and, by extension, our entire lives.

Total commitment is our **reasonable service**. It is our **reasonable service** in this sense: if the Son of God has died for me, then the least I can do is live for Him. “If Jesus Christ be God and died for me,” said the great British athlete C. T. Studd, “then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him.”46 Isaac Watts’ great hymn says the same thing: “Love so amazing, so divine, demands my heart, my life, my all.”

Reasonable service may also be translated “spiritual worship.” As believer-priests, we do not come to God with the bodies of slain animals but with the spiritual sacrifice of yielded lives. We also offer to Him our service (Rom. 15:16), our praise (Heb. 13:15), and our possessions (Heb. 13:16).

Rom. 12:1 Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament

1 "Therefore" establishes a connection with the entire foregoing presentation in this letter. It particularly relates to 6:13, 19, as a comparison of the terminology will show. The apostle begins by urging his readers instead of simply instructing them ("urge" lies between commanding and beseeching). "Mercy" denotes that quality in God that moved him to deliver sinners from their state of sin and misery and therefore underlies his saving activity in Christ. It serves here as the leverage for the appeal that follows. Whereas the heathen are prone to sacrifice in order to obtain mercy, biblical faith teaches that the divine mercy provides the basis for a life of sacrifice as the fitting response.

Since the milieu of thought is so similar to ch. 6, it is natural to conclude that "bodies" here include both the person (the volition of the one making the dedication) and the bodily powers that are thus set apart for God's use. In Greek thought the body was considered the receptacle containing the soul, but this was not the Hebraic concept, which viewed the human being as a unit. Thus Paul is not urging the dedication of the body as an entity distinct from the inner self; rather, he views the body as the vehicle that implements the desires and choices of the redeemed spirit. Through the body we serve God.

The words "offer" and "sacrifices" are cultic terms (cf. 15:16). Before a priest in Israel could minister on behalf of others, he had to present himself in a consecrated state and the sacrifices he offered were to be without blemish (Mal 1:8-13). "Holy" is a reminder of that necessity for the Christian, not in terms of rite or ritual but as renouncing the sins of the old life and being committed to a life of obedience to the divine will (cf. 6:19). The body is not evil in itself; if it were, God would not ask that it be offered to him. As an instrument, it is capable of expressing either sin or righteousness. If we do the latter, then we give an offering "pleasing to God." The word "living" may glance by way of contrast to the animal sacrifices of the OT, which, when offered, no longer possessed life. But it is also a reminder that spiritual life, received from God in the new birth, is the presupposition of a sacrifice acceptable to him. Christian sacrifice has in

view a total life of service to God. In Israel the whole burnt offering ascended to God and could never be reclaimed. It belonged to God.

Next, the living sacrifice is equated with "spiritual worship." While the exact sense is difficult to determine, the main idea is that the sacrifice we render to God is intelligent and deliberate, in contrast to the sacrifices of the Jewish worship in which the animals had no part in determining what was to be done with them. "Worship" is perhaps too narrow a translation, for in the strict sense worship is adoration of God, which does not fit well with the concept of "bodies." The term "service" (KJV) has an advantage, since it covers the entire range of a Christian's life and activity (cf. Dt 10:12). Serving God is the proper sequel to worship.

MEETING 19

Now That We (The Believer) Have This New Nature - What Are We To Do With It - Part 1

Now That We Have This New Nature, What Are We to Do with It? – Part 1
The Process of Salvation: Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification

1. **Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   - We dove into our union with Christ. <u>But the one who is united and *joined* to the Lord is one spirit with Him:</u> **1 Cor. 6:17 (AMP).** <u>His Spirit being *joined* with our spirit</u>: **Rom. 8:16 (NLT). -** *Joined* - **kollaó = Glue** - to glue, unite. To bond (cleave), adhere to (literally, "glued together"); to cleave, join to; (figuratively) <u>intimately connected in a soul-knit friendship</u>.
   - We talked about God's Spirit having His permanent dwelling in us who believe; "[to be at home in us, collectively as a church and also individually]." **1 Cor. 3:16 (NKJV/AMPC)** and about being the temple of God **1 Cor. 6:19-20 (NLT/AMPC)** and honoring God with our bodies by being a living sacrifice **Rom. 12:1-2 (KJV/AMPC)**.
   - We also talked about us being <u>a spirit who has a soul that lives in a body</u>. **We want His Spirit which is one with our (the believer's) spirit to flood our body and soul**. I believe this is the "Christ being formed in you" part, The ongoing sanctification which we are going to be talking about in this study. **Gal. 4:19 (NKJV)** *"until Christ is formed in you."*
2. **Walking Out This Newness of Life**

   The last 18 Bible studies we have gone through had to do with "receiving" what God has done for us. About what we "received" when we believed in Christ. Now we are heading into the "doing", what we (believers) are to be doing with all that we have received?

   Here is a short list of what we (believers) should be doing with all that we have received, then we will dive into the scripture to find treasure that will help as walk in this newness of life.
   - **We are told to be: Sober-minded, watchful, alert, vigilant and self-disciplined.** (1 Pet. 1:13, 4:7, 5:7-9, 5:8-10; 1 Cor. 16:13-14; Col. 4:2; Lk. 21:36; Mat. 24:4-6; Eph. 6:10-18)
   - **We are told to: Humble ourselves and resist the enemy** (1 Pet. 5:6-9; Jas. 4:7), **to stand firm in our faith** (1 Cor. 16:13) **and to continue in the faith** (Phil. 1:27).
   - **We are told to: Live as children of the light, walk in the light, walk in love, shine brightly and walk in newness of life.** (Eph. 5:8-10 – live/walk as children of light; 1 Jn. 1:7 – walk in the light; Eph. 5:2 – walk in love; Phil. 2:15 – shine like stars; Rom. 6:4 – walk in newness of life; also Jn. 8:12 for walking in Christ's light)
   - **We are told to: Love one another but to not love this world.** (1 Jn. 4:7-12, 21 – love one another; 1 Jn. 2:15-17 – do not love the world or things in the world; also Jn. 13:34-35 for the command to love one another)
   - **We are told to: Put on our new nature, put on Christ and put on the full armor of God.** (Eph. 4:24 – put on the new self/nature; Rom. 13:14 – put on the Lord Jesus Christ; Eph. 6:11-18 – put on the full armor of God; also Col. 3:10 for the new self)
   - **We are told to: Clothe ourselves with Christ and humility.** (Rom. 13:14 – clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ; 1 Pet. 5:5 – clothe yourselves with humility toward one another; also Col. 3:12 – clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, etc.)

- **We are told to: Present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.** (Rom. 12:1 – present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God)
- **We are told to: Lay Aside (Strip off) every unnecessary weight and the sin which so easily and cleverly entangles us.** (Heb. 12:1 – lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily entangles us)
- **We are told to: Not be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. A renewed mind is a mind acting under the influence of the Holy Spirit.** (Rom. 12:2 – do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind; also Eph. 4:23 – be renewed in the spirit of your minds)
- **We are told to: Look away from all that will distract us; to focus our eyes on Jesus and run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus and to daily fixing our gaze, attention and thoughts on God.** (Heb. 12:1-2 – run with endurance… fixing our eyes on Jesus; also Col. 3:2 – set your minds on things above)

These are some of the hard ones:

- **We are told to: Do everything without grumbling or arguing so that you may become blameless and pure, 'children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.** (Phil. 2:14-15 – do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation)
- **We are told to: Rejoice at all times, to pray without ceasing and to give thanks in all circumstances.** (1 Thess. 5:16-18 – rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances)
- **We are told to: be anxious for nothing, are told to not worry about our life and should cast all our cares on Him because He cares for us. – How much do we trust Jesus with our lives and our families?** (Phil. 4:6 – be anxious for nothing; Mt. 6:25-34 – do not worry about your life; 1 Pet. 5:7 – cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you).
- **We are told to: Go and make disciples and be ministers of the New Covenant.** (Mt. 28:19-20 – go and make disciples of all nations; 2 Cor. 3:6 – ministers of a new covenant; also Mk. 16:15 for preaching the gospel).
- **We are told to: <u>Make every effort to enter into His rest</u>. Much of what is listed above can come out of this rest.** (Heb. 4:11 – make every effort to enter that rest).

3. **This is going to lead us into the process of salvation:**
   Justification, Sanctification & Glorification
   a) Before we dive into how we are to be walking, living, and shining, I would like to start with a paragraph from a previous study where we talked about the new nature of the believer:

"What is the "new nature" of the believer? Scripture says those who believe in Christ through faith have been renewed, regenerated, born again [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed and sanctified], ***Gal. 3:26 (NKJV/AMP)****, Note: The believer <u>has been sanctified</u> and is <u>also being sanctified</u> throughout their entire life, an ongoing process.* ***Heb. 12:14 (NKJV/AMP)****, have become a new creation* ***2 Cor. 5:17****, have become a child of God through faith* ***Gal. 3:26-29*** *and are now in union with the*

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ***Rom. 8:16-17 (NLT); 1 Cor. 2:11-12, 6:17 (NKJV/AMPC); Gal. 2:20 (NKJV/AMPC); Eph. 3:17; Col. 1:27.*** *The believer "receives" a washing away their sins* ***Heb. 10:10****, giving them a new birth and a new life through the Holy Spirit* ***Rom. 6; 1 Pet. 1:3-5, 23; Jn. 3:1-5****. This is a new nature that replaces the old nature and this happened the moment you believed in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior."*

I want to focus on *"have been sanctified (set apart) and are being sanctified. An ongoing progressive process*."

b) This leads us into the process of salvation: **Justification, Sanctification and Glorification.**

c) **<u>Justification</u> (past tense, has happened for the believer) -** Saved, made right in God's sight. Righteousness through faith in Christ. Christ's righteousness imputed to all believers. Pronounced righteous, by trusting in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This happened at salvation. You were made right when you believed in Jesus Christ. Saved by grace through faith, not by works but by faith alone. A legal standing. We are sanctified (set apart positionally); that is, we are saved from the ultimate penalty of sin. Then begins progressive sanctification. *(We have gone over this in detail in previous studies.)*

d) **<u>Sanctification</u> - (past tense and is ongoing, it has happened for the believer and is happening; an ongoing process)** - The scriptures refer to believers as <u>having been sanctified</u>, set apart at salvation and points to us <u>being sanctified</u>, an ongoing process, a continual event. The continual process of God helping us (**by the Holy Spirit** and **through His word)** become Holy and transformed into His image. One example: *"For you are becoming progressively acquainted with and recognizing more strongly and clearly the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"* **2 Cor. 8:9 (AMPC).**
I say "<u>by the Holy Spirit and through His word</u>" because the Holy Spirit helps us understand the word. The Holy Spirit who is our helper and who will teach us all things and guide us into all truth. Continually being transformed by the Holy Spirit to become more like Jesus. The sanctifying work of the Spirit as mentioned in **1 Pet. 1:2** (NIV) "...through the <u>sanctifying work of the Spirit</u>, to be obedient to Jesus Christ..."
(KJV) "...<u>through sanctification of the Spirit</u>, unto obedience..."

e) I see the concept of "are being sanctified" as maturing and growing in Christ and the knowledge of God. (**2 Pet. 3:17-18**) So, there is sanctification (started at salvation) and progressive sanctification (ongoing through our entire life). *(see scriptures below)*

f) **<u>Glorification</u> - (Future, will happen for the believer)** - In Heaven with glorified bodies. Our mortal bodies transformed into immortal bodies. *(This will be a future study)*. Those dead "in Christ" (those who believed prior to death, will rise first, then all those alive next to meet the Lord in the air. Believers go on into Heaven and receive their new glorified bodies, unbelievers will be raised for judgment [raised to meet their sentence].

g) **Sanctification differs from justification in several ways**. One commentary puts it this way: *"Justification is a one-time work of God, resulting in a declaration of "not guilty" before Him because of the work of Christ on the cross. Sanctification is a process,*

beginning with justification and continuing throughout life. Justification is the starting point of the line that represents one's Christian life; sanctification is the line itself."

h) That said, there are scripture that say "we (the believer) have been sanctified. There are also many that refer to the process of being sanctified. We have been made holy and are being made holy. This is not a contradiction, they are intertwined. Let's dig into some of these scriptures:

i) **Rom. 3:22-23, 5:1 (NKJV/AMPC)** - Believer has been justified, made right with God. Christ's righteousness imputed to all believers. *(* See Rom. 3:22 commentary below)*

j) **1 Cor. 1:2 (NKJV)** - Who are/have been sanctified.

k) **1 Cor. 1:2 (BibleRef Commentary)** – *"Paul says he is writing to Christians, those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus. The word "sanctified" refers to something that has been "set apart" for special purposes. Every person who is a Christian has been marked by God, as His own possession, set apart from the rest of humanity for His own purposes. Christians are not hoping, by good behavior, to become sanctified someday. By God's grace through faith in Christ, that has already happened."* – Then there is the process of sanctification as noted above: *"The continual process of God helping us by the Holy Spirit and through His word to become Holy and transformed into His image."*

l) **Heb. 10:10 (NKJV/AMP)** - Believers have been made holy (consecrated and sanctified) through the offering made once for all of the body of Christ. The "for all" in NKJV is referring to the church, to all believers. *(* See Heb. 10:10 commentary below.)*

m) This is also contrasted by **Heb. 10:14 (AMP)** *"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified [bringing each believer to spiritual completion and maturity]."* – So, Sanctification is the process of bringing the believer to spiritual completion and maturity, to that which has already been made perfect. We spend a life time becoming what we already are; Just, righteous, perfect and holy through our union with Jesus Christ. **NKJV/NLT/AMP/ESV**: Are being sanctified. **KJV/NASB**: Are sanctified.

n) **1 Cor. 6:11 (NKJV/AMPC)** - You (the believer) were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified when you believed in Christ. ...you were consecrated (set apart, hallowed), and you were justified [pronounced righteous, by trusting] in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. See also **Rom. 10:9-11 (AMP)** – Justified because of believing.

o) **Heb. 12:14 (AMPC/NASB 1995)** *" Strive to live in peace with everybody and pursue that consecration and holiness [sanctification] without which no one will [ever] see the Lord."* - *Note:* We were just reading that we have been consecrated, sanctified and made holy (past tense), however here in **Heb. 12:14** it is saying to *"pursue that consecration and holiness [sanctification]"*. **1 Cor. 6:11** *"we have been sanctified"*, **Heb. 12:14** is saying we are to "*pursue" holiness*. We have been made Holy/Sanctified and we are to pursue it as well. **AMPC/ESV** - strive - "strive" - to make strenuous efforts toward any goal. **NLT** - work at, **AMP** - Continually pursue, **NKJ** - Follow. Following holiness is an interesting thought/concept in this process of being sanctified. There is a theme here of: "making an effort" towards holiness. I believe this comes down to intentionality with

our relationship with The Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- A question came up during discussion regarding this verse **Heb. 12:14**. How do we "pursue holiness" without turning it into a work to earn that which we were made at salvation? Some responses to this: Being intentional with our relationship with Christ, putting Him first. Seek first the Kingdom. Continually surrendering to the Lord. Let Him do the work in us! Accept, receive and grab hold of what He has done for us. Believe what the word says about salvation, about what we have "received" when we believed and walk in it! Believe and continue to believe. **Col. 1:23** *"But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News."*

p) **1 Pet. 2:2-3 (AMPC)** *"Like newborn babies you should crave (thirst for, earnestly desire) the pure (unadulterated) spiritual milk, that by it you may be nurtured and grow unto [completed] salvation,".*

q) **Phil. 3:12 (NKJV/AMPC)** "*Not that I have now attained [this ideal], <u>or have already been made perfect</u>, but I press on to lay hold of (grasp) and make my own, that for which Christ Jesus (the Messiah) has laid hold of me and made me His own."* - One commentary on **Phil. 3:12** puts it this way *"Paul was <u>not yet perfectly conformed to Christ</u>. The process was still going on, and Paul was deeply exercised that this work of God's grace might continue and deepen."*

r) Another commentary has this to say about progressive sanctification: *"Sanctification is the process of becoming holy. <u>It is the process of becoming who Christ has already declared us to be. It is the process of being transformed into His image</u>* ***(2 Cor. 3:18 AMP)."***

s) Jesus praying for the disciples: **Jn. 17:17-19 (NKJV/AMP)** - *"Sanctify them by Your truth"*

t) Paul's final greeting in **1 Thes. 5:23 (ESV)** - *"May God sanctify you completely."*

Sanctification is accomplished by the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
We need to allow Him to do the work. We need to "let" Him do the work!

Now, after diving into Justification, Sanctification and Glorification, we can now move onto walking out this newness of life.

Next study we will be heading into the "doing", what are we (believers) are to be doing with all that we have received.

Believer's Bible commentary on Rom. 3:22

*"Verse 21 told us that righteous salvation is not obtained on the basis of law-keeping. Now the apostle tells how it is obtained - **through faith in Jesus Christ**. Faith here means utter reliance on the living Lord Jesus Christ as one's only savior from sin and one's only hope for Heaven. It is based on the revelation of the person and work of Christ as found in the Bible.*

Faith is not a leap in the dark. It demands the surest evidence, and finds it in the infallible word of God. Faith is not illogical or unreasonable. What is more reasonable than that the creature should trust his Creator? Faith is not a meritorious work by which a man earns or deserves salvation. A man cannot boast because he has believed the Lord; he would be a fool not to believe Him. Faith is not an attempt to earn salvation, but it is the simple acceptance of the salvation which God offers as a free gift.

*Paul goes on to tell us that this salvation is **to all and on all who believe**. It is **to all** in the sense that it is available to all, offered to all, and sufficient for all. But it is only **on** those **who believe**.; That is, it is effective only in the lives of those who accept the Lord Jesus by a definite act of faith. The pardon is for all, but it becomes valid in an individual's life only when he accepts it.*

*When Paul says that salvation is available for all, he includes the gentiles as well as the Jews, because now **there is no difference**. The Jew has no special privilege, and the gentile is at no disadvantage. i.e. the gentiles have been grafted in. **Rom. 11:17**."*

See also **Rom. 19:1-13** "...if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ...For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ... whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. ...For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Believer's Bible Commentary on Heb. 10:10:

"This is a positional sanctification, as is the case all through Hebrews with exception of 12:14 and is true of all believers (1 Cor. 6:11) and not merely of a few "advanced Christians." It is accomplished by the will of God and the sacrifice of Christ. We are set apart by God, to God, and for God. It is not to be confused with the progressive work of God's Spirit in the believer through the word. (Jn. 17:17-19; 1 Thess. 5:23).

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Homework:

https://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/eng/ved/s/sanctification-sanctify.html

Sanctification, Sanctify - Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words

A — 1: ἁγιασμός (Strong's #38 — Noun Masculine — hagiasmos — hag-ee-as-mos')

"sanctification," is used of (a) separation to God, 1Cor, 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2 (b) the course of life befitting those so separated, 1 Thessalonians 4:3,4,7; Romans 6:19,22; 1 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 12:14 . "Sanctification is that relationship with God into which men enter by faith in Christ, Acts 26:18; 1 Corinthians 6:11 , and to which their sole title is the death of Christ, Ephesians 5:25,26 : Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 10:10,29; 13:12 .

"Sanctification is also used in NT of the separation of the believer from evil things and ways. This sanctification is God's will for the believer, 1 Thessalonians 4:3 , and His purpose in calling him by the gospel, 1 Thessalonians 4:7; it must be learned from God, 1 Thessalonians 4:4 , as He teaches it by His Word, John 17:17,19; cp. Psalm 17:4; 119:9 , and it must be pursued by the believer, earnestly and undeviatingly, 1 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 12:14 . For the holy character, hagiosune, 1 Thessalonians 3:13 , is not vicarious, i.e., it cannot be transferred or imputed, it is an individual possession, built up, little by little, as the result of obedience to the Word of God, and of following the example of Christ, Matthew 11:29; John 13:15; Ephesians 4:20; Philippians 2:5 , in the power of the Holy Spirit, Romans 8:13; Ephesians 3:16 .

"The Holy Spirit is the Agent in sanctification, Romans 15:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2; cp. 1 Corinthians 6:11 . ... The sanctification of the Spirit is associated with the choice, or election, of God; it is a Divine act preceding the acceptance of the Gospel by the individual." * [* From Notes on Thessalonians, by Hogg and Vine, pp. 115,271.]

B — 1: ἁγιάζω (Strong's #37 — Verb — hagiazo — hag-ee-ad'-zo)

"to sanctify," "is used of (a) the gold adorning the Temple and of the gift laid on the altar, Matthew 23:17,19; (b) food, 1 Timothy 4:5; (c) the unbelieving spouse of a believer, 1 Corinthians 7:14; (d) the ceremonial cleansing of the Israelites, Hebrews 9:13; (e) the Father's Name, Luke 11:2; (f) the consecration of the Son by the Father, John 10:36; (g) the Lord Jesus devoting Himself to the redemption of His people, John 17:19; (h) the setting apart of the believer for God, Acts 20:32; cp. Romans 15:16; (i) the effect on the believer of the Death of Christ, Hebrews 10:10 , said of God, and 2:11; 13:12, said of the Lord Jesus; (j) the separation of the believer from the world in his behavior -- by the Father through the Word, John 17:17,19; (k) the believer who turns away from such things as dishonor God and His gospel, 2 Timothy 2:21; (1) the acknowledgment of the Lordship of Christ, 1 Peter 3:15 . "Since every believer is sanctified in Christ Jesus, 1 Corinthians 1:2 , cp. Hebrews 10:10 , a common NT designation of all believers is 'saints,' hagioi, i.e., 'sanctified' or 'holy ones.' Thus sainthood, or sanctification, is not an attainment, it is the state into which God, in grace, calls sinful men, and in which they begin their course as Christians, Colossians 3:12; Hebrews 3:1 ." * [* From Notes on Thessalonians, by Hogg and Vine, pp. 113,114.]

Also: What is progressive sanctification? https://www.gotquestions.org/progressive-sanctification.html

MEETING 20

Now That We (The Believer) Have This New Nature - What Are We To Do With It - Part 2

Now That We Have This New Nature, What Are We to Do with It? – Part 2
Humility: The Foundation for Surrender, Submission, and Rest in the Spirit

1. **Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   - We dove deep into **Justification, Sanctification & Glorification.**
     - Justification: Past tense, has happened for the believer.
     - Sanctification: Past tense and is ongoing, it has happened for the believer and is happening; an ongoing process. Have been made holy and are being made holy.
     - Glorification: Future, will happen for the believer. New bodies, eternity in Heaven.
   - This is important to keep in mind as we dive into what the believer is supposed to be doing with their new nature. How can we be walking out this newness of life? How do we, as it says in **Gal. 5:16 (NKJV/AMPC)** "Walk in the Spirit" / "…*walk and live [habitually] in the [Holy] Spirit [responsive to and controlled and guided by the Spirit]*"?
2. **Walking Out This Newness of Life – (Being teachable, surrendering and submitting)**
   a) Let's go over the list of what we (believers) should be doing with all that we have received from Christ again before we start. (See below)
   b) When I started to dive into the long list of things Jesus and the scriptures tells us what we (believers) are to be doing, i.e. how we are to be living, I kept coming back to humility as a starting point. We are to humble ourselves. Pride is something God resists; therefore, we must obliterate it from our lives. Then this took me to being teachable, surrendering and submitting to the Lord and **letting Him do His work in us through and by the Holy Spirit**.
      - Let's start with humility and then next study we will dig into being teachable, surrendering and submitting to the correction and discipline of the Lord. Walking humbly before our God and others as well as being teachable, surrendering and submitting to the Lord is going to be the foundation that allows us to be victorious with walking out this newness of life.
3. **Humility (God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble)**
   a) Let's start with God resisting the proud but giving grace to the humble. **1 Pet. 5:5-7; Jam. 4:6-7; Prov. 3:34 (NLT)** – Summation: God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble, therefore Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God and be clothed with humility. Submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee. Notice that in **1 Pet. 5:7** and **Jam. 4:7** above we are given very important instructions regarding walking in newness of life:
      - **1 Pet. 5:7 (AMP)** *"casting all your cares [all your anxieties, all your worries, and all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares about you [with deepest affection, and watches over you very carefully]."* – Trusting God requires humility. [non-self-reliant]
      - **Jam. 4:7 (AMP)** *"So **submit** to [the authority of] God. Resist the devil [**stand firm** against him] and he will flee from you."* – Submitting to God requires humility.
        - Side note: Number 7 symbolizes completion or perfection. 😊

b) **1 Pet. 5:6 (KJV)** "Humble yourselves"
Strong's NT Greek 5013. Ταπεινόω (tap-i-no'-o) – a verb, used as an action word.
   - Definition: To make low, to humble. For the believer, showing humility, true lowliness, happens by being fully dependent on the Lord – dismissing reliance upon self (self-government) and emptying carnal ego (fleshly pride). This exalts the Lord as our all-in-all and prompts the gift of His fullness in us. I.e., The partaking of His divine nature as mentioned in **2 Pet. 1:4 (NKJV)** *"That we may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."* For more context, let's read **2 Pet. 1:2-9 (ESV/NKJV/AMPC).** *(* See **2 Pet. 1:5-9** commentary below).*

c) Let's go back to **1 Pet. 1:3** and tie in **Eph. 1:3** "God has given us everything we need for living a godly life". Notice how they are both **vs. 1:3** ref. an interesting connection.
2 Pet. 1:3 (NLT) – *"Through faith in Christ we have received everything we need for living a godly life by the Holy Spirit."*

d) **Eph. 1:3 (NLT)** – *"Because we are united with Christ we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the Heavenly realms."* We believers become united with Christ at salvation when we believe. (See **Gal. 3**) Being filled with the Holy Spirit at salvation is what allows this union to take place.
   - As a result of being filled with the Holy Spirit, the believer has everything they need for living a godly life. Let's read **2 Pet. 1:5-9 (NKJV/AMPC/ESV)**. We can see that there are seven "qualities, virtues or elements of holiness." We are to add to our faith (**virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, Godliness, brotherly kindness, love**), of which we are to make every effort to supplement to our faith. (supplement your faith with… these seven elements of holiness). To sum up the above: "**We are to humble ourselves and make every effort to add these seven elements of holiness to our faith.**"
   - This also lines up with **Heb. 12:14** that we discussed in our last study on sanctification. "Continually pursue peace and holiness." *Make every effort/persue*.

d) Many of the seven elements of holiness listed above from **2 Pet. 1:5-9** are also covered in **Gal. 5:22-23**. I.e. the Fruit of the Spirit (**love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control**) which the Holy Spirit produces in our lives. This also ties into the "process of sanctification" that we spoke of in our last study. Having been made holy and are being made holy; are being conformed into the image of His Son.
   - We see in **2 Pet. 1:5-9** that we are told to make every effort to add these seven elements of holiness to our faith and we are told in **Gal. 5:22-23** that the Holy Spirit in us produces this kind of fruit in our lives. When I put these two together, I see that we can achieve this by allowing/letting the Holy spirit do His work in us, thus submitting to the process of sanctification. Being humble ties into this in a big way! Make every effort to submit to the work of the Holy Spirit and let Him produce good fruit in our lives and these seven elements of holiness will be a natural bi-product of submitting to God's authority in our lives. Bending to His will and letting Him work in us requires humility!

e) We are also told to make every effort to "enter into His rest" in **Heb. 4:10-11 (NASB/AMPC)**. (*See Heb. 4:11 commentary below).
   * The key to this rest is faith. ~ Homework: full context **Heb. 4:1-16**.

f) When reading these three areas of scriptures (**2 Pet. 1:5-9, Gal. 5:22-23, Heb. 4:1-16**) there seems to be a contradiction or a paradox. One says to make every effort to add elements of holiness to your faith, one says the Holy Spirit in us, produces this kind of holiness, and the other says we are to make every effort to "enter into His rest."
   - **2 Pet. 1:5-9** - Make every effort to add (**virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, Godliness, brotherly kindness, love**) to your faith.
   - **Gal. 5:22-23** - The Holy Spirit in us produces **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control**. ...**If** we humble ourselves, submit to, surrender to, and let Him produce this good fruit in our lives! We can resist this process, or we can humble ourselves and let Him do His work in and through us.
   - **Heb. 4:11** "Make every effort to enter that rest" – This rest will help us achieve this.

g) Paul tells believers in **Rom. 12:1-2** to *"present their bodies as living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God"* and goes on to say that we should not conform to this worlds culture, but rather should be transformed by the renewing of your minds.
   - Being **humble, surrendering** and **submitting** to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is what enables us to be a "living sacrifice." Let's read through **Rom. 12:1-21 (NKJV/NLT)** for fuller context and see how being humble is essential to achieve what Paul is talking about in this passage. (* See Rom. 12:1 and 12:20 commentaries below)
   - See also **Rom. 6:11-14 (NKJV/AMPC)**. Specifically, **vs. 13** *"And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."*

h) **1 Peter 5:5-7** and **James 4:6-7** both say, *"God opposes and resists the proud but shows favor and grace to the humble"* and both **1 Pet. 5:5-7** and **Jam. 4:6** are referencing **Prov. 3:34**. Let's read through **Prov. 3:34 (NLT/AMP/NASB)**.
   - I like what NASB brought out using the word "needy" instead of "humble." To be humble is to be in need, being fully dependent on the Lord. When I am in a state of "not needing" the Lord, not relying on, depending on, and trusting in the Lord, but instead relying on, depending on, and trusting in myself, then I am in pride and God resists and opposes those who are prideful. Life has enough challenges; do I want to add God resisting me to those challenges? NO! **Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God and clothe yourself with humility.** The result will be rest for your souls!

e) **Mat. 11:29-30, 18:4, 23:12; Lk. 14:11; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:12-15; Isa. 66:2; Rom. 13:14 (ESV)**
A summation of these scriptures: For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted, so let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind and humbleness let each esteem others better than himself. Put on love, tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering. Clothe yourself with Christ and make no provision for the flesh! (* See notes on Rom. 13:14 ESV below)

- **Rom. 13:14 (ESV)** *"…make no provision for the flesh"*. How can we make no provision for the flesh? This ties in with **Gal. 5:16 (NKJV)** *"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."* So how do we make no provision for the flesh? The answer is "Walk in the Spirit". Which begs the question: How do we walk in the Spirit?
  - This study aims to answer this question and the answer is: HUMILITY. Humility will allow us to **surrender to** and **submit to** the lord's authority. Humbly **surrendering to** and **submitting to** the Lord's authority will help us **let the holy spirit do his work in and through us**. Being intentional and diligent to cultivate our relationship with Christ with humility will help us have victory with walking in the Spirit and making no provisions for the flesh and the result will be **entering into His rest**.

f) Note on **Mat. 11:28-30 (NASB/NLT)**. Everyone quotes **vs. 30** but **vs. 28-29** ties into our focus here. Jesus was humble, is our example and we should learn from Him. We are to take His yoke upon us and in so doing <u>will find rest for our souls</u>.

g) Bonus scripture. There are rewards for being humble 😊
Prov. 22:4 (AMPC) *"The reward of humility and the reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord is <u>riches</u> and <u>honor</u> and <u>life</u>."* --- Life abundant! (**Jn. 10:10**).

The last 19 studies have been focused on what we received when we believed in Christ and became a new creation with a new nature. Now we are diving into what we are to do with this new nature. Below is a recap list of what we (believers) should be doing with all that we have received:

Special note:

The ending of my original list is what I ended up starting with to tackle this list. 😯

- We are told to be: Sober-minded, watchful, alert, vigilant and self-disciplined.
- We are told to: Resist the enemy, to stand firm in our faith and to continue in the faith.
- We are told to: Live as children of the light, walk in the light, walk in love, shine brightly and walk in newness of life.
- We are told to: Love one another but to not love this world.
- We are told to: Put on our new nature, put on Christ, and put on the full armor of God.
- We are told to: Clothe ourselves with Christ and humility.
- We are told to: Present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.
- We are told to: Strip off every unnecessary weight and the sin which so easily and cleverly entangles us.
- We are told to: Not be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. A renewed mind is a mind acting under the influence of the Holy Spirit.
- We are told to: Look away from all that will distract us, to focus our eyes on Jesus and run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus and to daily fixing our gaze, attention, and thoughts on God.

These are some of the hard ones:

- We are told to: Do everything without grumbling or arguing so that you may become blameless and pure, 'children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.
- We are told to: Rejoice at all times, to pray without ceasing and to give thanks in all circumstances.
- We are told to: Be anxious for nothing, to not worry about our life and should cast all our cares on Him because He cares for us. – How much do we trust Jesus with our lives and our families?
- We are told to: Go and make disciples and be ministers of the New Covenant.
- **We are told to: Humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God and be clothed with humility.**
- **We are told to: Make every effort to enter into His rest. Much of what is listed above can come out of this rest.**

Next study will be: **Submitting to the teaching, correction, and discipline of the Lord**.

Don't worry, it's not as bad as it sounds. This will continue our study regarding humbling ourselves, being clothed with humility and entering His rest which has the end result of becoming partakers of His divine nature that we read about in **2 Pet. 1:4**.

Homework:

Read all of **Prov. 3 (NLT/NIV/NASB/AMP.AMPC)** which addresses trusting the Lord.
Heb. 4:1-16 full context "Promised rest for God's people". - enter into His rest.

HUMILITY—a prominent Christian grace (**Rom. 12:3; 15:17, 18; 1 Cor. 3:5–7; 2 Cor. 3:5; Phil. 4:11–13**). It is a state of mind well pleasing to God (**1 Pet. 3:4**); it preserves the soul in tranquility (**Ps. 69:32, 33**), and makes us patient under trials (**Job 1:22**).

Christ has set us an example of humility (**Phil. 2:6–8**). We should be led thereto by a remembrance of our sins (**Lam. 3:39**), and by the thought that it is the way to honor (**Prov. 16:18**), and that the greatest promises are made to the humble (**Ps. 147:6; Isa. 57:15; 66:2; 1 Pet. 5:5**). It is a "great paradox in Christianity that it makes humility the avenue to glory."

M. G. Easton, Illustrated Bible Dictionary and Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893), 340.

James 4
Drawing close to God: vs. 1-10.
Warning against judging others: vs. 11-12.
Warning about self-confidence: vs. 13-17.

1 Peter 1 and 2
A call to Holy Living 1:13 – 2:12

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Commentaries:

2 Pet. 1:5-9 Believer's Bible Commentary plus some of my own commentary in *italics*.

1:5 Versus 3 and 4 show that God has given us all that is necessary for the divine life. Because He has, we must be diligent in cultivating it. God does not make us holy against our will or without our involvement. There must be desire, determination, and discipline on our part. *I.e. intentionality on our part to seek first the Kingdom of God.*

In the development of Christian character, Peter assumes faith. After all, he is writing to Christians - to those who have already exercised saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So he does not tell them to furnish faith; he assumes they already have it.

What is necessary is that faith be supplemented by seven elements of holiness. Not adding these one after the other, but manifesting all the graces all the time. – This ties in with the Holy Spirit producing fruit in our lives. The fruit of the Spirit. Not plural fruits, all of the fruit

Virtue: moral excellence. Spiritual courage before a hostile world, the strength to stand for what is right. Also covered in **Godliness**.
Knowledge: especially the knowledge of truth. This emphasizes the importance of studying the word of God and obeying its sacred precepts. ***Self-Control and perseverance*** *to follow what the scriptures are telling us regarding how we are to live regardless of circumstances.* **Brotherly Kindness** identified us to the world as Christ's disciples. "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (**Jn. 13:34-35**). *The "this" mentioned here is the final element of holiness:* ***Love***.

1:6 God calls every Christian to a life of discipline. Someone has defined this as the controlling power of the will under the operation of the Holy Spirit. There must be discipline in prayer, discipline in Bible study, discipline in the use of time, discipline in sacrificial living. - *The Holy Spirit is our helper and we can lean on Him to help us with this discipline. I know personally for me, there are many distractions in life that tend to pull me away from being disciplined. I need the Holy Spirit's help when it comes to discipline.*

1:8 There is either advance or decline in the pathway to discipleship - no standing still. There is strength and security in moving forward, danger and failure in retreat. Failure to persevere in the development of Christian character leads to barrenness, unfruitfulness, blindness, shortsightedness, and forgetfulness.

1:9 The man who lacks the seven virtues has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. The truth of his redemption has lost its grip on him. He is going back in the direction from which he was once rescued.

So we must be diligent in cultivating these seven elements of Holiness.

Heb. 4:11 Believer's Bible commentary plus some of my own commentary in italics.
(Homework: **Heb. 4:1-16** full context "Promised rest for God's people")

The previous verse demonstrates that God's rest is still available. This verse says that diligence is necessary in order to enter that rest. We must be diligent to make sure that our only hope is Christ the Lord. We must diligently resist any temptation merely to profess faith in Him and then to renounce Him in the heat of suffering and persecution. - *This is where perseverance and having faith in God's promises kicks in…*
The Israelites were careless. They treated God's promises lightly. They hankered for Egypt, the land of their bondage. They were not diligent in appropriating God's promises by faith. As a result, they never reached Canaan. (The promised land) - The land of Canaan was promised by God to the descendants of Abraham (Genesis 12:7).

Joshua and Caleb were the two spies who brought back a good report and believed that God would help them succeed. They were the only men from their generation permitted to go into the Promised Land after the time of wandering.

Those who did not believe because there were giants in the land did not enter the promised land because of their unbelief and disobedience. - Faith is required to enter into His rest!

A Living Sacrifice Rom. 12:1-21 - Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible
A living sacrifice to God. "Christians should not feel themselves at liberty to be conformed to the world, if only they avoid what is manifestly sinful; but rather, yielding themselves to the transforming power of the truth as it is in Jesus, they should strive to exhibit before the world an entire renovation of heart and life".

Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible, vol. 2 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 253.

Rom. 12:20 Bibleref commentary

"Burning coals" is a metaphor for deep anguish. Acts of kindness will increase the guilt, shame, or remorse of our enemy's hostility toward us.

The description of "heaping burning coals" is a reference to Proverbs 25:21–22. In Egypt, there had been a custom to carry a pan of burning coals on one's head as a sign of repentance. Kindness and forgiveness to those who abuse us, ideally, will make them ashamed of themselves, and hopefully bring them to repent. The strongest, most powerful response to persecution and hatred is to love your enemies.

MEETING 21

Now That We (The Believer) Have This New Nature - What Are We To Do With It - Part 3

Now That We Have This New Nature, What Are We to Do with It? – Part 3
(Walking Out This Newness of Life – Submitting to the teaching, correction, and discipline of the Lord)

1. **Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   - We focused on humility. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.
   - We covered **2 Pet. 1:5-9** where we are told to add seven specific qualities, virtues, or "elements of holiness" to our faith.
   - We also discussed **Gal. 5:22-23**, how the Holy Spirit produces fruit in us that is similar to the seven specific qualities, virtues or elements of holiness that we are to add to our faith and how **Heb. 4:10-11** tells us that we are to <u>make every effort to enter into His rest</u>. These seem paradoxical and contrary to one another but when studied in full context, they complement each other. We are to make every effort to allow the Holy Spirit to produce good fruit in our lives which will help us add to our faith the seven specific qualities, virtues, or "elements of holiness" mentioned in **2 Pet. 1:5-9,** this requires humility. It required submitting to the Lord and allowing Him to work in and through your life. Relying on Him and not on self.
2. **Submit to the teaching, correction, and discipline of the Lord.**
   a) This is a 3rd part of a 3-part study. In the first part we discussed the fact that at salvation (when we believed) we were sanctified and at the same are being sanctified: the process of sanctification. This study is touching on that process. <u>Believers are not promised that this will be a smooth process</u>.
   b) Before we dive into breaking down **Heb. 12:1-14** we need to briefly talk about Heb. Chapter 11 for fuller context. Heb. 11 is all about faith: What faith is, examples of faith, what they were able to do because of faith, etc… But in the end of Heb. 11, specifically Heb. 11:36-40, the chapter speaks of all the persecution they endured because of their faith. They were chained in prison, whipped, and tortured. Some killed by stoning, some sawed in half and others killed with the sword. Some were hiding in caves and holes in the ground. They suffered much persecution because of their faith. Reading all of Heb. Chapter 11 before diving into **Heb. 12** helps you get a better understanding of **Heb. 12**.
   c) We can see in **Heb. 11:1-4** that the writer is encouraging those who have been persecuted to press on and persevere. To not give up and keep the faith. But then he goes onto say there are still going the be trials.
   d) Let's start with reading through all of **Heb. 12:1-14 (AMPC)** and then back up and go through this in more detail.
   e) Now let's back up and read through **Heb. 12:5-11 (NASB 1995, AMPC).** We also need to keep in mind that **Heb. 12:5-6** is quoting **Prov. 3:11**, so even though **Heb. 3:11** is NT, it is still referencing an OT scripture. This is important because the idea of <u>punishment</u> was in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament Christ took all our punishment for sin upon Himself.

We must see this **Prov. 3:11** reference as the Father teaching and training His son out of love. *(* Read **Heb. 12:5-7** commentary below)*.

f) Now let's continue in Hebrews and move onto **Heb. 12:12-14 (NASB/AMPC**) This is a passage of scripture that must be chewed on for a while to get it. Let's dig into this and discuss it. *(* Read **Heb. 12:13** commentary below)*.

g) I want to focus on **Heb. 12:5 AMPC** - *"...My son, <u>do not think lightly or scorn to submit to the correction and discipline of the Lord</u>, nor lose courage and give up and faint when you are reproved or corrected by Him".*
Quick word study on "Chasten":

h) **Prov. 3:11** "Chastening, Chasten"
Strong's OT Hebrew 4148. מוּסָר - <u>musar</u> (moo-sawr')
Definition: **discipline, chastening, correction.**
<u>Musar</u> word origin - Strong's OT Hebrew 3256. <u>Yasar</u>: to **discipline, chasten, admonish**.

i) **Heb. 12:6**; **Rev. 19** "Chasteneth, Chasten" – This is a different word when in the NT.
Strong's NT Greek - 3811 παιδεύω - <u>paideuó</u> (pahee-dyoo'-o)
Definition: **to train children, to chasten, correct** - A child under development with strict training. To train up a child, so they mature and realize their full potential (development).
   - So does God <u>allow</u> persecution, testing, trials, sickness, pain, sorrow, trouble, etc... for the purposes of **training, discipline, chastening, correction, and admonishing**? Discuss... I don't believe God makes people sick or creates the trials to teach us a lesson, however I do see that He <u>allows trials and uses them in our lives of which we can learn from</u>.

j) One commentary has this to say about the chastening of the Lord:
*"Often, people ask if God is "punishing" them for wrong choices in the past. All our punishment for sin was exhausted upon Jesus on the cross (Romans 5:9). The wrath of God was poured out on Him so that for those who are "in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1) no wrath [or punishment] remains. When we give our lives to Christ, our Substitute for sin **[our propitiation]**, our sin is forgiven and God remembers it no more (Hebrews 8:12; 10:15-18). However, often, our wrong choices in the past have brought about unpleasant consequences now. God does not necessarily remove the "natural consequences" of sin when we repent. Those consequences are tools God can use to teach us, to prevent us from repeating the same mistakes, and to remind us of God's grace."* i.e. God can use trials that we go through to teach us. Hopefully after we go through a trial, we come out the other side gaining humility, wisdom, insight, and maturity and run towards Him instead of running away from Him.
   - In the story of Job God did not <u>directly afflict Job</u>, He allowed Satan to. It's important to note that Satan had to ask God for permission to afflict Job. I always had a hard time with Job. God could have protected Job, but instead allowed Satan to afflict. Why did God allow so much affliction on Job, was it just to make a point to Satan? The book of Job gives us no real answers regarding the why. *(*Read **Job 13:1-19** commentary)*

- One reference in Job that sticks out is having to do with trust. **Job 13:15 (KJV)** *"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him."* I can relate to this: I trust you Lord, but I am still going to plead my case with you.

3. **We have a loving Father who wants the best for us and at the same time an enemy who wants to devour, steal, kill and destroy us.**
   a) We do have an enemy who walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. His focus is to steal, kill, and destroy us! The devil is a liar and the father of lies and half-truths. His tools are deception and trickery. Let's read about our enemy: **Jn. 8:43-45, 10:10; Lk. 22:31; 1 Pet. 5:8 (AMPC).** Note that in **Lk. 22:31** Jesus said, "Satan has asked to sift you all like wheat." Again, we have Satan asking the Lord to afflict the believers instead of just doing the afflicting on his own without asking, he needs permission. I bring this up because it is relative to God "allowing" trials.
   b) We have a loving Father who wants to <u>train and discipline us through chastening, correction and admonishing</u> because He wants the best for us and wants us to be conformed into the image of His Son. At the same time, we have an enemy the devil who wants to <u>steal, kill, destroy, and devour us through deceptions and trickery</u> because he is a liar and a murder and there is no truth in him.
      - **Jam. 4:7 (AMP)** ties into this concept: *"So <u>submit</u> to [the authority of] God. <u>Resist</u> the devil [stand firm against him] and he will flee from you."*
        Submit to God and **resist the devil**. <u>Surrender and submit to one</u> and <u>resist the other</u>.
      - *** The submitting helps us do the resisting. ***
      - **1 Pet. 5:7-9 (NKJV)** is very similar: "*casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be [sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. <u>Resist him, steadfast in the faith.</u>"*
   c) **How do we know what is from the Lord and what is from the enemy?** Does God sometimes allow trials for the purposes of **training, discipline, chastening, correction, admonishing** to help us conform to the image of His Son? Yes.
   d) There is also a testing of our faith noted in **Jam. 1:2-4** and **1 Peter 1:6-7 (AMPC/ESV)**.
   e) Let's go back to **Prov. 3:11-18 (NKJV/NASB)** and read it in full context – Here we see the benefit of being teachable is finding wisdom. This should remind us to "*<u>not think lightly or scorn to submit to the correction and discipline of the Lord</u>*" as we read in **Heb. 12:5.** *(*Read **Prov. 3:11-14** commentary)*
   f) We can also see how **Prov. 9:10** ties into this regarding wisdom. *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding".* – We should have a healthy fear (reverence and awe of the Lord) and allow Him to teach you.
   g) Now let's dive into **Rev. 3:19,** which is still using the language of OT **Prov. 3:11**. Let's read this in full context: **Rev. 3:15-22 (NKJV/NLT) - vs. 21.** This passage talks about Jesus rebuking and chastening those whom He loves and also talks about being either hot or cold; with a warning about being lukewarm. Be all-in or not! You cannot be both; with one foot in the world and one in the Kingdom. Jesus says He will spit the lukewarm out of His mouth.

h) **Vs. 3:19 (NLT)** really jumped out and slapped me in the face! *"I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and **turn from your indifference**"*. Wow, pay attention; this is sobering!
Indifference – *"absence of compulsion to or toward one thing or another; a lack of concern or uncaring attitude; having or showing a lack of interest or concern."*

i) God's ultimate purpose in the disciplines of life is that we become partakers of His holiness **Heb. 12:10 (AMPC)**, and partakers of His divine nature. **2 Ptr. 1:2-4** (NKJV)

j) We also need to remember that His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.
Mat. 11:28-30 (NKJV) *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

k) As we learn to yield and submit to the authority of the Lord, humbly allow Him to do His work in and through us and yield to His **training, discipline, chastening, correction,** and **admonishing**, we will find rest for our souls. We will be able to successfully "take" His yoke upon us which is easy and light. The result will be abundant life and sustaining joy.

In this study we dove into surrendering and submitting to the discipline of the Lord and touched on resisting the devil. We did not get to finish this study so in our next meeting we will pick up where we left off and will then dive into having spiritual discernment so as to not be deceived in a time when deception is all around us and powered by technology and resisting the devil by being **Sober-minded, watchful, alert, vigilant and self-disciplined, standing firm in our faith and to continue in the faith**. And by submitting to His authority which we spoke of in this study. We are also going to touch on repentance.

I did not add any homework here because this entire study is your homework. 😊

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Heb. 12:5-7 Believer's Bible Commentary:
12:5 The Christian view of suffering is now presented. Why do persecution, testing, trials, sickness, pain, sorrow, and trouble come into the life of the believer? Are they a sign of God's anger or displeasure? Do they happen by chance? How should we react to them?

These verses teach that these things are part of God's educative process for His children. Although they do not come from God, He permits them, then overrules them for His glory, for our good, and for the blessing of others.

Nothing happens by chance to the Christian. Tragedies are blessings in disguise, and disappointments are His appointments. God harnesses the adverse circumstances of life to conform us to the image of Christ.

So the early Hebrew believers were exhorted to remember Proverbs 3:11, 12, where God addresses them as **sons**. There He warns them against despising His discipline or losing courage under His rebuke. If they rebel or give up, they lose the benefit of His dealings with them and fail to learn His lessons.

12:6 When we read the word *chastening*, or *chastisement*, we tend to think of a whipping. But here the word means child training or education. It includes instruction, discipline, correction, and warning. All are designed to cultivate Christian virtues and drive out evil. In this passage, the chastening was not punishment for wrongdoing, but training through persecution.

The passage in Proverbs distinctly states that God's discipline is a proof of His love, and no **son** of His escapes chastisement.

12:7 By remaining submissive to the **chastening** of **God**, we permit His discipline to mold us into His image.

Heb. 12:13 Believer's Bible Commentary:
12:13 Faltering **feet** should be guided in **straight paths** of Christian discipleship.

All who follow the Lord fully smooth the path of faith for feeble brethren; but those who do not follow fully, roughen the path for others' feet and create spiritual cripples.

G. H. Lang gives a fine illustration:

A weary traveler, tired of the road and the buffeting of the tempest, stands dispirited and limp. With shoulders bowed, hands hanging slack, knees bent and shaking, he is ready to give up and sink to the ground. Such can God's pilgrim become, as pictured by our writer.

But one comes to him confident of mien (look or manner), with kindly smile and firm voice, and says, "Cheer up, stand erect, brace your limbs, take heart of grace. You have already come far;

throw not away your former toils. A noble home is at the end of the journey. See, yonder is the direct road to it; keep straight on; seek from the great Physician healing for your lameness.... Your Forerunner went this same hard road to the palace of God; others before you have won through; others are on the way; you are not alone; only press on! and you too shall reach the goal and win the prize."

Job 13:1-19 Believer's Bible Commentary:

13:1–19 Job scolds his critics. They have not said anything new. He wants to plead his case with God, not with these forgers of lies and worthless physicians. If they kept silent, people would think they were wise. Their explanation of God's action was not true; they would be accountable to Him for it. Their arguments were weak and useless. If they would just be quiet, he would plead his case ... before God and commit his life to Him. He is confident he will be vindicated, but even if God were to slay him, he will still trust the Lord.

Prov. 3:11-12 Believer's Bible Commentary:

3:11, **12** We can also acknowledge the Lord by submitting to His discipline. Too often we tend to think of discipline as meaning punishment, but it actually includes all that is involved in the proper training of a child, i.e., instruction, warning, encouragement, advice, **correction**, and **chastening**. Everything that God allows to come into our lives is purposeful. We should not **detest** it or **despise** it. Neither should we shrink from it or give up under it. Rather we should be concerned that God's purpose is achieved through the discipline, and thus we reap the maximum profit from it. God's ultimate purpose in the disciplines of life is that we become partakers of His holiness.

Discipline is a proof of love, not anger. **Correction** is a proof of sonship (see Heb. 12:6–8).

For an even further deep dive, I recommend digging through all of the commentary for Heb. 12:6-7 on Bible Hub:

Heb. 12:5 Commentaries on Bible Hub
Heb. 12:6 Commentaries on Bible HubHeb. 12:7 Commentaries on Bible Hub

Bible Hub covers the following commentaries:
Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers
Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary
Pulpit Commentary
Calvin's Commentaries (specifically John Calvin's commentary on the verse)
Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible (John Gill)
Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary
Matthew Poole's Commentary
Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges
Bengel's Gnomen (Johann Albrecht Bengel)
Expositor's Greek Testament
Meyer's NT Commentary (Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer)
Barnes' Notes on the Bible (Albert Barnes)
Vincent's Word Studies (Marvin Vincent)

MEETING 22

Now That We (The Believer) Have This New Nature - What Are We To Do With It - Part 4

Walking Out This Newness of Life, What Are We To Do With It? – Part 4
Divine Discipline: Overcoming Lukewarmness Through Discernment and Vigilance

1. **Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   - We discussed Submitting to the teaching, correction, and discipline of the Lord.
   - We dove into **Heb. 12:5 AMPC** - *"…My son, do not think lightly or scorn to submit to the correction and discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage and give up and faint when you are reproved or corrected by Him"*. We discussed this in-depth.
   - We also discussed that we have a loving Father who wants the best for us and at the same time an enemy who wants to devour, steal, kill and destroy us.
   - We will now dive into a warning about being lukewarm, about being deceived and because of this we need discernment, and we need to be sober-minded, watchful, alert, vigilant and self-disciplined, standing firm in our faith and continuing in the faith so we do not drift away. **Col. 1:23 (NLT)**
2. **A warning about being lukewarm and God reproves and discipline those whom He loves.**
   a) Now let's dive into **Rev. 3:19,** which is still using the language of OT **Prov. 3:11**. Let's read this in full context: **Rev. 3:15-22 (NKJV/NLT) - vs. 21.** This passage talks about Jesus rebuking and chastening those whom He loves and also talks about being either hot or cold; with a warning about being lukewarm. (In the AMP, lukewarm is translated to "spiritually useless"). Be all-in or not! You cannot be both; with one foot in the world and one in the Kingdom. Jesus says He will spit the lukewarm out of His mouth.
   b) **Vs. 3:19 (NLT)** really jumped out and slapped me in the face! *"I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and **turn from your indifference**"*. Wow, pay attention; this is sobering! - **Indifference** – *"absence of compulsion to or toward one thing or another; a lack of concern or uncaring attitude; having or showing a lack of interest or concern."*
   *(*Read **Rev. 3:14-22** commentaries below)*
   c) God's ultimate purpose in the disciplines of life is that we become partakers of His holiness **Heb. 12:10 (AMPC)**, partakers of His divine nature **2 Pet. 1:2-4 (NKJV),** and to "share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light" **Col. 1:12 (NLT).**
   d) We also need to remember that His yoke is easy and His burden is light.
   Mat. 11:28-30 (NKJV) *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*
   e) As we learn to yield and submit to the authority of the Lord and let Him do His work in and through us, we will find rest for our souls. We can be spiritually disciplined while at the same time experiencing rest. As discussed in our last study, we are told in **Heb. 4:10-11 (AMPC)** to strive to enter God's rest. The end result of discipline is rest for our souls.

3. **Fight off lukewarmness with spiritual discernment and by being sober-minded, watchful, alert, vigilant and self-disciplined, standing firm and continuing in the faith.**
   a) Let's start with discernment. Quick word study: *"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."* **Heb 5:14 (KJV)**. Let's investigate "discern" as it is used in **Heb. 5:14**.
   Discern: Strong's NT Greek – 1253 διάκρισις, εως, ἡ - diakrisis - (dee-ak'-ree-sis)
   Definition: the act of judgment.
   Usage: distinguishing; hence deciding, passing sentence on; a thorough judgment, discernment.
   Spiritual discernment is all the above with the help of the Holy Spirit.
   b) Important to keep in mind when reading scriptures. Discernment synonyms include wisdom, understanding, knowledge, discretion, prudence, testing, and sense. When you see these words being used, chances are they are dealing with discernment.
   c) One study on discernment has this to say if we are without it:
   "Without discernment, the body of Christ is vulnerable to the assaults of Satan and the poison of false teachers and teaching within the church are unable to minister Jesus' healing and freedom to those oppressed by evil spirits and are unable to move forward boldly, trusting the leading of the Holy Spirit."
   d) All believers have been given a measure of discernment because of the Holy Spirit that lives within. - *"But you have an anointing from the Holy One [you have been set apart, specially gifted and prepared by the Holy Spirit], and all of you know [the truth because He teaches us, illuminates our minds, and guards us from error]."* **1 Jn. 2:20 (AMP).**
   e) The word says if we lack wisdom, we are to ask God for it and He will give it liberally and without reproach. **Jam. 1:5-8 (NKJV/AMPC)**.
   f) I love Paul's prayer for spiritual wisdom and knowledge in **Col. 1:9-12 (NLT/AMPC)**. The phrase "Spiritual wisdom and knowledge" is another way of saying "spiritual discernment."
   g) **Heb. 5:13-15** talks about solid food for the spiritually mature and having senses trained by practice to distinguish good from evil. **Heb. 5:13-14 (AMP)**.
   Heb. 5:14 commentary: *"Solid spiritual food is for the full-grown, for those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. By obeying the light they receive from God's word, these people are able to form spiritual judgments and save themselves from moral and doctrinal dangers."* i.e. from being deceived.
   h) I like this Charles Spurgeon quote on discernment: *"Discernment is not knowing the difference between right and wrong. It is knowing the difference between right and almost right."* ~ Knowing what is right and wrong is one thing, but when you have to know the difference between what is right and almost right, that is when you need spiritual discernment. There are non-truths that can sound like truth.

i) One commentary put it like this: *"The Christian must take care to develop his "sixth sense" of spiritual discernment. This is why the psalmist prays, "Teach me good judgment and knowledge" (Ps. 119:66).* – Now for us believers living in the New Covenant, this prayer is towards the Holy Spirit who will teach us all things, guide us into all truth and give us spiritual discernment.

j) We should be relying on divine wisdom rather than solely trusting our own judgment. We should not be leaning on our own understanding but should be trusting God to help us with spiritual wisdom and knowledge, i.e. with discernment. **Prov. 3:5-8**.

k) The things of God must be spiritually discerned. **1 Cor. 2:14-15 (NKJV/APMC).**
2:14 Believer's Bible Commentary: *Not only is the gospel divine in its revelation and divine in its inspiration, but now we learn that it can only be received by the power of the Spirit of God. Unaided, the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness to him. He cannot possibly understand them because they can only be spiritually understood.*

l) **1 Cor. 2:14-15** ties into **2 Cor. 3:16 (NKJV)**. *"Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away"*.

4. **Therefore, be sober-minded, watchful, alert, vigilant and self-disciplined so you are not deceived.**

a) Do not be deceived; warning scriptures to keep us on guard: **Col. 2:8; Mat. 7:13-17; Eph. 4:11-15; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Jn. 4:1; Jn. 8:44**.

b) Therefore, be sober-minded, watchful, alert, vigilant and self-disciplined: **1 Pet. 1:13, 4:7, 5:8-10; 1 Cor. 16:13-14; Col. 4:2; Lk. 21:36; Mat. 24:4-6; Eph. 6:10-18**.

c) *"Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light."*
Rom. 13:11-12 (ESV). - Rom. 13:11 Believer's Bible Commentary: *The rest of the chapter encourages a life of spiritual alertness and moral purity. The time is short. The Dispensation of Grace is drawing to a close. The lateness of the hour demands that all lethargy and inactivity be put away. Our salvation is nearer than ever. The Savior is coming to take us to the Father's house.*

d) Paul wrote to the believers in the Church in Thessalonica and told them to *"stand firm and keep a strong grip on the teaching we passed on to you both in person and by letter."*
2 Thes. 2:15. (NLT) Just before this in **2 Thes. 2:1-12** Paul was telling them about the *"lawless one", the antichrist who would come and use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction."* **2 Thes. 2:10 (NLT).** He's talking about unbelievers being fooled here, but he is also still telling the believers and *"stand firm and to keep a strong grip on the teachings they have heard about Christ,"* so that they too would not be deceived. We can paraphrase **2 Thes. 2:15** as" *"stand and keep a firm grip on the word of God and to be on guard for deception of every kind."*

e) There is much deception out there regarding the Word of God and what it really says. There is much twisting of the truth and redefining of the scriptures to be conformed to the world. Fight this deception by keeping a firm grip on the Word and what it is teaching. We must read the Word of God in full context ourselves to know what it is teaching. If you're not grounded in the Word of God you will be easily deceived and will be in danger of being *"tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine"*.

   "So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. **Eph. 4:14 (ESV)**

   "So then, we may no longer be children, tossed [like ships] to and fro between chance gusts of teaching and wavering with every changing wind of doctrine, [the prey of] the cunning and cleverness of unscrupulous men, [gamblers engaged] in every shifting form of trickery in inventing errors to mislead." **Eph. 4:14 (AMPC)**

   Some more on "Standing":

f) Stand firm in the Lord. **Phi. 4:1**
g) Be steadfast and immovable. **1 Cor. 15:58**
h) Be watchful, stand firm in the faith. **1 Cor. 16:13-14**
i) Stand firm in your faith. **2 Cor. 1:24**

   This connects with where I started in **Rev. 3:19 (NLT)** "...So be diligent and <u>turn from your indifference</u>".

<u>Next meeting</u>... Jesus is The Light of the World and His true light is shining in our hearts. We are to be Living as Children of Light, walking and living in the light. Living by the Spirit's Power. We are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. How do we let our light shine in a dark world and be ministers of The New Covenant?

Rev. 3:14-22 NIV Grace and Truth Study Bible Commentary

3:14–22 Laodicea was about 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia and the last stop on the postal route beginning in Ephesus, which was about 100 miles due west. Laodicea was a very wealthy and successful city. It was a banking center. It had a textile industry famous for its black wool. The city was also known for producing an expensive medical eye salve. It was devastated by an earthquake in AD 60, and when Nero offered financial help, the city declined because it had plenty of money to rebuild on its own. The churches at Laodicea and Sardis (vv. 1–6) are the only churches that received negative criticism and nothing positive in John's vision. Both were wealthy, comfortable, and self-sufficient.

The church in Laodicea, like Sardis, was not doing as well as they thought. They saw themselves as vibrant, useful, rich, healthy, without any needs. But Jesus calls them lukewarm, wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. Laodicea piped its water from nearby hot springs, and by the time the water arrived in the city, it had cooled and become lukewarm. Both hot and cold water were preferable for drinking, but lukewarm water was undesirable. That Jesus wants to spit them out is reminiscent of how the land wanted to spit out the people of Israel when they were so sin-saturated (Lev 18:28; 20:22). Because Jesus sees their true condition, he counsels them to depend on him for true riches, pure white clothes to cover their shame, and spiritual sight. Faith in Christ and dependence on him alone provide all anyone really needs for life and salvation.

The reason for Jesus' strong rebuke to these believers is because they are his people, and he loves them enough to discipline them like a father disciplines his own children (Pr 3:12). Jesus moves from the idea of discipline to an image of him knocking at a door and waiting for it to be opened. In this picture, the church is gathered for a meal, and Jesus is excluded as he stands outside and knocks. If they hear his voice and invite him in, he will gladly fellowship with them. Those who are victorious overcomers are promised the right to sit with him on his Father's throne (Rev 3:21). As sons and daughters of God through Christ, they will rule with him.

See also: **3:14–22** Baren's Notes on The Bible

Be zealous therefore, and repent - Be earnest, strenuous, ardent (enthusiastic or passionate) in your purpose to exercise true repentance, and to turn from the error of your ways. Lose no time; spare no labor, that you may obtain such a state of mind that it shall not be necessary to bring upon you the severe discipline which always comes on those who continue lukewarm in religion. The truth taught here is, that when the professed followers of Christ have become lukewarm in his service, they should lose no time in returning to him.

MEETING 23

Living in the Light as Children of Light - Part 1

Walking and Living in The Light and Living by the Spirit's Power. - Part 1
(How do we let His light shine through us into a dark world and be ministers of the New Covenant?)

1. **Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   - We dove into God disciplining, rebuking, and chastising those He loves and Christ's warning "
   - about being lukewarm in **Rev. 3:15-22**. **v. 3:19 (NLT)** being one that really stood out: *"I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference"*.
   - We talked about learning to yield and submit to the authority of the Lord and let Him do His work in and through us and how that is where we will find rest for our souls. We can be spiritually disciplined while at the same time experiencing rest.
   - We talked about fighting off this lukewarmness by being sober-minded, watchful, alert, vigilant and self-disciplined, standing firm and continuing in the faith.
   - We ended with putting on the full armor of light: **Rom. 13:12** - Believer's Bible Commentary *"The present age is like a night of sin that has just about run its course. The day of eternal glory is about to dawn for believers. This means that we should cast off all the filthy garments of worldliness—that is, everything associated with unrighteousness and evil. And we should put on the armor of light, which means the protective covering of a holy life. The pieces of armor are detailed in **Eph. 6:14–18**.*
   - This leads us straight into our study on "Walking and Living in The Light and Living by the Spirit's Power"
2. **Christ is Supreme, He is the True Bread that came down from Heaven and the True Light that came into the world He created.**
   a) I want to start with Christ being supreme, the one true light that came into the world, the true bread that came down from Heaven and the good news that all who believe in Him will no longer be in darkness because they have received His light at salvation.
   b) Our starting point:
      - Christ is supreme.
      - He is the True Bread that came down from Heaven!
      - He is the One True Light who came into the very world that He created.
      - Believers are no longer living in darkness.
      - Believers are delivered out of darkness into His light.
   c) Let's start with: Christ is supreme. **Col. 1:15-18 (NKJV).** (See commentary below)
   d) Christ is the true bread that came down from Heaven! **Jn. 6:51-71 (NLT/AMP)**
      Full context **Jn. 22-71**. Also see notes below on **Jn. 17:4-5**.
   e) The Word became flesh. The one true light who came into the very world that He created. Let's read through **Jn. 1:1-14 (AMPC**).

f) Now let's focus on **Jn. 1:9**. - His light is not in all of humanity, it is shining on all humanity. In **v. 1:9** we see in the **AMPC** version above it says "The true light coming into the world that illuminates every person", i.e. shines upon, not in. Other translations: **(KJV)** *"which lighteth every man"*, (NKJV) *"which gives light to every man"*, **(ESV)** *"which gives light to everyone"*, **(NASB)** *"enlightens every person"*, **(NLT)** *"who gives light to everyone"*. This passage does not mean that all humanity now has the light of Christ within them because He came into the world. This light must be received through faith. We have free will to receive or reject this light. God the Father made a way for salvation through Christ's sacrifice on the cross and that way and only way, is by believing in His Son, Jesus Christ

g) His light is received at salvation. Because He came into the world His true light is now available for all to receive through and by faith.

3. **Believers once in full darkness but now have Light from the Lord, the Light that leads to life!**

a) I want to point out that prior to faith in Christ we were in darkness, His light is shining on all men, is available to all men through faith in Him, but until one believes in Christ He is in darkness. When one believes in Christ they are transferred out of that darkness and into His light. His light is shining on all of humanity, but it must be "received" through faith. Let's walk through some scriptures that talk about this.

b) **Eph. 5:8-9 (NLT)** *"For once you were full of darkness, **but now you have light from the Lord**.* Note the *"you"* in *"but now **you** have the light of the Lord"* is believers. Unbelievers have no light in them. When one believes in Jesus Christ through faith, He (the true light - **Jn. 1:9**) moves in and replaces darkness with His light.

c) **Jn. 8:12 (NLT)**. *"Jesus said: If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." – To "follow Jesus" means to "believe in Him"*.

d) **Jn. 12:46 (AMPC)** *"I have come as a Light into the world, so that whoever believes in Me may not continue to live in darkness."*

e) **Col. 1:11-14 (NLT)** *"He has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and has transferred us into the Kingdom of His dear Son."*

f) **1 Thes. 5:4 (AMP)** *"But you, believers, [all you who believe in Christ as Savior and acknowledge Him as God's Son] are not in spiritual darkness [nor held by its power]..."*

I want to walk through some commentaries on **Jn. 1:9**, **Col. 1:13, Jn. 6:51-59** and **Jn. 12:46**. See the last two pages of this study.

- The Grace New Testament, BibleRef & Believer's Bible Commentaries on **Jn. 1:9.**
- Believer's Bible Commentary on **Col. 1:13.**
- Believer's Bible Commentary on **Jn. 6:51, 53, 56.**
- Believer's Bible Commentary on **Jn. 12:46.**

*See commentaries below.

4. **We (believers) can walk in the Light and live as Children of the Light because we now (through faith in Christ) have the Holy Spirit in us and as a result have the True Light shining and living in our hearts.**
   a) Christ is supreme, He is the one true light that came into the world, He is the true bread that came down from Heaven and this light, this true bread is in all believers! **Jn. 14:23; Col. 1:26-27; 1 Jn. 4:13,15; Rom. 8:10; Gal. 2:20, 3:26-28; Eph. 3:17; Jn. 14:20.** (group reading)
   b) We (believers) are the temple of the living God. **1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19, 2 Cor. 6:16**.
   c) The Holy Spirit is what makes it possible for the one true light to be "in" us believers and makes it possible for believers to walk in the light and live as children of the light. **Jn.14:16-7, 26, 16:12-15, 1 Cor. 2:10-12**. – When did we receive the Holy Spirit? When we believed in Christ. The Holy Spirit is also called the Spirit of Christ or The Spirit of His Son. We can walk in the light and live as children of the light because the One True Light is living in us (believers) because of the Holy Spirit!
   d) Christ; The True Light Shining in Our Hearts: **1 Jn. 4:9-10 (ESV/TPT), 2 Cor. 4:6-7 (NLT).**
   e) Believers should be walking in the light: **Jn. 12:35-36 (NLT).**
   f) Believers should be living as children of the light: **Eph. 4:17-32 (NLT).**
   1 Thes. 5:4-8 (AMP) *"But let us who live in the light be clearheaded, protected by the armor of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the confidence of our salvation."*
   Cross reference of **1 Thes. 5:4-8** > **Eph. 6:10-18:** protected by the full armor.
   g) Believers should be living in the light: **Eph. 5:1-14 (NLT), 1 Jn. 1:5-7 (AMPC).**

Homework for more context:

Christ is the true bread that came down from Heaven! **Jn. 6:22-71 (NLT)** - God the Father made a way for salvation through Christ's sacrifice on the cross and that way and only way, is by believing in His Son, Jesus Christ: **Mk. 1:15; Jn. 3:1-8, 16-17, 36, 5:24, 14:6, 20:31; Acts 4:12, 16:17, 31; Rom. 10:4-17; Gal. 2:16; Rom. 10:9-13, 17: Eph. 1:13-14, 2:8-10; 2 Tim. 1:9. Jn. 3:1-8 Heb.11:1; 1 Jn. 4:15, 5:4**. - The Holy Spirit is what make it possible for the one true light to be "in" us believers and makes it possible for believers to walk in the light and live as children of the light. Read all of **Jn. 14:1-17:26, Gal. 3**. - Believers should be living as children of the light: **Eph. 4:17 – 5:20.**

Commentaries on **Jn. 1:9** and **Col. 1:13, Jn. 6:51-59** and **Jn. 12:46**.

Believer's Bible Commentary on Col. 1:18 - "***The firstborn from the dead***. *Here again we must be careful to emphasize that this does not mean that the Lord Jesus was the first to rise from the dead. There were cases of resurrection in the OT as well as in the NT. But the Lord Jesus was the first to rise from the dead to die no more, He was the first to rise with a glorified body, and He rose as the Head of a new creation. His resurrection is unique, and is the pledge that all who trust in Him will also rise. It proclaims Him as supreme in the spiritual creation."* – I also wanted to add definition of "Preeminence" – Superior over all.

The Grace New Testament Commentary on Jn. 1:9 - *"By coming into the world He gives light to every man in the sense that the truth is available to all.* He made a way for all to receive the light and that way is through faith in Him."

BibleRef Commentary on Jn. 1:9 - *"There is no room to see Jesus as one way to heaven, or a possible way. He is the one and only, real and true way. Unlike the law of Moses, which was given only to the people of Israel, this light is given to everyone—to the entire world. The best-known verse in the entire Bible, John 3:16, sums this up by saying that God loved the entire world enough to send His Son for the salvation of anyone who believes in Him. Not all people will choose to accept that light, however. Some will deliberately stay in the dark."*

Jn. 1:9 Believer's Bible Commentary - "***That was the true Light.*** *Other persons down through the ages have claimed to be guides and saviors, but the One to whom John witnessed was the genuine* ***Light****, the best and the truest* ***Light****. Another translation of this verse is, "The true Light, which,* ***coming into the world****, gives light to every man." In other words, the expression coming into the world may describe* ***the true Light*** *rather than* ***every man****. It was by the coming of the* ***true Light ... into the world*** *that every man was given light. This does not mean that every man has received some inward knowledge concerning Christ. Neither does it mean that all men have heard about the Lord Jesus at one time or another. Rather, it means that the* ***Light*** *shines on all people. It also means that by shining on all men, the Lord Jesus has revealed men in their true character. By His coming into the world as the perfect Man, He has shown how imperfect other men are. When a room is in darkness, you do not see the dust on the furniture. But when the light goes on, the room is seen as it actually is. In that same sense, the shining of the true Light reveals man as he actually is."* ~ One has to believe in Christ to "receive" His light.

Col. 1:13 Believer's Bible Commentary - In making us "qualified ... to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light," God **has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love** (cf. 1 Jn. 2:11). This can be illustrated by the experience of the children of Israel, as recorded in Exodus. They had been living in Egypt, groaning under the lashes of the taskmasters there. By a marvelous act of divine intervention, God delivered them out of that fearful bondage and led them through the wilderness to the promised land. Similarly, as sinners we were in bondage to Satan, but through Christ we have been **delivered from** his clutches and now we are subjects of Christ's **kingdom**. Satan's kingdom is one of **darkness**—an absence of light, warmth, and joy; while the **kingdom** of Christ is one of **love**, which implies the presence of all three (light, warmth, and joy).

Kingdom of darkness: The absence of light, warmth, and joy.
Kingdom of His dear Son: The presence of light, warmth, and joy.

Jn. 6:51 Believer's Bible Commentary - *"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever"* - Jesus is the living bread. Those who eat this bread will live forever. But how can this be? How can the Lord give eternal life to guilty sinners? The answer is found in the latter part of this verse: "The bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." Here the Lord Jesus was pointing forward to His death on the cross. He would give His life as a ransom for sinners. His body would be broken, and His blood would be poured out as a sacrifice for sins. He would die as a Substitute. (Propitiation). He would pay the penalty that our sins demanded. And why would He do this? He did it for the life of the world. He would not die just for the Jewish nation, or even just for the elect. But His death would be of sufficient value for the whole world. This does not, of course, mean that the whole world will be saved, but rather that the work of the Lord Jesus at Calvary would be sufficient in its value to save the whole world, if all men came to Jesus.

Jn. 6:53 Believer's Bible Commentary - *"I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you."* - Once again Jesus, knowing all things, realized exactly what they were thinking and saying. And so, He warned them solemnly that if they did not eat His flesh and drink His blood, they would have no life in them. This could not refer to the bread and the wine used at the Lord's Supper. When the Lord instituted His Supper, on the night in which He was betrayed, his body had not yet been broken and His blood had not yet been shed. The disciples partook of the bread and the wine, but they did not literally eat His flesh and drink His blood. The Lord Jesus was simply stating that unless we appropriate to ourselves by faith the value of His death for us on Calvary, we can never be saved. **We must believe on Him, receive Him, trust Him, and make Him our very own**. ~ Believe in Christ and receive His finished work. – This is how we eat His flesh and drink His blood. - *Believe on Him, receive Him, trust Him, read his Word, Pray, talk with and have relationship with Christ.*

Jn. 6:56 Believer's Bible Commentary - *"Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him."* - A very close union exists between Himself and those who are believers in Him. Whoever eats His flesh and drinks His blood abides in Him, and He abides in that person. Nothing could be closer or more intimate than this. When we eat literal food, we take it into our very being; and it becomes a part of us. When we accept the Lord Jesus as our Redeemer, He comes into our lives to abide, and we, too, abide (continually dwell) in Him.

Jn. 12:46 Believer's Bible Commentary - *"I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark."* - The illustration of light was apparently one of our Lord's favorites. Again, He referred to Himself as a light coming into the world in order that those who believe in Him should not abide in darkness. Apart from Christ, men are in deepest darkness. They do not have a right understanding of life, death, or eternity. But those who come to Christ in faith no longer grope about for the truth, because they have found the truth in Him. – (and now Abide in Christ). We mostly read the word "abide" in scripture and think of "Abiding in Christ." We don't often think about "abiding in darkness", but that is the state of an unbeliever.

Definition of "abide" = to remain, to continue to be present, to be held, kept, continually.
One can reject Christ and remain in darkness, continue to be in darkness, held and kept by darkness continually. **-Or-**
One can believe in Christ and remain in Him, continue to be in Him, held and kept by Him continually.

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Homework: The Extended Version

The Lord's Supper (communion) is mentioned in: **1 Cor. 11:23-26, Mat. 26:26-29, Mk. 14:22-25, Lk. 22:17-20**, however in John's Gospel it is very different! We can see in the Commentary for **Jn. 6:51, 53 and 56** above that what Jesus is getting to in regards to eating His flesh and drinking His blood is about relationship.

I recommend this article that is related to Jesus referring to eating His flesh and drinking His blood in **Jn. 6:22-71.**

What did Jesus mean when He said we must eat His flesh and drink His blood?

Speaking to a crowd of Jews in **Jn. 12:1-4** there is reference to the last supper but not the bread and wine. But earlier in **Jn. 6:32-59** Jesus mentions the bread and the wine in a very different way regarding eating His flesh and drinking His blood and what that means. You must read all of **Jn. ch. 6** to get the context of what John is saying in **v. 32-71**.

Also note: taking Jn. Chapter 6 into consideration, the disciples heard Jesus teach about the bread and wine, (the flesh and the blood) prior to the last supper. It was not a new concept for the disciples at the last supper when Christ, as note in Mt. 26:26-29 for example: "broke the bread and said *"take and eat; this is my body" and held up the cup of wine and said "Drink from it, all of you, this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.""*

Also wanted to point out Jesus' prayer in **John 17**. Specifically verses **4-5 *(AMPC)***.
*" I have glorified You down here on the earth by completing the work that You gave Me to do. And now, Father, glorify Me along with Yourself and **restore Me** to such majesty and honor in Your presence as I had with You before the world existed."* Connect this with **Phil. 2:7-8 (AMPC)** *"But stripped Himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity], so as to assume the guise of a servant (slave), in that He became like men and was born a human being..."*

He had to leave this glory to come to earth. Christ is the True bread that came down from Heaven and He is the True Light that came into the world He created. He had to leave the glory He had in Heaven with the Father and The Holy Spirit to come down to earth. Not only was suffering and dying on the cross a sacrifice, but leaving the glory He had with the Father and The Holy Spirit to come to earth was also a sacrifice.

He is praying to the Father to "restore" this glory He had before the world existed. Meaning He had to leave that glory to come to earth. WOW!!!

When we read about Christ being the Bread that came down from Heaven and the True Light that came into the world. We need to remember what He sacrificed with having to leave the glory He had with the Father and Holy Spirit to come down to earth to provide salvation to all who will believe and receive

Him.

MEETING 24

Living in the Light as Children of Light - Part 2

Living in Light as Children of Light - Part 2
Daily and Intentional Renewal: Putting Off Darkness, Putting on Christ and the Amor of Light

1. **Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   - We talked about Christ being Supreme, the True Bread that came down from Heaven and the True Light that came into the world He created and how this true light is now living in believers because we are now the temple of God. **1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19, 2 Cor. 6:16.**
   - Because of this true light, believers are no longer living or walking in darkness, no longer in spiritual darkness, no longer held by its power because we have been transferred from darkness into the Kingdom of His Son. **Eph. 5:8-9, Jn. 8:12, 12:46, Col. 1:11-14, 1 Thes. 5:4**.
   - Satan's kingdom is one of darkness—an absence of light, warmth, and joy; while the kingdom of Christ (the Kingdom of His Son) is one of love, which implies **the presence of all three (light, warmth, and joy)**.
   - We also went into detail on how His light is received at salvation. Because He came into the world <u>His true light is now available for all to receive through and by faith</u>.
     We also talked about living and walking in this true light.
2. **How do we "daily" live and walk in the light and how do we share this light?**
   a) We ended with Living in the light - **Eph. 5:1-14 (NLT), 1 Jn. 1:5-7 (AMPC)**. I want to continue from **Eph. 5:1-14** onto **Eph. 5:15-20** which focuses on living by the Spirit's power. Let's read through **Eph. 5:1-20 (NLT)** for better context. This passage tells us how we should and can "daily" walk in the light.
   b) Within a **Eph. 5:18** commentary about being filled with the holy spirit there is this Writing from an unknown author: *"Just as you have left the whole burden of your sin, and have rested on the finished work of Christ, so leave the whole burden of your life and service, and <u>rest upon the present inworking of the Holy Spirit</u>. Give yourself up, morning by morning, to be led by the Holy Spirit and go forth praising and at rest, leaving Him to manage you and your day. Cultivate the habit all through the day, of joyfully depending upon and obeying Him, expecting Him to guide, to enlighten, to reprove, to teach, to use, and to do in and with you what He wills. Count upon His working as a fact, altogether apart from sight or feeling. Only let us believe in and obey the Holy Spirit as the Ruler of our lives and cease from the burden of trying to manage ourselves; then shall the fruit of the Spirit appear in us as He wills to the glory of God."*
   c) I want to focus on "intentionality" and "daily". We can see both of these at work in **Luke 9:23-27 (AMP)** *"If anyone wishes to follow Me [as My disciple], he must deny himself [set aside selfish interests] and take up his cross daily [expressing a willingness to endure whatever may come] …"*. Let's read the entire passage and discuss.
     To daily take up the cross means to deliberately (and intentionally) choose the kind of life He lived.
   d) There are many other things the word tells us we believers should be doing. Here are some examples. Note: these passages do not refer to "daily" or "intentionally", but they are

assumed to be not a one-time event when you take them in full context. This also lines up with the "process of sanctification" we talked about in meeting 19.

3. **What the Bible says we are to put off and put on, and I would add <u>daily</u> and <u>intentionally</u>.**
   a) **Rom. 13:11-14 (AMP)** - *"Awaken from your sleep [of spiritual complacency] - fling away the works of darkness and put on the [full] armor of light.* ***Vs. 14*** *"Clothe yourselves with Jesus Christ"*. (read full passage)
   NLT – *remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes and put on the shining armor of right living*.
   NKJV - *cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.*
   b) **Rom. 13:11-14 (MSG)** – I love how the message translates this passage. I also like its use of the word <u>dissipation</u>: *"to be extravagant or dissolute in the pursuit of pleasure"*.
   Dissolute: lacking restraint. So "dissolute in the pursuit of pleasure ", = "<u>Lacking resistance in the pursuit of pleasure</u>." This reminds me of **Jas. 4:7** *"Resist the devil and he will flee"*, but reading this in full context is much more useful and impactful.
   c) Let's read **Jas. 4:7-10 (AMP)** for better context. Notice before the phrase *"Resist the devil and he will flee"*, we have *"submit to the authority of God"*. <u>The "submitting" helps with the "resisting"</u>. Without submitting to God, you will be *"lacking the power to resist"* which will then lead into what is says in vs. 9. *"Be miserable and grieve and weep [over your sin]. Let your [foolish] laughter be turned to mourning and your [reckless] joy to gloom."* And then we see in vs. 10 that we are to *"humble ourselves in the presence of the Lord and He will lift you up and give you purpose!"* Putting this together: <u>Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord</u>, <u>submit to His authority</u> and then you will be able to resist the enemy and successfully <u>put on the armor of light</u> daily and intentionally.
   d) Bringing this back to **Rom. 13:11-12**: Wake up! Resist spiritual complacency, humble yourselves in the present of the Lord, submit to His authority, fling away the works of darkness and clothe yourselves daily and intentionally with the full armor of light! This will help you resist the devil and as a result daily walk in the light!
   e) But wait, there is more on **Rom. 13:12**. Let's read this excerpt from "Rom. 13:12 - MacLaren's Expositions commentary - The Soldier's Morning Call":
   "Now, the first thing that strikes me is that the garb for the man expectant of the day is armor. We might have anticipated something very different in accordance with the thoughts that Paul's imagery here suggests, about the difference between the night, which is so swiftly passing, and is full of enemies and dangers, and the day which is going to dawn, and is full of light and peace and joy. We might have expected that he would have said, '<u>Let us put on the festival robes</u>.' But no! 'The night is far spent; the day is at hand.' <u>But the dress that befits the expectant of the day is not yet the robe of the feast, but it is 'the armor'</u> which, put into plain words, means just this, that there is fighting, always fighting, to be done. If you are ever to belong to the day, you must equip yourselves now with armor and weapons."
   f) **1 Thes. 5:8 (AMP)** *"put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope and confident assurance of salvation"*. - **<u>1 Thes. 5:8</u>** - <u>Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers</u>: *"in* ***1 Thes. 5:8****, the metaphor of night <u>and day</u> should suggest that of "armor." The warfare*

*in which the Christian is engaged is between the powers of light and of darkness. (**Eph. 6:12**) And the use of the word "putting off" (stripping oneself of clothing) supplies a link between the two ideas by suggesting the putting on of a different kind of clothing, the Christian panoply (a complete suit of armor)."*

- **Eph. 4:21-24 (AMP)** - Put off the old self and put on the New Self (new nature). Vs 22 in the **AMP** is powerful: *"Strip yourselves of your former nature [put off and discard your old unrenewed self] which characterized your previous manner of life and becomes corrupt through lusts and desires that spring from delusion;"*
- **Eph. 6:11-17 (AMP)** - Put on the Full armor. – We all know this, but let's read this carefully through in the **AMP**.
- **Job 29:14 (NKJV)** - Put on righteousness. In this passage Job was being self-righteous. *Job later in vs. 42:1-6 repents in dust and ashes*. Now on this side of the cross in the new covenant, we (believers) put on Christ's righteousness as we started with in **Rom. 13:14** *"Cloth yourselves with Jesus Christ, putting on His righteousness."* **Phil. 3:8-9 (AMP)** ties into this very well. *"…but [possessing] that [genuine righteousness] which comes through faith in Christ."*
- **Col. 3:12 (AMP)** - Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and [unselfish] love.

g) The Holy Spirit is what enables us to share Christ's light, the true light (who is in us believers) into a dark world. The Holy Spirit is what enables us to be *"partakers of His divine nature"* as mentioned in **2 Pet. 1:3-4**. Let's read this in the **ESV**. Notice the following: *"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness"*, *"He has granted to us his precious and very great promises"* and *"through them (these promises) you may become partakers of the divine nature"*.

- **Believers have this promise:** Jesus promised the Holy Spirit as a permanent **guide, teacher, seal of salvation, and comforter** (**John 14:16-18**). He also promised that the Holy Spirit's power would help His followers to spread the message of the gospel around the world. (Acts 1:8) i.e. be a light in a dark world. His power leads us, convicts us, teaches us, and equips us to do His work, spread the gospel, to walk and live in the light as children of light and to share His light with others as we share in His divine nature.
- Let's be a light to a dark world by daily and intentionally living and walking in the light. We do this by daily and intentionally putting off and putting on what we discussed above.

Homework:

Read **Rom. 13:8-14 (NLT/NKJV/AMPC)**

I highly recommend these commentaries.

MacLaren's Expositions – Romans 13:8-14
LOVE AND THE DAY / ONE METAPHOR AND TWO MEANINGS / THE SOLDIER'S MORNING-CALL
https://biblehub.com/commentaries/maclaren/romans/13.htm

What does it mean to put on Christ in Romans 13:14?
(In a very real sense, the Christian life is a "put on.")
https://www.gotquestions.org/put-on-Christ.html

Read all of Eph. 5:1-20 (NLT/NKJV/AMPC) – Instructions for how we can "daily" walk in the light.

MEETING 25

Living in the Light as Children of Light - Part 3

Living in the Light as Children of Light – Part 3
Salt and Light: How Believers Stay Salty, Shiny, and Impactful in a Dark World

1. **Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   - We talked about how we can let His light shine through us into a dark world, how we can and should be continually living and walking in The Light and letting this light that is "Christ in us" shine.
   - We focused on the idea of being daily intentional in our walk with the Lord.
   - We also discussed what the Bible says we are to be "clothed with," what we are to "put on" and "put off," and how we should be doing this intentionally and daily. Such as "*flinging away the works of darkness, putting on the [full] armor of light] … and clothing ourselves with Jesus Christ.*" **Rom. 13:11-14 (AMP).**
   - We also talked about "Humbling ourselves in the presence of the Lord, submitting to His authority and how this will allow us to resist the enemy and successfully put on the armor of light daily and intentionally. **Jas. 4:6-10 (NKJV/NLT).**
   - We also talked about how the Holy Spirit's power in us is what allows us to walk in the light.
   - Now we are going to dive into what Jesus meant when He said to His disciples that they were the salt of the earth and light to the world and how we can stay salty and shiny!
2. **What does it mean for believers to be salt and light to the world and how do we do this?**
   a) Let's start with the Light. Jesus is the light of the world. John tells us this in **Jn. 1:1-9 (AMPC)** (*see note on Jn. 1:9 below) and Jesus Himself tells us this in **Jn. 8:12 (NLT)** and that *"we who follow Him would have this **light that leads to life**."* Believer's Bible commentary on Jn. 8:12: *"A multitude was still following Him. He turned to them and made one of the many grand statements as to His Messiahship. He said, "I am the light of the world." Naturally speaking, the world is in the darkness of sin, ignorance, and aimlessness. The light of the world is Jesus. Apart from Him, there is no deliverance from the blackness of sin. Apart from Him, there is no guidance along the way of life, no knowledge as to the real meaning of life and the issues of eternity. Jesus promised that anyone following Him would not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. To follow Jesus means to believe on Him. To follow Jesus means to come to Him in repentance, to trust Him as Lord and Savior, and then to commit one's whole life to Him. Those who do this have guidance in life and clear and bright hope beyond the grave."*
   b) The light we are to be shining into a dark world is Christ, the Light that came into the world and who is in every believer.
   c) **Phil. 2:12-16** talks about shining this light that leads to life: *"shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people." - "children of God without blemish in the midst of a [morally] crooked and [spiritually] perverted generation, among whom you are seen as bright lights… offering to everyone the word of life". Let's read* **Phil. 2:12-16 in (NLT, AMPC).**

d) *"Offering to everyone the word of life"* … This "Word of Life" is important. **Phil. 2:16 - KJV** – *"Holding forth the word of life."* - **NKJV, ESV** – *"holding fast to the word of life."* - **NASB** – *"Holding firmly the word of life."* - **AMP** – *"Holding out and offering to everyone the word of life."* Putting these together: *"<u>We are to firmly hold onto the Word of life and offer it to everyone</u>!"* Hold on to it and give it away. Sharing "Christ," who is the "Word of Life" with everyone! - **1 Jn. 1:1 (NLT, AMP)** – *"Christ is the Word of Life."*

e) In **Matt. 5:13-16**, Jesus calls His disciples the "<u>salt of the earth</u>" and the "<u>light of the world</u>" and tells us that we should let this light shine and that we should not lose our saltiness. <u>Note</u>: He says <u>we are</u> salt and we are light, but we can lose our saltiness and brightness. Let's see what Luke has to say about this light in **Lk. 11:33-36 (NLT).** (**see commentary on vs 35 below*)

f) **Lk. 14:34-35 (AMPC)** talks about tasteless salt being worthless and it cannot have its saltiness restored. "*Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?"* Meaning, once it has lost its taste it should be thrown away. **Lk. 14:34-35 (NKJV)** mentions that this tasteless salt is "neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out", noting just how worthless salt that has lost its flavor is. This also ties into being <u>lukewarm</u> which Jesus spoke of in **Rev. 3:14-22** in His message to the Church of Laodicea. We also dove into a warning about lukewarmness in meeting 22. Being lukewarm will make you less salty and if you are allowing the world to mix in with your walk with the Lord (being conformed to it), this will cause lukewarmness and thus make your salt tasteless and your light dim.

g) I want to take **Lk. 14:34-35** and bring it into fuller context. Let's read **Lk. 14:25-35 (NLT).** In full context, **Lk. 14:25-35** is talking about the cost of discipleship. The cost is high but the reward is great! Let's read through **Lk. 14:25-35 (AMPC)** – AMPC study notes for **Luke 14:26**, *"The word "hate" in this passage is an exaggerated figure of speech indicating a lesser degree of love, not actual hostility or aversion toward one's earthly family."* Another way to phrase it would be "*and does not (love less) his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life than how much He loves God, He cannot be my disciple."* - Jesus is saying, to be His disciple you must "Love God first and above all". (**Mat. 6:33** "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness").

h) **Lk. 14:27** in the passage that we just read mentions the following: *"And if you do not carry <u>your own cross</u> and follow me, you cannot be my disciple."* – "Your own cross" this is better described in **Lk. 9:23-25 (AMP)** that talks about taking up this cross daily.

i) Bible and Life Commentary on being salt and light, see homework link below. – *"Being the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" is not about empty words or superficial actions, but about being authentic. Just as salt effects the taste of its environment it's placed in and light illuminates its surroundings effortlessly, we are called to be so different from our environment that we deeply impact it.* ***Mat. 5:13-16*** *says we believers should be "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world", but* ***Lk. 14:34-35*** *gives us a deeper meaning. It's more than just adding flavor or preserving. We should be agents of transformation.*

We should be able to radically change the environment in which we live with His Light. That's the message Jesus brought to us. We are challenged to be so unique, so authentic in our faith that we deeply and positively impact the world around us."

j) This ties in well with **Rom. 12:2 (NKJV, MSG)** "And do not be conformed to this world…". See also **1 Jn. 2:15-17 (AMP)** *"Do not love this world"*.

k) Scientifically, salt (Sodium chloride) cannot lose its flavor, but if it is not pure salt, if it has been mixed with sand and other contaminants, it will lose its flavor and will have to be thrown away. If we conform to the world, we are mixing the things of the world in with the light, thus making His Light in us dimmer and our saltiness less salty, thus making both less effective, having less power and impact in the world.

l) This also ties back into **Lk. 9:23-26 (AMP)** we discussed in our last meeting about daily taking up the cross. Deliberately (and intentionally) choosing the kind of life He lived. Doing this daily will help us not conform to the world but to be set apart letting our light shine.

3. **Being Born of God (Born Again) allows us to let our light shine and to love one another and to be the salt of the earth and a light to the world.**

a) We cannot be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" if we are not born of God. To be born of God means to be recreated by the Spirit of God, that is, to be regenerated. It is the same thing as being born anew or born again:

- Born of God not by natural birth, nor man's will, but by God's will and His Holy Spirit, a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. – **Jn. 1:12-13; 3:6-8; Titus 3:5**.
- Born again with a new life that will last forever. This new life comes from the eternal, living word of God. - **1 Pet. 1:23**. – believer's Bible commentary on 1 Pet. 1:23 *"The new birth is brought about through the word of God. As men hear or read the Bible they are convicted of their sins, convinced that Christ is the sole and sufficient Savior, and converted to God. No one is ever saved apart from the instrumentality in some way of the incorruptible word of God."*
- Born of God by believing that Jesus is the Christ - **1 Jn. 5:1-12 (NLT)**.

Believer's Bible commentary on **1 Jn. 5:1** – *"John now concludes the tests of life. Here he resumes the test of doctrine, or we might also call it the test of faith. In the first three verses, we are given the results of faith. These are, first, the divine birth, then love for God, then love for one's fellow believers, and finally obedience to God's commandments. First of all, then, we have the divine birth: Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. Belief here is not a mere intellectual assent to the fact, but rather a committal of one's life to Jesus as the Christ. If we have been truly born of God, then we will love Him. And not only so, we will love His children as well. It is good to notice here that we are to love all believers, and not just those of a certain earthly communion or fellowship."*

Full Context Homework:

Read all of **John 8:12-20 (NLT/AMPC) -** Jesus, the light of the world.
Read all of **1 Jn. 1:1 – 4:21 (AMPC)** - Living in the light / Do not love this world / Love one another.

Read all of **1 Jn. 5:1 - 21 (AMPC)** - Faith that Overcomes the World

Jn. 1:9 note: "There it was—the true Light [was then] coming into the world [the genuine, perfect, steadfast Light] that illumines every person."

NLT/NKJV and others say "the true light, who gives light to every man." would be better said as "who offers light to every man". This is better said here in the AMPC as "the true light that "illumines every person." i.e. shines upon. (Universalists like to point to this vs. to support the (all-are-saved theology, universal reconciliation. Also called universal salvation, Christian universalism, or in context simply universalism). But this is not what Jn. 1:9 is saying.

Believer's Bible Commentary Jn. 1:9 "It was by the coming of the true Light ... into the world that every man was given light. This does not mean that every man has received some inward knowledge concerning Christ. Neither does it mean that all men have heard about the Lord Jesus at one time or another. Rather, it means that the Light shines on all people, without regard to nationality, race, or color. "

An unbeliever has not yet received this light (who is Christ) and is still in darkness even though the True Light came into the world and shines on everyone (**Jn.1:9**). One must believe in Christ to receive this light before he can be a light to the world.

Believer's Bible Commentary Lk. 11:35 "The men Jesus was addressing thought themselves to be very wise. They supposed that they had a great deal of light. But the Lord Jesus warned them to consider the fact that the light that was in them was actually darkness. Their own pretended wisdom and superiority kept them from Him."

MEETING 26

Beware of False Light - False Teachers and False Prophets - Part 1

Beware of False Light, False Teachers, and False Prophets – Part 1
Deception: When Darkness Masquerades as Light

1. **Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   - Last meeting we talked about Jesus being the one true light that came into the world and what it means for us believers to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world that Jesus spoke of in **Matt. 5:13-16**.
   - We also discussed the warning Jesus gave about our salt losing its flavor and how conforming to the world can make us less salty, lukewarm, and dim our light making us less effective and having less power and impact on the world. We also discussed being born again and how the Holy Spirit can help us be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.
   - As we read in **Phil. 2:12-16**, we are to be shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people and we are to be firmly holding onto the Word of life and offering it to everyone. We cannot do this if our salt has lost its flavor and our light is dim because of conforming to the world.
   - We also talked about the cost of being His disciple, the cost of following Jesus, living in the light, not loving this world, and loving one another. **Lk. 14:25-35, 1 Jn. 1:1 – 4:21**.
   - Now we are going to dig into another warning: Beware of False Light, False Teachers, and False Prophets.
2. **This is a warning: Beware of False Light, False Teachers, and False Prophets**
   a) Let's start with continuing where we left off about the light of Christ being in us and how we are to let that light shine which we read about in **Lk.11:33.** Let's read this in more context and discuss. **Lk. 11:33-36 (NLT, AMP)**. Also, in **Mat. 6:22** sandwiched between "where your treasure is, there your heart is" and "no one can serve two masters" referring to God vs. money. I find it interesting that Mathew put "your eye being like a lamp" between those two scriptures.
   b) **Lk. 11:34** and **Mat. 6:22** talks about our eyes being like a light to our body. It can be healthy or bad. ~ Discuss this, what does this mean?
   c) **Lk. 11:35 Expositor's Bible Commentary**: *"Good eyes admit (allow) light, bad ones do not. Jesus implies that the individual is responsible for receiving light. The eye is thus a "lamp," not in the sense that it emits light, but that through it the body receives light. …if we think we can generate our own light, we must beware lest that inner "light" prove to be darkness."*
   d) **Lk. 11:35 Believers Bible Commentary**: *"The men Jesus was addressing thought themselves to be very wise. They supposed that they had a great deal of light. But the Lord Jesus warned them to consider the fact that the light that was in them was actually darkness. Their own pretended wisdom and superiority kept them from Him."*
   * Worldly wisdom can be a false light; light that is actually darkness.

e) *"When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. But when it is unhealthy, your body is filled with darkness."* I also like to think of this as the eye being a receiver and what it is receiving can affect your whole body. Be careful what you are looking at and how you are perceiving it. This ties into discernment.

f) **Lk. 11:35 Got Questions Commentary:** *"Here our Lord describes the eye as a lamp which lights the entire body. Our eyes are the entrance to our hearts and minds and, as such, they provide a doorway to our very souls. When He referred to "good" eyes, He meant eyes that not only see well, <u>but also perceive well</u>. <u>It is not only what we see, but how we perceive what we see</u> that makes the difference between godliness and ungodliness, between light and darkness. <u>Bad eyes lead to bad perception, but if our eyes are good, our whole person will be illuminated</u>. If we are in a lighted room, we see everything clearly. We can move around obstacles and locate whatever we're looking for. But walking in darkness results in stumbling, falling, and groping for some secure thing to hang on to. … The Bible tells us that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. <u>That's his great deception—to make people think they've found the light when in fact it's the darkness of false light</u>. His intention is to blind us to truth and corrupt our minds, and <u>he uses our eyes to gain entrance to our hearts</u>. He parades before us all manner of evil, from the deluge of pornography on the internet to the endless barrage of the world's goods that appeal to our materialistic impulses. He deludes us into believing that these things will make us happy, fulfilled people, when all the while they are robbing us of the very joy we long for. <u>He wants us to allow more and more darkness into our minds through the books we read, the movies we watch, and the images we allow our eyes to linger upon. In that way, the light of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ is obscured to us</u>.*

g) **Lk. 11:35 (combination of several commentaries):** *Jesus gives a serious caution: we must ensure that what we think is light within us is not actually darkness. This warning highlights the danger of self-deception or misplaced confidence in beliefs that may not align with true spiritual truth. It urges self-examination and discernment to avoid being misled by false teachings, impure motives, or incorrect understanding that can masquerade as light. - We are not to let the light within us become spiritually darkened which implies ignorance or error to the Truth of God's Word. … This verse emphasizes the importance of <u>allowing God's light to fully penetrate every aspect of our lives</u>."*

3. **Warnings about being deceived by false teachers which can produce false light, that light you think you have which can be darkness.**
   a) Warnings about being deceived by false prophets and false teachers: **2 Tim. 4:3-4 (AMPC)**, **Col. 2:8-10 (NLT)**.
   b) <u>Deception is Satan's favorite weapon of choice.</u>
   c) Satan is the father of lies and there is no truth in Him: **Jn. 8:44 (NLT)**.
   d) Satan transforms himself into an angel of light: **2 Cor. 11:12-15 (NKJV)**.
   e) The god of this world has blinded the unbelievers' minds [that they should not discern the truth]: **2 Cor. 4:4 (NLT)**.

f) The false teaching problem is not a new thing. Paul was addressing this problem with Jewish believers that where straying from the truth and going back to the law. There is also a warning to the false teacher: **Gal. 1:6-10, 5:5-10 (AMP)**.
g) Beware of false prophets who are disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves: **Mat. 7:15 (NLT)**. - Something I have been experiencing and witnessing through conversations and debates with some fellow Christians who are being deceived by false teaching is that because they are being deceived by false light and false teaching, they can be wolves and not even realize it. When someone is deceived, they are believing a lie. I've heard this said this way which I think explains it well: *"Satan's best operatives are the ones that are themselves deceived sincerely."*
h) False teaching is like tares being sown among the wheat. It is hard to tell the difference between the two. In the context of this study, I am referring to truth vs. falsehoods regarding the word of God. There is a lot of twisting of the scriptures going on right now and it is accelerating. Let's read this parable about the wheat and tares. Parable of the wheat and tares: **Mat. 13:24-29 (ESV)** *"but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way."* Further explained in **Mat. 13:36-43 (ESV).**
i) **BibleRef commentary on the "tares":** "The enemy's attack takes the form of sabotage. He sows a second round of plants, weeds, mixed right in with the wheat. It's possible that this was a known form of vandalism, and that the people listening to Jesus had seen or heard of this very thing happening before. Scholars suggest the audience likely would have imagined the weeds to be an inedible type of ryegrass called "darnel" or "tares." Prior to modern sorting techniques, this was a difficult weed to manage. It looks almost exactly like wheat, at first. By the time it can be clearly distinguished, it's already fully rooted in the ground.
j) **1 Jn. 4:1-3 (ESV & AMP)** - Discerning false prophets: do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God.
k) **1 Jn. 4:1 Believer's Bible Commentary**: *"Having mentioned the Holy Spirit, John is reminded that there are other spirits abroad in the world today, and that the children of God need to be warned against them. Thus he cautions the believer not to trust every spirit. The word spirit here probably refers primarily to teachers but not exclusively so. Just because a man speaks about the Bible, God, and Jesus does not mean that he is a true child of God. We are to test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. These are people who profess to accept Christianity, but teach another gospel altogether."*

Homework:

Read the following scriptures in their full context and do your own cross referencing. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal truth to you as you read. The Holy Spirit is the teacher and will guide you into all truth **(Jn. 14:26, 16:13).**

The Light in you, the believer: **Lk. 11:33-36**

Warnings about being deceived by false prophets and false teachers: **2 Tim. 4:3-4 (AMPC), Col. 2:8-10 (NLT).**

Satan is a Lier Jn. 8:44 (NLT) and a deceiver. He transforms himself into an angel of light:
2 Cor. 11:12-15 (NKJV)

Discerning false prophets: **1 Jn. 4:1-3 (ESV & AMP)**

MEETING 27

Beware of False Light - False Teachers and False Prophets - Part 2

Beware of False Light, False Teachers, and False Prophets – Part 2
Discernment: Testing Spirits and Guarding Against Deception

1. **Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   - The Biblical warnings about False light, teachers, and prophets.
   - The concept of our eyes being a lamp to our bodies **Lk. 11:33-36; Mat. 6:22-23 (NLT, AMP).**
   - How the Word says to be careful that the light within you is not actually darkness.
     * Worldly wisdom can be a false light; light that is actually, darkness.
   - Satan being a murderer, a liar and that there is no truth in him and that he is the father of lies and half-truths. **Jn. 8:44 (AMP)**.
   - How the Word warns us about false apostle and that deceitful workmen can disguise themselves as apostles of Christ and Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light and how his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. **2 Cor. 11:12-15**. This passage is very applicable to what we will be learning about in this study.
2. **Heed the warnings: Beware of False Light, False Teachers, and False Prophets.**
   a) In our last meeting we touched on false profits and teachers coming to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. I want to dig a little deeper into this. Let's start with reading **Mat. 7:15 (NLT/AMP)**. Some are being wolves and don't know it.
   b) False teaching is like tares being sown among the wheat. It is hard to tell the difference between the two. In the context of this study, I am referring to truth vs. falsehoods regarding the word of God. There is a lot of twisting of the scriptures going on right now and it is accelerating. Let's read this parable about the wheat and tares.
   Mat. 13:24-29 (ESV). Further explained in **Mat. 13:36-43 (ESV).**
   c) **BibleRef commentary on the "tares":** *"The enemy's attack takes the form of sabotage. He sows a second round of plants, weeds, mixed right in with the wheat. It's possible that this was a known form of vandalism, and that the people listening to Jesus had seen or heard of this very thing happening before. Scholars suggest the audience likely would have imagined the weeds to be an inedible type of ryegrass called "darnel" or "tares." Prior to modern sorting techniques, this was a difficult weed to manage. It looks almost exactly like wheat, at first. By the time it can be clearly distinguished, it's already fully rooted in the ground"*.
   Note: False teaching can look like the real thing and can sometime be hard to notice.
   d) **1 Jn. 4:1-6 (ESV & AMP)** – *"Discerning false prophets: **do not believe every spirit**, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God"*. How do we do this? Discuss. ~ Vs. 4&5 really jump out as something that is happening today. *"4 Little children (believers, dear ones), you are of God and you belong to Him and have [already] overcome them [the agents of the antichrist]; because He who is in you is greater than he (Satan) who is in the world [of sinful mankind]. 5 <u>They [who teach twisted doctrine] are of the world and belong to it; therefore they speak from the [viewpoint of the] world [with its immoral freedom and baseless theories—**demanding compliance with their opinions and ridiculing the values of the upright**], and the [gullible one of the] world listens closely and pays attention to them</u>."*

e) Vine's Expository Dictionary commentary on **1 Jn. 4:1** regarding the use of the word "spirit" in this passage. *"Every spirit - The question arises is whether John intends this phrase to refer to human spirits or spiritual beings who influence, but the context supports the interpretation that behind the false prophets with their false Christology (and false light teachings) is the spirit of the antichrist, and ultimately the spirit of the consummate (extremely skilled and accomplished) liar Satan, and behind the spirit of believers to which he is writing is the Spirit of God (The Holy Spirit, **The Spirit of Truth**). (Compare the phrase "the spirit of truth and the spirit of error". Since one cannot see a spirit, spirits is a metonymy (figure of speech) for the human agents (and their teachings) who manifested the antichrist spirit. The false prophets are the ones who willingly spoke error. However, do not miss the significance of what John is saying using the word "spirit" -- he could have just plainly stated "do not believe every false prophet" but he did not. In using the word "spirit" he was calling our attention to the literal spiritual war that is raging in the unseen world, the spirit of error on one side and the Spirit of truth on the other. **Do not let the invisibility of our enemy lull us into complacency and indifference** regarding our absolute necessity to daily, moment by moment put on the full armor of God **(Eph. 6:13-17).** In a parallel passage in **1 Ti. 4:1** Paul says that "the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons." How are those "doctrines of demons" propagated, except by human agents who are in a sense the "missionaries" of the evil one!*

f) Let's quickly read about the "spirit of Truth" **Jn. 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:13 (NKJV).**

g) An excerpt from a sermon by Ray Stedman on **1 Jn. 4:1-3**: *"When Unbelief is Right". "Every Christian is also called to be an unbeliever. There is a time when unbelief is the right thing and the only right thing. The very same Scriptures which encourage us to believe likewise urge us not to believe. In fact, they not only urge us, they command us not to believe. ...You cannot believe truth without rejecting error. You cannot love righteousness unless you are ready to hate sin. You cannot accept Christ without rejecting self. ...You cannot follow good unless you are ready to flee from evil. So, it is not surprising, therefore, that the Scriptures tell us we are not to believe, as well as to believe. This is what John declares in the first three verses of 1 Jn. 4. (In Stedman's closing words he says) "God help us to be unbelievers in error as well as believers in truth."*

h) Paul also spoke of about this in **2 Cor. 11:2-6 (NASB/NLT)** – *"...you happily put up with whatever anyone tells you, even if they preach a different Jesus"*.

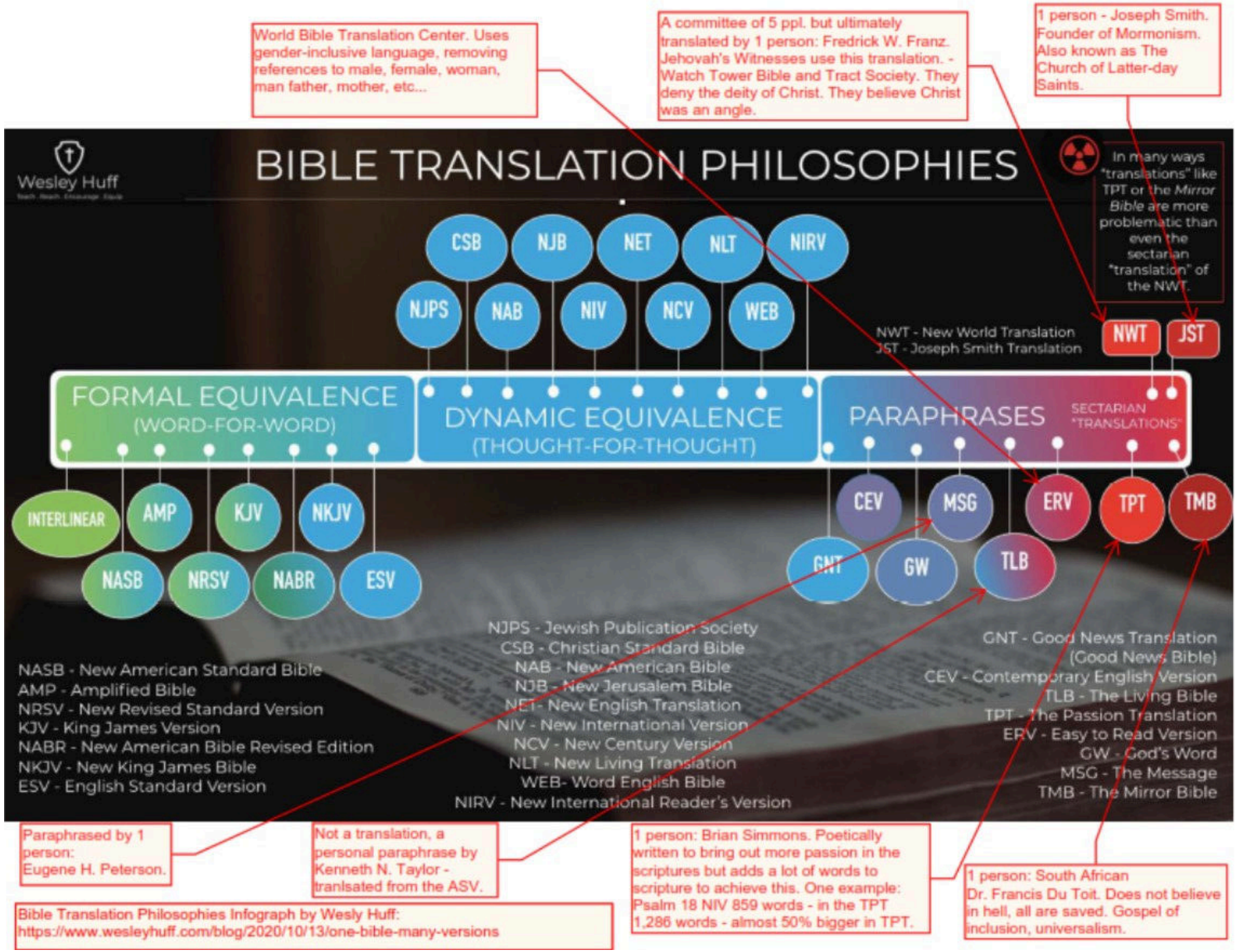
i) Peter also warns us about not being carried away with error. **2 Pet. 3:17** – "*You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability*." This also ties into **Rom. 12:2** *"do not be conformed to this world, to its culture"*. ***Mat. 24:11*** *says "...many false prophets will arise and lead many astray."* There are many more warning in the scriptures about false teachings. Be on guard and do not be led astray!

j) So back to my question: How do we "not believe" every spirit and "test" the spirits to see whether they are from God or not? First, we are told to "not believe" these false teachings.

The first challenge to testing the spirits if they are from God or not is to know right away if they are false teachings or not. We can only know they are false teaching by knowing what the truth is, knowing what the word says for yourself. We need to know the real thing, the truth, the word of God so well that we can instantly and easily recognize the counterfeit. Similar to how a bank teller is trained to spot counterfeit money by knowing what the real thing looks like and feels like. They don't train with the counterfeit, they train with the real money long enough so when the counterfeit shows up, they know it instantly.
By staying grounded in the word, a false teaching that comes your way should instantly sound an alarm in your spirit. We also have the Holy Spirit in us to help give us spiritual discernment. The Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth. We need to be grounded in the word and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us and give us discernment. Prayer is necessary as well. - Knowing the Word of God leads me to the subject of Bible translations and paraphrases. What Word are you reading. I would like to touch on Bible translations for a moment. *~ Discuss attached infographic. [Mark-up notes added by me]*

One notable aspect of the Bible Translation Philosophies infographic is the section on the right side, which indicates the "red danger zone." This area represents translations and paraphrases created by a single individual. It's important to exercise caution with these translations, as the biases and agendas of one person can significantly influence the text, lacking the checks and balances that come from a committee of Bible scholars. In contrast, on the left side, you'll find the word-for-word translations, such as for one example: the ESV, which was produced by a team of over 100 prominent Bible scholars and pastors. The ESV is based on recently published critical editions of the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts. It follows an "essentially literal" translation philosophy that accounts for differences in grammar, syntax, and idioms between contemporary English and the original languages. This translation prioritizes "word-for-word" accuracy, literary quality, and depth of meaning. If you're reading paraphrases like The Message or The Passion Translation, it's advisable to compare them with word-for-word or phrase-for-phrase translations. Consider "paraphrase" Bibles for casual reading, "word-for-word" translations for more in-depth Bible study and "phrase for phrase" translations for help with context. Additionally, it's important to note that paraphrase Bibles often add many more words to the original scripture, which can distort the intended meaning of the text.

Next study will be a part 3 and continuation of this study and we will dive into some good examples of false light and deceptive teachings. As noted above, if we are grounded in the word of God, we should be able to spot the counterfeit when we see it.


World Bible Translation Center. Uses gender-inclusive language, removing references to male, female, woman, man father, mother, etc...
A committee of 5 ppl. but ultimately translated by 1 person: Fredrick W. Franz. Jehovah's Witnesses use this translation. - Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. They deny the deity of Christ. They believe Christ was an angle.
1 person - Joseph Smith. Founder of Mormonism. Also known as The Church of Latter-day Saints.
Wesley Huff
BIBLE TRANSLATION PHILOSOPHIES
In many ways "translations" like TPT or the Mirror Bible are more problematic than even the sectarian "translation" of the NWT.
CSB
NJB
NET
NLT
NIRV
NJPS
NAB
NIV
NCV
WEB
NWT - New World Translation
JST - Joseph Smith Translation
NWT
JST
FORMAL EQUIVALENCE
(WORD-FOR-WORD)
DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE
(THOUGHT-FOR-THOUGHT)
PARAPHRASES
SECTARIAN "TRANSLATIONS"
INTERLINEAR
AMP
KJV
NKJV
NASB
NRSV
NABR
ESV
CEV
MSG
ERV
TPT
TMB
GNT
GW
TLB
NASB - New American Standard Bible
AMP - Amplified Bible
NRSV - New Revised Standard Version
KJV - King James Version
NABR - New American Bible Revised Edition
NKJV - New King James Bible
ESV - English Standard Version
NJPS - Jewish Publication Society
CSB - Christian Standard Bible
NAB - New American Bible
NJB - New Jerusalem Bible
NET- New English Translation
NIV - New International Version
NCV - New Century Version
NLT - New Living Translation
WEB- Word English Bible
NIRV - New International Reader's Version
GNT - Good News Translation (Good News Bible)
CEV - Contemporary English Version
TLB - The Living Bible
TPT - The Passion Translation
ERV - Easy to Read Version
GW - God's Word
MSG - The Message
TMB - The Mirror Bible
Paraphrased by 1 person: Eugene H. Peterson.
Not a translation, a personal paraphrase by Kenneth N. Taylor - tranlsated from the ASV.
1 person: Brian Simmons. Poetically written to bring out more passion in the scriptures but adds a lot of words to scripture to achieve this. One example: Psalm 18 NIV 859 words - in the TPT 1,286 words - almost 50% bigger in TPT.
1 person: South African Dr. Francis Du Toit. Does not believe in hell, all are saved. Gospel of inclusion, universalism.
Bible Translation Philosophies Infograph by Wesly Huff: https://www.wesleyhuff.com/blog/2020/10/13/one-bible-many-versions

Homework:

Read in full context the scriptures referenced below:

Beware of the false prophets: **Mat. 7:15, 13:24-29**

Test the spirits: **1 Jn. 4:1-6**

The "spirit of Truth" **Jn. 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:13**

Warning on not being carried away with false teachings: **2 Cor. 11:2-6; 2 Pet. 3:17; Rom. 12:2; Mat. 24:11**

MEETING 28

Beware of False Light - False Teachers and False Prophets - Part 3

Finding Treasure in The Word

Beware of False Light, False Teachers, and False Prophets – Part 3
False Teachers: Exposing Universalist Deceptions and Scriptural Twists

1. **Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   - We discussed the parable of the wheat and tares **Mat. 13:24-29; 13:36-43.** How it relates to truth vs. falsehoods regarding the word of God. The world sowing falsehoods into truth, twisting the scriptures to conform to the world. (an agenda or ideology). Sowing lies, i.e. bad seeds.
   - We discussed discerning false prophets and testing the spirits. **1 Jn. 4:1-6 (NKJV)**. Vine's Expository Dictionary quote: "*behind the false prophets with their false Christology (and false light teachings) is the spirit of the antichrist, and ultimately the spirit of the liar Satan, and behind the spirit of believers to which he is writing to is the Spirit of God (The Holy Spirit, **The Spirit of Truth**).*"
   - We also discussed the "Spirit of Truth (The Holy Spirit)" **Jn. 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:13 (NKJV).** How the Holy Spirit gives us discernment and helps us rightly divide the Word of Truth. **2 Tim. 2:15 (NKJV/ESV/AMPC) – *** How do we do what this scripture says? Discuss…
   - 2 Tim. 2:15 Expositor's Bible Commentary - *"Do your best" refers to a person being zealous or eager. Timothy must put forth every effort to be a Christian minister approved by God. When his work is inspected by God, he will then have no reason to feel ashamed. "Who correctly handles or rightly divides" suggests a plowman making a straight furrow in the soil. As Timothy teaches the Scriptures, he is to guide the word of truth along a straight path and not turn aside into the devious paths of **deceiving interpretations**."*
   - *We also discussed Bible translations: word for word, thought for thought and Paraphrase.*
2. **Let's go over some examples of false light and deceptive teachings.**

   a) **Example 1 (False)**: Francois Du Toit quote (author of The Mirror Bible Paraphrase) Quote: *"If the gospel we preach does not begin with the fact that every person on the planet is equally valued and included in Christ, well then our good news is just not good enough! The danger was never to exaggerate the gospel, but always to underestimate it! Something happened to mankind in Christ which is by far superior to what happened to mankind in Adam!"* - **What jumps out at you when you read this quote?** – This quote is alluding to a misinterpretation of **1 Cor. 15:22-23**. It is carefully worded to teach **universalism**, that all of humanity is "in Christ" and that all are or will eventually be saved. The idea of "all are in Adam and all are in Christ. **1 Cor. 15:22-23** is not saying that, especially when you bring in **vs 23** for more context. Let's read this and discuss. **Verse 23** is very different than **vs. 22**. The all who shall be made alive is defined in **verse 23** as those who are Christ's at His Coming." 1 Cor. 15:22-23 Believer's Bible Commentary - *"Adam and Christ are presented as federal heads. This means that they acted for other people. And all who are related to them are affected by their actions. All who are descended from Adam die. So, in Christ all shall be made alive. This verse has sometimes been taken to teach universal salvation. It is argued that the same ones who die in Adam will be made alive in*

Christ, and that all will eventually be saved. But that is not what the verse says. The key expressions are in Adam and in Christ. All who are in Adam die. All who are in Christ shall be made alive, that is, only believers in the Lord Jesus Christ will be raised from the dead to dwell eternally with Him. The all who shall be made alive is defined in verse 23 as those who are Christ's at His Coming."

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b) **Example 2 (False)**: Stan Mitchell (graduate of Vanderbilt Divinity School and pastor to the LGBTQ+ community) – Quote: *"The idea that two people being coaxed by a talking snake into eating a forbidden fruit somehow justifies every human ever born deserving to be torturously separated from God for eternity is undoubtedly the most ridiculous religious assertion ever made. And, arguably, the most effective. The premise of innate separation from God is a terrible untruth, one that has laid the groundwork for many a religious industry to profitably fix a problem that doesn't exist."* - **What jumps out at you when you read this quote?** – First thing that jumps out to me is the mocking of scripture.

- This is also tying into the misinterpretation of **1 Cor. 15:22-23** pointing again to the idea that all of humanity is saved (or will eventually be saved) and has never been separated from God. It is also casting doubt on the validity of the Word of God and is even mocking it. i.e., does the Bible really say that? Similar to **Gen. 3:1** where satan said to Eve, *"did God really say you cannot eat from the tree in the garden?"*
- This is the sobering truth of God's Word: Those who believe in Christ receive eternal life, while those who do not, face eternal separation from God and everlasting destruction, excluded from the Lord's presence and power (**2 Thes. 1:6-9, NLT/AMP**), due to their unbelief and rejection of Christ. One must believe in Christ to "receive" salvation.
- Those who believe in Jesus Christ belong to Christ. When you believed, He identified you as his own. He put His seal upon you by giving you the Holy Spirit. **Eph. 1:13-14 (NLT)**, Unbelievers do not yet belong to Christ. So, as noted in **1 Cor. 15:23** "*those who are Christ's at His Coming*", is referring only to believers who are in Christ. All of humanity is not in Christ. All of humanity is not "Christ's at His coming."
- There is a popular Bible paraphrase/translation called "The Mirror Bible Translation" (TMB) by South African Dr. Francis Du Toit of whom I have quoted above. He has thousands of glowing reviews on Amazon and very large following in South Africa and has become very popular globally as well. A comparison of a few passages from the ESV and the Mirror Bible will illustrate Francis Du Toit's theology ←- This translation is infused with the idea that all are included, all are saved and that there is no separation from God for all of humanity. i.e. "the gospel of inclusion." Just one example of many false teachers that are persuading many away from the truth of what the Word says.

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c) **Example 3** - A false teaching from the Mirror Bible by Francois Du Toit

- **Truth: Jn. 1:11-12 (ESV)** *"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."* These are compared with the many who rejected Christ in **Jn. 1:11**. The point is, that while many rejected Jesus, those who receive Him (and only those) i.e., those who are saved through faith in Christ become God's children.

- **False: The Mirror Bible** completely reverses this. *"Everyone who realizes their association in him, convinced that he is their original life and that his name defines them, God gives the assurance that they are indeed his offspring, begotten of him; he sanctions the legitimacy of the sonship."* - According to the Mirror paraphrase, it is not sonship that people need but assurance of that sonship. They (all of humanity) have always been a son regardless of salvation through faith in Christ. - The point of the Mirror Bible paraphrase is not that people need to become children of God but that they need to "recognize" that they are already children of God because of Christ. The Bible does not teach this. One receives sonship only through faith in Christ. – You can also see this in **Gal. 3:23-26 (ESV/AMP),** *"For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith".* *Context is crucial! Gal. 3:23-26 Believers Bible Commentary: *"Notice the change in pronouns from "we" in vs. 23-25 to "you" in vs 26. In speaking of the Jews as "we," Paul showed that they were kept under law until the coming of Christ. The law maintained them as a separate people to whom justification by faith might be preached. When they were justified, they ceased to be under law, and their distinctive character as Jews ceased. The pronoun "you" from here to the end of the chapter includes both saved Jews and saved Gentiles. Such people are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."* * All of you saved Jews and Gentiles become a son of God through faith. Not all of humanity. The "All" is Jew and Gentile believers.

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d) **Example 4** - A false teaching from the Mirror Bible by Francois Du Toit

- **Truth: Jn. 3:3 (ESV)** *"Jesus answered him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* All other modern versions convey the same message, although the wording may be slightly different. The point is that without new birth through salvation a person will be excluded from God's kingdom. **How does one get born again?**
- **False: Jn. 3:3 (TMB)** gives a completely different emphasis: *"Jesus answered him emphatically; no one would even be able to recognize anything as coming from God's domain unless they are born from above to begin with! The very fact that it is possible to perceive that I am in union with God, as a human being, reveals humanity's genesis from above!"* Here, receiving Christ does not make one a child of God but simply proves the divine origin of mankind. All are born saved and all are children of God with an inheritance. * This is not what the Bible teaches.

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e) **Example 5** - A false teaching from the Mirror Bible by Francois Du Toit

- **Truth: Jn. 3:17–18** (**ESV)** and very similarly in all reputable English translations reads, *"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."* The condemnation spoken of here is the condemnation of a holy God who judges unrepentant sinners who refuse, reject, and do not believe in Christ.
- **False: Jn. 3:17–18** (**TMB)**, In the Mirror Bible the warning of God's condemnation becomes something else entirely: *"God has no intention to condemn anyone—he sent his son not to be the Judge but the Savior of the world. Faith and not flesh defines you! In the persuasion of your authentic sonship there is no separation or rejection! For someone to prefer not to*

embrace this is to remain under their own judgment sustained by their futile efforts to define themselves through personal performance. In their stubborn unbelief they reject what is revealed and redeemed in the Name of the son, begotten only of the Father and not the flesh." - For Francis Du Toit, the condemnation of God for rejecting the Son becomes self-condemnation as one refuses to recognize his true sonship and tries to earn God's favor by his performance. Francis Du Toit cannot except a God who is loving **and** just. He has a hard time believing that God would allow people to suffer torment in and separation in hell for eternity, so he has rewritten the bible to say that there is no hell and all are saved.

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f) **Example 6** - A false teaching from the Mirror Bible by Francois Du Toit

- **Truth: Rom. 3:23-26** (**ESV)** *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."* Here we can clearly see that salvation is received only through faith in Christ.
- **False: Rom. 3:23-26 (TMB)** *"Humanity is in the same boat; their distorted behavior is proof of a lost blueprint. Jesus Christ is proof of God's grace gift; He redeemed the glory of God in human life; mankind condemned is now mankind justified! Jesus exhibits God's mercy. In His blood conciliation, God's faith persuades mankind of His righteousness and the fact that He has brought closure to the historic record of their sins (not by demanding a sacrifice but providing the sacrifice of Himself). Jesus is the unveiling of the Father's heart toward us. All along God refused to let go of mankind. At this very moment, God's act of righteousness is pointing them to the evidence of their innocence, with Jesus as the source of their faith."* In this translation salvation is not to be received by faith, it's something all of humanity already has. The Bible clearly does not teach this.

There are many more examples of twisting of scriptures to push an agenda or an ideology. Many of these are in the form of books promising a better understanding of what the Bible really says. One glaring example is this book noted below. Placing the short review here for reference:

That All Shall Be Saved: Heaven, Hell, and Universal Salvation by David Bentley Hart - *"A scathing, vigorous, eloquent attack on those who hold that that there is such a thing as eternal damnation. In this momentous book, David Bentley Hart makes the case that nearly two millennia of dogmatic tradition have misled readers on the crucial matter of universal salvation. On the basis of the earliest Christian writings, theological tradition, scripture, and logic, Hart argues that if God is the good creator of all, he is the savior of all, without fail. And if he is not the savior of all, the Kingdom is only a dream, and creates something considerably worse than a nightmare. But it is not so. There is no such thing as eternal damnation; all will be saved. With great rhetorical power, wit, and emotional range, Hart offers a "new" perspective on one of Christianity's most*

important themes." – Can you feel the mocking of the Word of God and the casting doubt onto the Word in the above description of this book? Hart is twisting the scriptures and how they are translated to conform to the idea that there is no judgment/no Hell. i.e preaching another gospel. (**2 Cor. 11:4**)

Homework: **The importance of the Word of God in our lives**: **Hebrews 4:12; Matthew 4:4; Psalm 119:105; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; John 17:17; Matthew 24:35; Colossians 3:16; Luke 11:28; Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:25; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Acts 17:11; Ephesians 6:17 ~** Combing these scriptures together**:**

"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints, and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. The Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. His Word is Truth. Heaven and earth will pass away, but God's Word will never pass away. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. The word of the Lord endures forever. When you received the word of God, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. ***Examine the scriptures and see if they are true! Put on the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."***

A short study on Hell: Hell, described as the second death and the lake of fire (**Rev. 20:14; 21:8**), is both real and eternal. This truth is affirmed in I**sa. 66:22-24, Dan. 12:1-2, Mat. 13:50; 18:6-9; 25:31-46, Mk. 9:42-48, 2 Thess. 1:5-10, Jd. 1:7,13,** and Rev. **14:10-11; 20:10,14-15 (NKJV/AMPC)**. Scripture teaches that unbelievers will face this eternal judgment and separation from His presence (Love, Joy and Peace): **Mat. 13:41,50; 25:46; Jn. 3:36; 5:28-29; 2 Thess. 1:5-10; Rev. 20:11-15; 21:6-8, (NKJV/AMPC)**. However, this clear biblical message is challenged by attempts to redefine core doctrines—such as salvation, heaven, hell, judgment, and the gospel itself—All in an effort to align Scripture with an "all-inclusive gospel." Such redefinitions often undermine the authority of God's inerrant, God-breathed Word **(Ps. 19:1; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Jn. 16:13; 17:17)**.

A deeper dive: I have a very long article I have written and worked on over the past 5 years or so that dives deeper into what the Bible says about salvation and the false teaching of inclusion.

My rebuttal to the "Gospel of Inclusion" (all are not in)

https://christinyoustudymap.com/my-rebuttal-to-the-all-inclusive-gospel/

<u>Bonus homework</u>:
1 Cor. 15:22-23 (NKJV) - "*22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming*."

"All in Adam all die," - this "death" is referring to: Eternal death, everlasting destruction, eternal exclusion, and banishment from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power as mentioned in **2 Thes. 1:9, Matthew 18:8, 25:26; Mark 3:29; Hebrews 6:2; Rev. 21:8 (NKJV/AMP).**

"All in Christ made alive" this "life" is referring to: New life, now here on earth and eternal life with the Lord. The born-again transformation to new life and the everlasting life with the Lord. It is what will happen for those who believe in Christ. They "will be made alive in Christ". This life is eternal life in Heaven, everlasting life. **John 3:16, 11:25-26, 17:3; Matthew 19:29, 25:46; 1 John 5:13, Luke 10:25-28 (NKJV/AMP)**.

Easton's Bible Dictionary - Eternal death

Easton's Bible Dictionary - Eternal life

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

<u>Double Bonus Homework</u>: In reference to *"those who are Christ's at His coming"* i.e. Those who belong to Christ, those who are in Christ. (all of humanity is not Christ's at His Coming, i.e. all of humanity does not belong to Christ and are not in Christ). Adding this homework for a better understanding of **1 Cor. 15:22-23.**

I posed the following questions to A.I. for some in-depth research:

Question:
How do I reconcile 1 Corinthians 15:23 with psalm 24:1 with a focus on "those who belong to Christ" i.e. only believers belonging to Christ." Also take into account the following: Belonging to Christ is the positional reality of being "in Christ". The concepts of being "in Christ" and "belonging to Christ" are theologically equivalent in Pauline theology, as they both describe the believer's union with Christ. We also see this with believers being "sealed with the Holy Spirit". This sealing is a mark of divine ownership (Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 4:30 (NLT/NASB/AMP).

Note: Below is an A.I. response to my challenging question and is pulling from the entire text of the Bible in these versions AMP, AMPC, ESV, KJV, NASB, NIV, as well as many commentaries, it is always wise to dig into the Word of God yourself and read the scriptures in full context while allowing the Holy Spirit to teach you as you dive in. Ask this same question yourself and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal truth as you dig into the word for the answers. Use the question and answer below for deeper study.

Answer:
To reconcile **Psalm 24:1** and **1 Corinthians 15:23**, we must distinguish between God's **universal ownership** as Creator and His **redemptive ownership** as Savior. While every molecule in the universe belongs to God by right of creation, only those "in Christ" belong to Him by right of covenant and redemption.

Theologically, this is often called **"Double Ownership."**

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1. General Ownership: The Creator's Right (Psalm 24:1)

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it."

This verse describes **Ontological Ownership**. God is the rightful owner of all things because He made them and sustains them. In this sense, even the unbeliever, the mountains, and the stars "belong" to God. He holds the "title deed" to the universe.

- **Scope:** Universal (everyone and everything).

- **Basis:** Creation and Providence.
- **Status:** Subjection to divine authority and judgment.

2. Redemptive Ownership: The Redeemer's Purchase (1 Cor. 15:23)

*"...but each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming **those who belong to Christ**."*

This verse describes **Soteriological Ownership**. While God owns the world, Paul is referring to a specific group—the Church—who have been "bought with a price" (1 Cor 6:20).

In Pauline theology, "belonging to Christ" (*hoi tou Christou*) is the functional equivalent of being **"in Christ."** It is a positional reality where the believer is legally and spiritually transferred from the "domain of darkness" into the "Kingdom of the Son" (Colossians 1:13).

- **Scope:** Particular (only believers).
- **Basis:** The Blood of Christ and Union with Him.
- **Status:** Adoption, Inheritance, and Resurrection life.

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3. Reconciling the Two: The "Seal" of Ownership

The link between these two concepts is the **Sealing of the Holy Spirit**. While everyone belongs to God as a creature, the believer is "marked" as a special possession.

In the ancient world, a seal (like a signet ring in wax) did three things:

1. **Identified the Owner:** It showed whose "property" the object was.
2. **Guaranteed Authenticity:** It proved the object was the "real deal."
3. **Provided Protection:** To break the seal was to challenge the authority of the owner.

The Moment of Salvation

As you noted, this happens the **moment** one believes. The scriptures you cited (Ephesians 1:13-14, 2 Corinthians 1:22) use the Greek word *arrabōn*, meaning a "down payment" or "earnest money."

- **Ephesians 1:13:** "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth... and believed in him, were **sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**."
- **Positional Reality:** The Spirit is the "brand" or "mark" that separates the believer from the rest of the world that God owns.

Summary: The Distinct Relationship

Feature	Psalm 24:1 (Universal)	1 Cor. 15:23 (Redemptive)
Relationship	Master to Creature	Head to Body / Groom to Bride
Means	The Act of Creation	The Act of Redemption (Cross)
Requirement	Existence	Faith / Union ("In Christ")
The Result	Accountability to God	Resurrection and Inheritance

The Reconciliation: 1 Corinthians 15:23 does not deny that God owns all people (Psalm 24:1); rather, it highlights that only those who have been **spiritually united** to Christ through the "seal" of the Spirit are participants in the specific resurrection of the righteous. At the moment of salvation, you move from being a "creature belonging to a Creator" to a "child belonging to a Father."

See also: 1 Cor. chapter 15 BibleRef Commentary for full context of **1 Cor. 15:22-23**.
...and Matthew Henry :: Commentary on **1 Cor. 15**.

...and for further consideration I have placed below the Believer's Bible Commentary on **1 Cor. 15:22-23**.

15:22 Adam and **Christ** are presented as federal heads. This means that they acted for other people. And all who are related to them are affected by their actions. **All** who are descended from **Adam die. So in Christ all shall be made alive**. This verse has sometimes been taken to teach universal salvation. It is argued that the same ones who die in Adam will be made alive in Christ, and that all will eventually be saved. But that is not what the verse says. The key expressions are **in Adam** and **in Christ. All** who are **in Adam die. All** who are **in Christ shall be made alive**, that is, only believers in the Lord Jesus Christ will be raised from the dead to dwell eternally with Him. The **all** who **shall be made alive** is defined in verse 23 as those who are Christ's at His Coming. It does not include Christ's enemies, for they shall be put under His feet (v. 25), which, as someone has said, is a strange name for heaven.

15:23 Next we have the groups or classes involved in the first resurrection. First is the resurrection of **Christ** Himself. He is spoken of here as **the firstfruits**. Firstfruits were a handful of ripened grain

from the harvest field before the actual harvest started. They were a pledge, a guarantee, a foretaste of what was to follow. The expression does not necessarily mean that Christ was the first one to rise. We have instances of resurrection in the OT, and the cases of Lazarus, the widow's son, and Jairus' daughter in the NT. But Christ's resurrection was different from all of these in that, whereas they rose to die again, Christ rose to die no more. He rose to live in the power of an endless life. He rose with a glorified body.

The second class in the first resurrection is described as **those who are Christ's at His coming**. This includes those who will be raised at the time of the Rapture, and also those believers who will die during the Tribulation and will be raised at the end of that time of trouble, when Christ comes back to reign. Just as there are stages in the coming of Christ, so there will be stages in the resurrection of His saints. The first resurrection does not include all who have ever died, but only those who have died with faith in Christ.

Some teach that only those Christians who have been faithful to Christ, or who have been overcomers will be raised at this time, but the Scriptures are very clear in refuting this. All **who are Christ's** will be raised at His coming.

MEETING 29

Belonging to Christ-Believers are Heavenly Citizens, Sons, and Heirs

Belonging to Christ: Believers are Heavenly Citizens, Sons, and Heirs

1. **Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   - We discussed several examples of deceptive and false teaching that were carefully worded to twist the scriptures towards universalism, the idea that all of humanity is saved. We also went over scriptures that show how this is not what the Bible teaches.
   - We also explored the difference between being "in Adam" and being "in Christ," focusing on the full context of **1 Cor. 15:22-23 (NLT/NKJV)**. We discussed the significance of **v. 23**, particularly the phrase "*those who are Christ's at His coming*," which refers to those who belong to Christ—that is, those who are in Christ through faith. - Not all of humanity will be "Christ's at His coming"; not everyone belongs to Christ or is in Christ. Belonging to Him and being in Him (in union with Him) is a gift received through faith.
   - In this study we are going to dig deeper into *"belonging to Christ"* and the *"inheritance"* that comes with this new relationship which is received through faith in Jesus Christ. Believing in Christ brings you into the kingdom of God, making you a citizen of heaven and an heir to all that God has promised in His kingdom.
2. **Through faith in Christ, you belong to Christ and are now a citizen of Heaven, brought into His family as a son or daughter and are now an heir with an inheritance.** Frist let's talk about "belonging to Christ" and "being in Christ" and how they are essentially the same thing and what this means for the believer.
   a) **Belonging to Christ and being in Christ**:
      - **1 Cor. 6:19-20 (AMP/NKJV)** - You (believer) are a temple of the Holy Spirit who is within you and your body is not your own. Your body and Spirit belong to God.
      - **Rom. 8:12-17 (NKJV), 8:15-17 (AMP)** - **Sonship through the Holy Spirit**. The Holy Spirit produces sonship. We need to tie in the fruit of the Spirit with this as well: **Gal. 5:22-23 (NLT/AMPC)**. Here we see that the Holy Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control and in **Rom. 8:12-17 (NKJV/AMP)** we also see that the Holy Spirit produces **sonship** which enables us to be heirs with an **inheritance**! Tying these two together: The Holy Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, **and** sonship! *Believe it/walk in it*.
      - **Rom. 8:1 (AMP)** "Therefore there is now no condemnation [no guilty verdict, no punishment] for those who are in Christ Jesus [who believe in Him as personal Lord and Savior]." **(NLT)** "So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus." **(ESV)** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
        In these three translations for example, we see "in Christ" and "belong to Christ". Belonging to Christ is the positional reality of being "in Christ". The concepts of being "in Christ" and "belonging to Christ" are theologically equivalent in Pauline theology, as they both describe the believer's union with Christ. We also see this with believers being "**sealed with the Holy Spirit**". This sealing is a mark of divine ownership (**Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 4:30**).

      - **Rom. 14:8 (NLT)** - So whether we live or die, we [believers] belong to the Lord.

- The Holy Spirit makes this "belonging to Christ" possible. When we believed in Christ we were sealed in Him with the promised Holy Spirit, thus making us His own. **Rom. 8:9; Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:21-22 (NASB/AMP).** As mentioned above, this is the Holy Spirit producing sonship through faith in Christ. Notice how in **Rom. 8:9** it specifically says, *"But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him [and is not a child of God]."*, e.g. non-believers do not belong to God and believers do because they have been sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.
- At salvation we are Baptized "into Christ" **Gal. 3:26-28**, some scriptures referring to the believer as being "in Christ": **1 Pet. 5:14; Phil. 1:1; Rom. 8:1**. Believers have died, and their life is now <u>hidden with Christ in God</u>. **Col. 3:3.**
  Note that being "<u>in Christ</u>" and "<u>belong to Christ</u>" are the same thing, describing the believer's union with Christ as noted above: the believers new positional reality.

3. **If you belong to Christ [if you are in Him], then you are Abraham's descendants, and with that comes a spiritual inheritance.** ** If you believe in Christ, you belong to Christ and are in Him.*
   - **Gal. 3:28-29 (AMP)** – *" There is [now no distinction in regard to salvation] neither Jew nor Greek ...**for you [who believe] are all one in Christ Jesus** ...And if you belong to Christ [if you are in Him], then you are Abraham's descendants, and **[spiritual heirs]** according to [God's] promise." Also read this in* (**NASB/NLT)** - All [believers] are one in Christ Jesus. If you are in Christ, you belong to Him. Believers are in Christ and as a result are Abraham's descendants and **[spiritual heirs]** according to [God's] promise. God's promise to Abraham belongs to you, the believer. - **So, what was God's promise to Abrham?**
     The promise, is promises (plural):
     - That he would have <u>numerous descendants</u> **(Gen. 12:7, 13:15, 17:8)**.
     - He was promised the <u>land of Canaan to his descendants</u> **(Gen. 12:7, 13:15, 17:8)**.
     - That through Abraham's offspring, <u>all nations on earth would be blessed</u> **(Gen. 12:3, 22:18**). The blessing to all nations is understood as the offer of salvation and reconciliation with God through faith in Christ **(Rom. 3:20-25 NLT).**
   - **How does this promise translate into a Spiritual Inheritance?** i.e. "[spiritual heirs]"
     Gal. 3:29 (AMP) *"And if you belong to Christ [if you are in Him], then you are Abraham's descendants, and **[spiritual heirs]** according to [God's] promise."*
     - **Spiritual Inheritance:** The inheritance here is eternal life, the Holy Spirit, and the kingdom of God, rather than just the land of Canaan, numerous descendants and being a blessing to the nations. This spiritual inheritance includes:
       - <u>Righteousness received by Faith</u>: Just as Abraham was justified by faith **(Gal.3:6-9)**, so are believers through faith in Christ **(Rom. 3:20-25 NLT).**
       - <u>The Holy Spirit received by faith</u>: Paul associates the promise with receiving the Holy Spirit **(Gal. 3:14)**.

       - <u>Eternal Life received by faith</u>: The promise extends to eternal life and a place in God's eternal kingdom. Believers are "citizens of Heaven, citizens of the Kingdom"

now and for **eternity**! **Phil. 3:20-21; Eph. 2:19; Col. 3:1-3; 1 pet. 2:11; Heb. 11:13-16.** With this citizenship comes undeserved rights & privileges. **We will dive into what these are in future studies.*

- **Now**: Abundant life here on earth as it is in Heaven in intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, experiencing His kingdom and His presence while we are here on earth. We are also in Him in Heavenly places. **Eph. 2:4-6 (AMP)** *"…He raised us up together with Him [when we believed], and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, [because we are] in Christ Jesus"* <- This is Paul speaking to believers. This is where we (believers) are now in Christ. We need to believe this and walk in this truth daily.
- **Eternity**: Having a confident hope of an eternal, heavenly dwelling rather than an earthly one. Living forever in the presence of the Lord. **Ps. 16:11, 23:6, 1 Thes. 4:17, Rev. 21:3-4, 22:3-5, Jn. 14:2-3** - These scriptures collectively paint a picture of eternal life characterized by joy, peace, and an everlasting communion with God, where believers are in His presence continuously.

4. **With all this talk of being heirs, we must talk about becoming a child of God through faith and what this means for the believer.**
   a) **Becoming a child of God through faith.**
      - Fatih is the entry point: Believing in Jesus as the Son of God, the Savior, and accepting His sacrifice for sin is foundational. This faith is not just intellectual, but involves repentance, trust, commitment, and surrender to Christ's lordship. - **Jn. 1:12-13 (ESV)** *"But to all who did **receive him**, who **believed in his name**, he **gave the right to become children of God**, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God"*. Born Again, we become a child of God through faith in Christ.
   b) **What this means for the believer.**
      - Adoption into God's Family: **Spiritual adoption: Rom. 8:14-17 (NLT/AMP)** speaks of this adoption where believers receive the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." This points to being a citizen of Heaven mentioned above.
        "For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children."
      - Sonship/Heirship**:** With this adoption comes the status of being co-heirs with Christ, sharing in His inheritance, which includes righteousness, the Holy Spirit and eternal life all received by faith.
      - Transformation and New Identity:
        - **Born Again**: The process of becoming a child of God involves a spiritual rebirth. Born again to new life. A transformation into a new creation. **1 Pet. 1:3, 23; 2 Cor. 5:17; Jn. 1:12–13**. This new identity is not based on one's past or works, but on being part of God's family through faith in Christ. **Jn. 20:31 (AMP)** *"but these have been written so that you may believe [with a deep, abiding trust] that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed), the Son of God; and that by believing [and trusting in and relying on Him] you may have life in His name."* The life referred to here is everlasting life."
      - Implications of Being Children of God:

- **Access to God**: As children of God, believers have direct access to God, an intimate relationship where we can *"…come boldly to the throne of our gracious God and there we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most."* **(Heb. 4:16 NLT).**
- **Transformation**: The identity as God's children leads to a life that increasingly reflects the character of God, emphasizing love, holiness, and the fruit of the Spirit as well as learning to live as a son with an inheritance. Believing it and walking in it! As we allow the Holy Spirit to produce this fruit in our lives we become more like Him.

Homework: Read all of **Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:21-22 (NLT/NASB/AMP)** which talk about how a believer is sealed with the promised Holy Spirit "at the moment of salvation" and then read **Rom. 8:9** "But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him [and is not a child of God]."

While reading through these passages not how **Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:21-22** and **Rom. 8:9** are connected and keep in mind that the sealing of the Holy Spirit is a mark of divine ownership.

MEETING 30

The Triune God - Trinity-One God in Three Persons

The Triune God
Trinity: One God in Three Persons – Eternal Union and the Believer's Inclusion Through Faith

1. **Brief recap from last meeting.**
   - We discussed how believers belong to Christ, are citizens of Heaven, have been brought into His family as a son or daughter and are now an heir with an inheritance.
   - We discussed what belonging to Christ, being a citizen of Heaven as a son and daughter with an inheritance means for the believer.
   - We dove into what it means to have a spiritual inheritance: Salvation, forgiveness, The Holy Spirit, righteousness, sonship, heirship, and Eternal life all "received" by faith.
   - We also discussed the transformation and new identity that comes with being born again.

2. **The work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are one God but three persons.**
   a) Let's start in the very beginning where all three persons of the Trinity were present in the creation of earth.
   b) **Gen. 1:1-2 (NKJV/AMP)** *"In the beginning God (The Father) created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God (The Holy Spirit) was hovering over the face of the waters."* - This is signifying the Holy Spirit's role in creation alongside the Father and Son. We know that the Son was there during creation because of what we are going to read in Jn. 1.
   c) The remaining verses in **Gen. 1:3-31** describe the six days of "creation and reconstruction" which prepared the earth for human habitation. In vs. 1 we see that God created the Heavens and the earth [by forming from nothing], <u>but it was without form</u>, <u>was void</u> and <u>water was over the surface of the earth</u>, hence the wording of "creation and reconstruction". During the six days of creation, God was "reconstructing" and "molding" the earth that He already made in the beginning (which was formless and void) into something that was habitable for humans. A quick recap of creation: (***see homework Gen 1:2 commentaries below**).
      - 1st day: **(Gen. 1:3 -5)** God created light and separated the light from the darkness, thus creating day and night.
      - 2nd day: **(Gen. 1:6-8)** God created the sky (Vault or Firmament) by separating the waters above from the waters below.
      - 3rd day: **(Gen. 1:9-13)** God made Land and Seas by separating the waters from dry ground and he made vegetation (plants and trees with seed bearing fruit).
      - 4th day: **(Gen. 1:14-19)** God created the Sun, moon, and stars.
      - 5th day: **(Gen. 1:20-23)** God made Sea creatures and birds.
      - 6th day: **(Gen. 1:24-31)** God made Land animals and Humans.
      - 7th day: **(Gen. 2:1-3)** God rested.

The Father and the Son's role in creation: Jn. 1:1-3 (AMP); Col. 1:15-17 (NLT/NKJ), Heb. 1:1-11 (NLT) (Through Christ, God created)

...And the Spirit of God (The Holy Spirit) was <u>hovering over</u> the face of the waters.

d) Hovering or Moving: The Hebrew word used here is "rachaph," which can be translated as "hover" or "move." This term suggests a gentle, nurturing, or protective action. It's used in a few places in the Old Testament, notably in Deuteronomy 32:11, where it describes an eagle fluttering over its young, suggesting care, protection, or preparation for creation.

e) *And the Spirit of God was hovering.* A short commentary on this: *"The "Spirit of God" (Hebrew "Ruach Elohim") is a powerful image of divine presence and activity. The word "ruach" can mean spirit, wind, or breath, indicating a dynamic and life-giving force. The verb "hovering" (Hebrew "rachaph") suggests a gentle, nurturing movement, like a bird caring for its young. This imagery conveys the idea of God's intimate involvement in creation, preparing to bring life and order. This foreshadows the Holy Spirit's role in the new creation through faith in Christ.*

f) This imagery reminds me of the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant, gently hovering over humanity and awaiting the moment someone believes in Christ and receives salvation. At that point, He begins His transformative creative work, making the new believer a brand-new creation. We must never forget how vital the Holy Spirit is in every believer's life—He is the one who is in us, guides us and empowers us through the ongoing process of sanctification.

3. The Lord God is one and is Three Persons

a) **God is One**:

- **Deut. 6:4 (ESV/NIV):** *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one."*
- **Isa. 44:6 (ESV)**: *"Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.'"*
- **Isa. 45:18 (NASB)** *" For this is what the Lord says, He who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it as a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited): "I am the Lord, and there is no one else."*
- **Isa. 46:9 (NLT)** - *"Remember the things I have done in the past. For I alone am God! I am God, and there is none like me."*
- **Mk. 12:29 (NLT)** – "*Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord."*
- **Eph. 4:6 (KJV)** - *"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."*
  (Full context "…The "in you all" at the end is referring to believers, the church Paul was writing to")

b) **God is Three Persons**:

- **1 Tim. 2:5 (AMP)** – "*For there is [only] one God, and [only] one Mediator between God and mankind, the Man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom [a substitutionary sacrifice to atone] for all, the testimony given at the right and proper time.*"
- **Mat. 28:19 (NLT)** (The Great Commission): *" Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."*
- **2 Cor. 13:14 (NKJV):** *"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."*
- **Jn. 1:1-2 (NIV)**: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning." ~ Read this in* ***NLT/AMP*** *as well.*
- **Jn. 10:30 (NKJV)**: *"I and my Father are one."*
- **Jn. 14:16-17 (NLT)**: *"And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive Him, because it isn't looking for Him and doesn't recognize Him. But you know Him, because He lives with you now and later will be in you."*

4. **The Word became flesh and dwelt among us**
   a) *"In the beginning [before all-time] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself."* Let's read through all of **Jn. 1:1-34 (AMPC)** and discuss.
   b) Let's focus on Christ coming into the world in **Jn. 1:9 (AMPC)** and Christ changing His position and role to become flesh and dwell among us in **Jn. 1:14 (AMPC)**. Discuss…
   c) So, in the beginning He (Christ), was with God before anything was made and then Christ left the Father in Heaven and came down to earth. He changes His role and position. Jesus Christ (the Son) was still fully God, however He became flesh and dwelt among us. The scriptures do not say the Father became flesh, it says the Son became flesh.
5. **Christ ascends to the Father and the Holy Spirit is sent to dwell in believers**
   a) Jesus told His disciples that it was better for Him to go away and be with the Father so the Holy Spirit could come and be in close fellowship with believers **Jn. 16:7 (AMP).** After Jesus ascends to the Father, He (Jesus) sent the Holy Spirit who is from the Father **Jn. 15:26 (NLT)**. This moment changed everything. When Jesus was on earth (Old Covenant) in the flesh He was "with" the disciples, in the New Covenant, Christ is "in" believers through faith and because of the Holy Spirit. (see **Jn. 14:16** again)
   b) Now, in the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit can "dwell **in** believers" which is what allows Christ to be in you. *"Christ in you, the hope of glory"* **Col. 1:27**. *"It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me"* **Gal. 2:20**. The Holy Spirit came so that "*Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith*" **Eph. 3:16-17**. "*Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?*" **2 Cor. 13:5**. "*Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God?*" **1 Cor. 6:19**. "*And Christ lives within you (the believer), so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God."* **Rom. 8:10.** In context: "you" the believer.

6. **The Believer is in Union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit** (he, we, us, they, you = believers)

a) **Jn. 14:20 (NLT):** *"When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my father, and you are in me, and I am in you."* - Jn 14:20 Expositor's Bible Commentary: "The coming of the Spirit to indwell believers would bring the realization that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united in purpose and operation and that there would be a new intimate relationship between them and believers."
b) **1 Cor. 6:17:** *"But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him."* At salvation the believer becomes joined with the Lord, in union with Him.
c) **1 Jn. 4:13:** *"By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit."* This union is only possible because of the Holy Spirit. The "us" is believers.
d) **Jn. 17:21-23:** *"that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me."* (In full context Jn. 17)
e) **Col. 3:3:** *"For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."*
f) **1 Jn. 4:13-16 (NLT):** *"And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us."* Read all of **1 Jn. 4:13-16 (NLT).**

Homework:

Believers bible Commentary for Gen. 1:2

1:2 One of several conservative interpretations of the Genesis account of creation, the creation-reconstruction view, says that between verses 1 and 2 a great catastrophe occurred, perhaps the fall of Satan (see Ezek. 28:11–19).3 This caused God's original, perfect creation to become without form and void (tōhû wāvōhû). Since God didn't create the earth waste and empty (see Isa. 45:18), only a mighty cataclysm could explain the chaotic condition of verse 2. Proponents of this view point out that the word translated was (hāyethā) could also be translated "had become."4 Thus the earth "had become waste and empty."

The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters, preparatory to the great creative and reconstructive acts to follow. The remaining verses describe the six days of creation and reconstruction which prepared the earth for human habitation.

Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): Old Testament for Gen. 1:2

2a Verse 2 describes the condition of the land just before God prepared it for the human race. The immediate context suggests that the land was "formless and empty " because "darkness" was over the land, and it was covered with water. It was in its "not-yet" state, i.e., not yet inhabitable for humankind (cf. Isa 45:18). Thus the remainder of the account portrays God's preparing the land for man and woman. When Israel disobeyed God, the land became again "uninhabitable", and the people were sent into exile: "I looked at the earth, and it was formless and empty and at the heavens and their light was gone. . . . the fruitful land was a desert" (Jer 4:23-26). In other words, the land after the Exile was depicted in the same state as it was before God's gracious preparation of the land in Creation. The land lies empty, dark, and barren, awaiting God's call to light and life.

2b The second part of v.2 describes the work of God, or the Spirit of God, in the initial stages of Creation, hovering over the "not-yet" world like an eagle "hovering" (cf. Dt 32:11) over its young with great concern. There is an interesting parallel between the Creation account (Ge 1) and the account of the construction of the tabernacle in Exodus. In both the work of God (Ge 2:2; Ex 31:5) is to be accomplished by the "Spirit of God." As God did his "work" of creation by means of the "Spirit of God," so Israel was to do their "work" by means of the "Spirit of God."

I also suggest digging into all the Gen. 1:2 commentaries on Bible Hub.

MEETING 31

Walking in Fullness of Life and Power Through Christ - Part 1

Walking in Fullness of Life and Power Through Christ – Part 1
Holy Spirit Power: Resurrection Life and Receiving Christ's Gifts Through Faith

1. **Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   - We explored how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each engage with us in unique ways.
   - We examined the doctrine of the Trinity, where God is one and is three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, highlighting their individual roles in both creation and the believer's life.
   - We discussed why Christ's ascension was essential for the Holy Spirit to come, and the significance of this for believers.
   - We also discussed the believer's union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2. **Walking in Fullness of Life and Power Through Christ with help from the Holy Spirit.**
   a) Continuing from our last discussion, I want to dive deeper into how believers have full access to the Holy Spirit who is in every believer from the moment they believed in Christ. This taps into the same power that resurrected Christ from the dead, empowering believers to live beyond their natural capabilities, into a life of spiritual victory and fulfillment.
   b) When we place our faith in Christ Jesus, we are called to walk in the newness of life. This transformation is not merely symbolic but a profound spiritual rebirth, as described by Paul when he speaks of being "raised with Christ" to "walk in newness of life." This new life is characterized by the resurrection power of Jesus, a power that not only raised Him from the dead but also operates within us to make us new creations. **Eph. 2:4-10 (AMPC); Rom. 6:4 (AMPC).** *"He made us alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ"* The Holy Spirit gives us full access to the *"glorious [power] of the Father"* that raised Christ from the dead.
   c) It is the same power that enables God to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine. This divine power (the Holy Spirit) at work within us, empowers us to live beyond our natural capabilities, into a life of spiritual victory and fulfillment. **Eph. 3:20 (AMP).**
   d) Let's read Paul's beautiful prayer for believers in Ephesians. The Holy Spirit empowers believers to understand and fulfill the prayer Paul makes in **Eph. 3:16-19 (NASB/AMP)**. *"Strengthened and spiritually energized with power through His Spirit, fully capable of comprehending His love, filled up to all the fullness of God."* This is only achievable by yielding to the Holy Spirit.
   e) **Col. 2:9-10 (NASB)** "For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in Him, who is the head of all rule and authority." - Emphasizes that believers are filled in Christ who embodies the fullness of God.
   f) **Col. 1:19 (AMP)** *"For it pleased the Father for all the fullness [of deity—the sum total of His essence, all His perfection, powers, and attributes] to dwell [permanently] in Him (the Son)."* This indicates that the fullness of God dwells in Christ, which believers partake in.
   g) **2 Pet. 1:4 (ESV)** *"His divine power has granted to us [believers] all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them <u>you may become partakers of the divine nature</u>, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire."*

3. **Receiving Christ's Gifts through faith - When we believe in Christ we receive the following.**

Let's read through and discuss the following scriptures:

- **He gives us (believers) His peace**: not as the world gives, ensuring an inner tranquility that withstands all storms (**Jn. 14:27**).
- **He gives us (believers) His joy**: His joy remains in us, making our joy complete (**Jn. 15:11**).
- **He gives us His glory**: We (believers) share in His glory which He gave that we might be one as He and the Father are one (**Jn. 17:22**).
- **He gives us (believers) His love**: His love is poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (**John 17:26; Rom. 5:5**).
- **Believers have the promise of joy and strength from the Lord: The joy of the Lord is our strength, shield, stronghold, song, and refuge**. **(Neh. 8:10; Psa. 28:7; Psa. 16:11; Isa. 12:2-3)**
- **He gives us (believers) His Spirit, the Holy Spirit**: The Spirit Himself is our guarantee, the seal of our inheritance until redemption's fulfillment (**Eph. 1:13-14**). The Holy Spirit is called "The Promise" **Eph. 1:13-14; Lk. 24:49; Acts 2:38-39**. The promise of the Holy Spirit to be received through faith.
- **He gives us (believers) new abundant and eternal life**: Abundant life we can experience now here on earth and eternal life we can experience with Him forever! (**Jn. 5:24, 10:10**).
- **He makes us alive together with Christ:** Raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus **(Eph. 2:5-6).**
- When we believe in Christ we receive His <u>peace, joy, love, and power!</u>

Homework: The believer's relationship and union with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

- **Christ in us** - Jn. 14:20-23; Gal. 2:20, 3:26-28; Eph. 3:17; Col. 1:26-28; 2 Cor. 13:5; 1 Jn. 4:13
- **Us in Christ**: 1 Jn. 4:13, 15 (NLT), Eph. 2:5-6 (AMP)
- **The abundant life** - Jn. 10:10, 2 Cor. 3:6, Jn. 6:63, 1 Cor. 15:22 (AMP)
- **Union with Christ** - Eph. 2:6 (NLT), 1 Cor. 6:17 (NASB), Eph. 3:16-18 (AMP), Col. 3:3 (NLT)
- **The Holy Spirit Dwells in Those Who Believe in Christ** - 1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19-20, 2 Cor. 6:16, Ezek. 36:27, 2 Tim. 1:14, Eph. 5:18, Rom. 8:9, 8:11, Jn. 16:13, Gal. 3:5-8, 5:18, 1 Jn. 2:27 (NLT)
- **The kingdom of God within you!** - Lk. 17:20-21 (NKJV)

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Deeper Study:

Note: Below is an A.I. response to my challenging question and is pulling from the entire text of the Bible in these versions AMP, AMPC, ESV, KJV, NASB, NIV, as well as many commentaries, it is always wise to dig into the Word of God yourself and read the scriptures in full context while allowing the Holy Spirit to teach you as you dive in. Ask this same question yourself and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal truth as you dig into the word for the answers. Use the question and answer below for deeper study.

Question:
Eph. 2:5 *"Even when we were dead (slain) by [our own] shortcomings and trespasses, He made us alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ."* (AMPC). How does this scripture reconcile with unbelievers not being in fellowship and in union with Christ because of unbelief and the idea of fellowship with Christ starting at salvation through faith? Such as: John 1:12; 3:18, 36; Rom. 5:1; 8:9; 1 Cor. 1:9; 6:17; 2 Cor. 6:14-15; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:12-13; 3:17; Col. 1:27; 1 Jn. 1:3, 6-7; 2:23; 5:12;

Answer:
Ephesians 2:5, in the Amplified Classic Edition (AMPC), emphasizes God's merciful initiative: while humanity was spiritually dead due to sin, He sovereignly acted to make believers alive in vital union and fellowship with Christ. This "making alive" is not applied to unbelievers in their state of unbelief but describes the transformative moment of salvation for those who respond in faith (as clarified in Ephesians 2:8–9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith"). The verse highlights the prior condition of death in sin ("even when we were dead"), but the union and fellowship begin at the point of believing and receiving Christ, aligning seamlessly with the provided scriptures. For instance, passages like John 1:12 and Romans 5:1 show access to sonship and peace with God through faith; Romans 8:9 and 1 John 5:12 affirm that without the Spirit of Christ (received at salvation), one does not belong to Him; and Ephesians 2:12–13 contrasts the pre-faith alienation of unbelievers with the nearness brought by Christ's blood upon belief. Thus, Ephesians 2:5 celebrates God's grace awakening the dead to life in Christ exclusively through faith, without implying pre-faith union for unbelievers.

MEETING 32

Walking in Fullness of Life and Power Through Christ - Part 2

Walking in Fullness of Life and Power Through Christ – Part 2
Holy Spirit Power: Indwelling Resurrection Power and Clothing Yourself with Christ

1. **Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed…**
   - We talked about the Holy Spirit that every believer has full access to which allows us to tap into the same power that resurrected Christ from the dead, empowering us to live beyond our natural capabilities.
   - We talked about how when we believed in Christ, we were "*made alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ*" and *were "delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ's salvation."* Through faith in Christ, we were *"recreated in Christ Jesus, [born anew] that we may do those good works which God (planned beforehand) for us… and* <u>*that we should walk in them"*</u> **Eph. 2:4-10 (AMPC).** and *"We were buried with Him into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious [power] of the Father, so we too might [habitually] live and behave in newness of life"* **Rom. 6:4 (AMPC).**
   - We also talked about how becoming *partakers of Christ's salvation*, is what allows us to: *"become partakers of the divine nature"* **2 Pet. 1:4 (ESV).** *But we must note the word "may" in this passage." you "*<u>*may*</u>*" become partakers of the divine nature." Let's read through* **2 Pet. 1:4 (ESV)** again. The word "may" indicate a choice. This is where our intentionality with our walk with God comes into play. We may choose to partake; we may choose to walk out this newness of life. Let's dive deeper into walking out this newness of life.
   - We have been made alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ, we <u>have been</u> delivered from judgment and have been made partakers of Christ's salvation, we <u>have been</u> recreated in Christ Jesus [born anew] and <u>are now</u> in Him and He is in us. The same spirit that raised Christ from the dead <u>now dwells within us</u>, we have access to this same power, so let's walk in this power. How do we do this?

2. **Walking out this New Life**
   a) We discussed in our last meeting how Christ gives believers His Joy, Peace, love, Holy Spirit, and new life; Abundant and eternal life. We also noted the phrase *"My peace I give you; not as the world gives, do I give to you."* In **Jn. 14:27**. He also added *"Do not let your hearts be troubled, nor fearful."* We need to remember what we have received from Christ because of our faith in Him and that He does not give as the world give.
   b) **Jn. 14:27** Believer's Bible Commentary - *"A person who is about to die usually writes a last will and testament in which he leaves his possessions to his loved ones. Here the Lord Jesus was doing that very thing. However, He did not give material things but something that money could not buy—peace, inward peace of conscience that arises from a sense of pardoned sin and of reconciliation with God. Christ can give it because He purchased it with His own blood at Calvary. It is not given as the world gives—sparingly, selfishly, and for a short time. His gift of peace is forever. Why then should a Christian be troubled or afraid?"* This is speaking of the peace that Christ gives. I would add to this, His gift of: <u>Joy, Peace, love, Holy Spirit, and new abundant now and eternal life ever after with Him.</u>

c) Believers have received all the gifts listed above and now "have the opportunity" to choose to live out these gifts with the Holy Spirit's help. There are practical steps we should take to experience and truly live out what is described above. Yes, we have received these blessings, but we must also believe and actively live out this new life. This lines up with *"work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."* **Phil. 2:12 (NASB/AMPC).** But we also cannot leave out vs. **13** *"for it is God who is at work in you, both to desire and to work for His good pleasure."* God is at work in us believers through the Holy Spirit's presence and power in our lives. We have full access to this power. Jesus called the Holy Spirit the helper for a reason. He is in us to help us. We need to allow the Holy Spirit to help us and work through. We need to trust the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Christ) and not resist Him. The Holy Spirit is mentioned as "the Spirit of Christ" and as the "Spirit of God" in **Rom. 8:9**, **Gal. 4:6** and others.
What does it mean to *'not resist the Holy Spirit,'* and how can we achieve that? Discuss…

d) We are to intentionally make sure we are properly dressed.
- **Rom. 13:12 (NLT)** *"The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So, remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living."*
- **Rom. 13:12 (AMPC)** *"The night is far gone and the day is almost here. Let us then drop (fling away) the works and deeds of darkness and put on the [full] armor of light."*
- Note that this scripture is telling us what we must remove before we put on the shining armor of right living. We do not want to put on the armor of right living over or on top of our dark deeds (dirty clothes). We must remove the dirty clothes first! Think of being dressed in sweaty, dirty, and smelly clothes and then putting on new fresh clean clothes on top of your nasty clothes. This would not be reasonable or wise and the dirty clothes would still be there hidden underneath and would soon ruin (corrupt) the new clothes that have been put on over the filth.
- **Rom. 13:12** Believers Bible Commentary *"The present age is like a night of sin that has just about run its course. The day of eternal glory is about to dawn for believers. This means that we should cast off all the filthy garments of worldliness—that is, everything associated with unrighteousness and evil. And we should put on the armor of light, which means the protective covering of a holy life. The pieces of armor are detailed in **Eph 6:14–18**. They describe the elements of true Christian character."*
- **Rom. 13:14 (NLT)** *"Put on (clothe yourself with) the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."*
- **Gal. 3:27 (NLT)** *"And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes."*
- **Eph. 4:22-24 (NLT)** *"Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy."*
- **Eph. 6:11 (NLT)** *"Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil."*

- **Col. 3:10 (NLT)** *"Put on your new nature (NKJV New Man) and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him."*
- **Col. 3:12 (NLT)** *"You must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience."*

- **1 Peter 5:5 (ESV)** *"Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."* Also, read this in **AMPC**.
- **Lk. 24:49 (ESV)** *"And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city* <u>*until you are clothed (equipped) with power*</u> *from on high."*
- **Ps. 30:11-12 (NLT)** <u>Clothed with joy</u>! *"You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing.* <u>*You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy*</u>*, that I might sing praises to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever!"* Amen!

e) This all-leads to being eternally properly dressed. i.e. being more dressed!
   - **1 Cor. 15:53-54 (ESV) – "***For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality."* Read this in the **AMPC**.
   - **2 Cor. 5:2-4 (ESV)** *"For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, …not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life."*
   - **Isa. 61:10 (AMPC)** *"He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."*

f) All of what is listed above is possible because of the believers' new relationship and union with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the new creation with a new nature.

g) In our next study, we will be diving into what it means <u>to put on this new nature</u> as noted in **Eph. 4:22-24**.

Homework: Study in full context all of the scriptures referring to clothing yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ; put on Christ, like putting on new clothes; Put on your new nature; Put on ALL of God's armor; Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts; clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience; Be clothed (equipped) with power from on high; He has taken away my clothes of mourning and has clothed me with joy **Rom. 13:14, Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:10, 12; 1 Peter 5:5; Lk. 24:49 (NLT, ESV, AMPC)**.

Take time to slowly read and meditate on these key Scriptures in their full context. Ask the Holy Spirit to make them come alive for you.

MEETING 33

Walking in Fullness of Life and Power Through Christ - Part 3

Walking in Fullness of Life and Power Through Christ – Part 3
Holy Spirit Power: Renewing the Mind and Putting on the New Nature

1. **Brief recap from last two meetings**
   - Two meetings ago in (Part 1) we talked about <u>receiving Christ's gifts through faith</u>. Believers receive: <u>His Peace, His Joy, His Love, the right to become a child of God, The Holy Spirit and new abundant life and the promises to partake of His divine nature to implant (infuse) the word into their souls</u>. **Jn. 5:24, 10:10, 14:22, 27, 15:11, 17:22, 26; Rom. 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14, Gal. 3:14; Jn. 1:12, 10:10; 2 Pet. 1:3-4 & Jam. 1:21**. We also discussed how Christ gives not as the world gives. **Jn. 14:27** *"Not as the world gives do I give to you."* What the world gives is temporary (The world gives sparingly, selfishly, and for a short time). Believers Bible commentary: *"What Christ gives is eternal. What Christ gives is something that money could not buy—peace, inward peace of conscience that arises from a sense of pardoned sin and of reconciliation with God. Christ can give it because He purchased it with His own blood at Calvary."*
   - Last meeting (Part 2) we talked about <u>being properly dressed</u>: Clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ; put on Christ, like putting on new clothes; Put on your new nature; Put on ALL of God's armor; Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts; clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience; Be clothed (equipped) with power from on high; He has taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy. **Rom. 13:14, 6:11; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10, 12; 1 Peter 5:5; Lk. 24:49 (NLT, ESV, AMPC)**.
   - We also talked about how this leads to being <u>eternally properly dressed</u>: The believer's perishable body must put on the imperishable, the believer's mortal body must put on immortality. The believer groans and longs to put on their heavenly dwelling, to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Our eternal hope is to be clothed with the garments of salvation. **1 Cor. 15:53-54; 2 Cor. 5:2-4; Isa. 61:10 (NLT, ESV, AMPC).**

2. **Walking out this New Life (Continued)**
   a) In our last meeting we left off with **Eph. 4:22-24** which talks about <u>putting on our new nature</u>. Let's dive into what this new nature means for the believer.
   b) Let's read **Eph.4:22-25 (NASB/AMPC)**. ~ Discuss.
   c) <u>*Eph. 4:22-23 Believers Bible commentary*</u> – *"22 In the school of Christ we learn that at the time of conversion we put away our old man which grows corrupt through deceitful lusts. The old man means <u>all that a person was before his conversion</u>, all that he was as a child of Adam. …As far as his position in Christ is concerned, <u>the believer's old man was crucified and buried with Christ</u>. <u>In practice, the believer should reckon it to be dead</u>. We have put off the old man once for all. 23 A second lesson the Ephesians learned at the feet of Jesus was that they were being renewed in the spirit of their mind. This points to a complete about-face in their thinking, a change from mental impurity to holiness. The Spirit of God influences the thought processes to reason from God's standpoint, not from that of unsaved men. 24 The third lesson is that they had put on the new man once for all. The new man is what a believer is in Christ. It is the new*

creation, in which old things have passed away and all things have become new (2 Cor. 5:17). This new kind of man is according to God, that is, created in His likeness. And it manifests itself in true righteousness and holiness. Righteousness means right conduct toward others. Holiness is "piety (reverence) towards God, which puts Him in His place.

d) Now I want to reconcile **Eph. 4:22** which is present, i.e. do this. ("Strip yourselves of your former nature [put off and discard your old unrenewed self], … And put on the new nature (the regenerate self) created in God's image. With **Rom. 6:6** and **Col. 3:9-11** which says this happened when you believed in Christ. *"Our old self was crucified with Him [and nailed to the cross] {past tense}, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin. … you (believer) have {past tense} stripped off the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self, which is being renewed"* Let's read through **Rom. 6:6 (NASB/AMPC)** and **Col. 3:9-11 (NASB/AMPC).**

e) Item "d" above is similar to a previous study we did (meeting 19), where we talked about Sanctification. At salvation we where sanctified, separated and made holy and we are being sanctified as well, being conformed into the image of Christ. An on-going process. It happened at salvation, is our position in Christ and it is also an ongoing process. It is the same with putting off our old nature and putting on our new nature. It was done at salvation, is our position in Christ and is an ongoing process. ~ See commentary below that dives deeper into this.

   * **Added for deeper study**.

f) This also lines up with **Rom. 13:12 (NASB/AMPC)** that we talked about in our last meeting: "*The night is far gone and the day is almost here. Let us then drop (fling away) the works and deeds of darkness and put on the [full] armor of light*." In **Rom. 13:12** we are told to remove, drop, fling away our deeds of darkness before we put on the armor of light. In **Eph. 4:22-24** we are told to throw off our old sinful nature and our former way of life, to strip ourselves of our former nature prior to putting on our new nature. ~ How do we "put on our new nature? Through faith in Christ. First, we must receive this new nature through faith in Christ. Let's read through these scriptures that talk about receiving through faith: **Jn. 1:12 (AMPC); 2 Cor. 5:15(NLT); Acts 10:43 (AMPC); Rom. 5:17(NLT); Col. 2:6(NASB); Gal. 3:13-14(NKJV); 1 Peter 1:9 (AMPC)**.

g) So, after receiving salvation through faith in Christ and the new nature that comes with it, we then must "put on this new nature" mentioned in **Eph. 4:22-24**. So how do we "strip ourselves of our old nature" and "put on the new nature"? Notice that in **Eph. 4:22-24** we have **vs 23** which is in-between stripping off the old and putting on the new which says: *"And be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind [having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude]"* The renewing of our mind has a lot to do with putting on our new nature.

h) **2 Cor. 5:15** that we read above has a good answer as to what this new nature is, or rather what the result of this new nature is: **2 Cor. 5:15 (NLT)**: *"He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them."* New nature = no longer living for self but living for Christ – Having a new nature with new desires.

i) At the last meeting we talked about being **properly dressed**, now I want to talk about being **properly focused**. Being properly dressed and properly focused is one of the ways that we can "put on our new nature".

- **Heb. 12:1-2 (ESV/AMPC)** – *"Lay aside every weight, run with endurance and looking to Jesus. - Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus"*
- **Col. 3:1-2 (NIV/AMPC)** – *"Set your hearts on things above, Set your minds on things above." Also read this in* **-** *set your minds and keep them set on what is above"*.
- **Mat. 6:33-34 (KJV/AMP)** – *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God. … all these things will be given to you also"* – Notice that right after this in vs 34 it talks about not being worried or anxious. Seeking first the Kingdom can help us with worry and anxiety.
- **2 Cor. 4:18 (NLT)** – *"Don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen - but the things which are invisible are everlasting and imperishable."*- This is speaking of priorities. Where are our priorities?
- **Prov. 4:23-27 (AMPC)** – *"Let your eyes look directly ahead [toward the path of moral courage]. And let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you [toward the path of integrity]."*
- **2 Cor.10:5 (NKJV) "**…*bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"* We are going to dive deeper into **2 Cor. 10:3-6** (spiritual warfare) in our next meeting.
- **Ps. 16:8 (ESV)** – "set the Lord always before you."
- A good summation of **Psalm 16** – "Psalm 16 is a confident expression of trust and joy in God's presence and provision. David declares God as his ultimate refuge and source of goodness, rejecting false gods and delighting in the faithful. <u>He celebrates the security and guidance God provides, which keep him steadfast</u>. The psalm culminates in gratitude for God's constant presence and the promise of eternal joy and life in His path, hinting at resurrection hope. <u>It's a personal, hopeful reflection on **choosing God above all and finding unshakable satisfaction in Him**</u>."

Conclusion: We need to be intentional regarding what we are told to put off and to put on. At the same time, it is the Holy Spirit that produces fruit in us that helps us with "putting off and putting on", if we let Him. **Gal. 5:22-23 (AMPC)** *"But the fruit of <u>the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is</u> love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness, Gentleness (meekness, humility), self-control (self-restraint, continence). Against such things there is no law [that can bring a charge]."* I am not producing this fruit, it is the Holy Spirit in me that produces this fruit, however I can resist the Holy Spirit and not allow Him to produce this fruit in my life. This fruit in our lives is what can enable us to "daily put off" the old self and "put on" our new nature, even though we have received our new nature when we believed in Christ.

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Homework:

We should be praying daily: *"Holy Spirit do your work in and through me. Help me to not resist you from producing this fruit in my life. Help me to be humble to receive this fruit with continual repentance (and greater humility). Help me to daily put on my new nature and know my true position in Christ which is seated with Him in heavenly places."*

The phrases "put off" and "put on" are often used in the context of a transformation from the sinful nature to a life that reflects Christ's character. These instructions are directed toward believers who are called to live out their new identity in Christ. Some passages (e.g., **Col. 3:5, Jam. 1:21**) use terms like "put to death" or "put away" instead of "put off," but the intent is similar, emphasizing the rejection of sinful behaviors.

The "put on" commands often imply adopting Christlike qualities or relying on God's provision (e.g., the armor of God, love, or the new self).

Here is a handy putt off/put on list:

Put Off the Old Self, Put On the New Self
Put Off: The old self (or old man), which is corrupt through deceitful desires.
Put On: The new self (or new man), created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
Scripture: **Ephesians 4:22–24**

Put Off Falsehood, Put On Truthfulness
Put Off: Falsehood (lying).
Put On: Speaking the truth in love.
Scripture: Ephesians 4:25

Put Off Anger, Put On Kindness and Forgiveness
Put Off: Anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk.
Put On: Compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and forgiveness.
Scripture: Colossians 3:8, 12–13

Put Off Bitterness and Evil Behavior, Put On Love and Unity
Put Off: Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and all malice.
Put On: Kindness, tenderheartedness, forgiveness, and love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
Scripture: Ephesians 4:31–32

Put Off Filthiness, Put On the Armor of God
Put Off: All filthiness and rampant wickedness.
Put On: The word of God (implied as righteousness and truth) and the full armor of God (in a related context).
Scripture: James 1:21

Put Off Sexual Immorality and Impurity, Put On Holiness
Put Off: Sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness (idolatry).
Put On: A heart of holiness and devotion to God (implied through sanctification).
Scripture: Col. 3:5

Put Off the Works of Darkness, Put On the Armor of Light
Put Off: The works of darkness (sinful deeds like orgies, drunkenness, sexual immorality, sensuality, quarreling, and jealousy).
Put On: The armor of light and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Scripture: Rom. 13:12–14

One scripture that brings out this intentionality I am talking about in this study is in **2 Pet. 1:5-8 (AMPC)**. You will notice the phrase: "exercising your faith to develop". This is intentionality. Putting your faith into practice. 2 Pet. 1:5-8 (AMPC) summarized: *"...adding your diligence [to the divine promises], employ every effort in exercising your faith to develop virtue: [exercising] Virtue to develop Knowledge, [exercising] knowledge to develop self-control, [exercising] self-control to develop steadfastness, [exercising] steadfastness to develop brotherly affection and [exercising] brotherly affection to develop Christian love."* We have gone over this passage as a group many times in the past but it is very applicable to this study.

All of this is intentionality. Things we are to do, to develop Christian character while at the same time allowing the Holy Spirit to help us with this process of sanctification, this process of "being comforted into the image of Christ". Conformed and transformed into the image of Christ:
Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:10; Gal. 4:19; Gal. 4:19.

"Conformed" in **Rom. 8:29** is summorphos (Greek), meaning to be shaped or fashioned into the same form. "Transformed" in **2 Cor. 3:18** and **Rom. 12:2** is metamorphoō (Greek), implying a change in form or nature, often used for the process of sanctification. Both terms support the idea of becoming like Christ, but "conformed" (as in **Rom. 8:29**) is more specific to taking on His image.

We believers are progressively being transformed into His image - **2 Cor. 3:18 (AMP)** *"...are progressively being transformed into His image from [one degree of] glory to [even more] glory, which comes from the Lord, [who is] the Spirit."*

... and then there is the ultimate transformation of new bodies: **Phil. 3:20-21**.

This subject of being transformed can be a whole separate future study.

2 Cor.10:4-6 (NKJV) – *"4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled."*

Vs. 6 seems a bit harsh: *"and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled."*

Your homework is to dig into **vs 6** in full context and have something to share about this during our next meeting. What was Paul communicating to the Corinth church in this verse? Hint: you may have to read all of **1 and 2 Cor.** for full context of **vs 6**.

In our next meeting we are going to explore what being a new creation really means (**Rom. 6:6, 8:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:9-11; 1 Pet. 1:3-4; Rom. 13:12; Eph. 4:17-32**)

This section is added for deeper study.

Reconciling Ephesians 4:22 with Rom. 6:6 - Commentary pulled from several commentaries, including my own, see references/citations below.

Key Points

- Ephesians 4:22, which tells believers to "put off" their old self, aligns with other scriptures where the old nature is described as already crucified with Christ at salvation.
- There's a distinction between the positional truth (old self crucified at salvation) and the practical application (continually putting off the old self in daily life).
- The scriptural evidence leans toward understanding this as a process of sanctification, where believers live out their new identity in Christ through ongoing effort and the Holy Spirit's power.

Direct Answer

Overview

Ephesians 4:22, from the Amplified Bible, instructs believers to "strip off" their old, unrenewed self, which is corrupted by sinful desires. This might seem to conflict with other scriptures, like Romans 6:6, that say the old self was already crucified with Christ when we believed. However, these ideas can work together. At salvation, our old nature is positionally dealt with, but we still need to actively "put it off" in our daily lives as part of growing in faith.

Positional Truth vs. Practical Application

When we believe in Christ, scriptures like Romans 6:6 (NIV) tell us, "our old self was crucified with him," meaning it's already dealt with in God's eyes. This is a one-time event at salvation. But Ephesians 4:22 calls us to continually "put off" this old self, suggesting an ongoing process. This makes sense because, even though our old nature is crucified, we still face temptations and need to choose to live out our new identity in Christ.

The Role of Sanctification

This ongoing process is part of sanctification, where we become more like Christ over time. For example, Romans 8:13 (NIV) says, "if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live," showing it's

an active, daily effort, empowered by the Holy Spirit. Colossians 3:9-10 (NIV) also says we "have taken off" the old self but are "being renewed," highlighting both the past action and ongoing growth.

Conclusion

There's no real conflict here. As per scripture in full context, the old self is crucified at salvation, but we must continually put it off and put on the new self as part of our Christian walk, guided by the Holy Spirit and the renewal of our minds.

Survey Note: Detailed Analysis of Ephesians 4:22 and Related Scriptures

This section provides a comprehensive examination of Ephesians 4:22 and its reconciliation with other scriptures that describe the believer's old nature as already crucified with Christ. The analysis draws on biblical texts, theological insights, and commentaries to ensure a thorough understanding, expanding on the direct answer with additional details and context.

Context of Ephesians 4:22

The user referenced Ephesians 4:22 from the Amplified Bible, which states: "Strip yourselves of your former nature [put off and discard your old unrenewed self] which characterized your previous manner of life and becomes corrupt through lusts and desires that spring from delusion." This verse is part of Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 4:17-24, where he contrasts the believer's former pagan life with their new identity in Christ. The imperative "put off" suggests an active, ongoing action, implying that believers must continually reject their old, sinful nature.

To understand how this aligns with other scriptures, we first need to identify texts that describe the old nature as already dealt with at salvation, such as being "buried" or "nailed to the cross." These concepts are rooted in the believer's union with Christ, particularly in His death and resurrection.

Cross-References and Their Implications

Several scriptures highlight the past tense aspect of the old self being crucified with Christ. These include:

- **Romans 6:6 (NIV)**: "For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin." This verse indicates that at the moment of salvation, the believer's old self (or old nature) is positionally crucified with Christ, breaking sin's dominion.
- **Romans 6:11 (NIV)**: "In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." Here, Paul instructs believers to reckon or consider themselves dead to sin, based on the reality of Romans 6:6. This is a mental and spiritual acknowledgment of their new status.
- **Colossians 3:9-10 (NIV)**: "Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator." This passage uses past tense ("have taken off") for the old self but present continuous ("being renewed") for the new self, suggesting both a completed action and an ongoing process.

- **Galatians 5:24 (NIV)**: "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." This again uses past tense, indicating that at salvation, the believer's sinful nature is crucified, aligning with the positional truth.
- **Romans 8:13 (NIV)**: "For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live." This verse introduces an ongoing action, where believers, empowered by the Spirit, must actively "put to death" sinful practices, complementing the positional reality.

These scriptures collectively suggest that while the old self is crucified with Christ at salvation, there is also an ongoing responsibility for believers to live out this truth in their daily lives.

Reconciling the Tenses: Positional Truth vs. Practical Application

The reconciliation between Ephesians 4:22 and the above scriptures lies in distinguishing between **positional truth** and **practical application**, often referred to as justification and sanctification in theological terms.

- **Positional Truth**: At the moment of salvation, when a person believes in Christ, their old self is crucified with Him (Romans 6:6, Galatians 5:24). This is a legal or positional reality in God's eyes, where the believer is declared dead to sin and alive to God (Romans 6:11). This is why Colossians 3:9 says, "you have taken off your old self" (past tense), reflecting a completed action at conversion.
- **Practical Application**: Despite this positional reality, believers still live in a fallen world with residual sinful tendencies. Ephesians 4:22's command to "put off" the old self reflects the need for ongoing action in the believer's sanctification process. This is not a contradiction but an extension of the positional truth into daily life. For example, Romans 8:13 calls believers to "put to death the misdeeds of the body" by the Spirit, indicating an active, continuous effort. Similarly, Colossians 3:10 describes the new self as "being renewed," highlighting an ongoing transformation.

This dual aspect is further supported by commentaries. For instance, a commentary from Bible Study Tools notes: "It is clear here that Paul is indeed saying that, like a tattered old coat, we should take off our old self and put on the new and far-improved one — our 'Jesus cloak.' We do this by striving to be like Jesus, our God-given role model." This imagery underscores the ongoing nature of putting off the old and putting on the new.

Another commentary from GotQuestions.org explains: "Paul commands the Ephesians to stop living as the old man and instead put on the new man. He points to the means for putting on the new self in Ephesians 4:23, namely, that one be renewed in the spirit of the mind." This renewal of the mind, as also seen in Romans 12:1-2, is central to living out the new identity, bridging the gap between positional truth and practical application.

Theological Framework: Sanctification and the Role of the Holy Spirit

The ongoing process of putting off the old self and putting on the new is part of sanctification, the believer's progressive growth in holiness. This is not achieved by human effort alone but is empowered by the Holy Spirit. For example, Romans 8:13 explicitly states, "if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body," emphasizing the Spirit's role. A commentary from A Clay Jar states: "Paul calls on us to do a complete makeover. To put off the old self that is corrupted. And to put on a new self. A self created by God to be holy," reinforcing the idea of a Spirit-enabled transformation.

This process is also described as a daily choice. A commentary from Theology in the Dirt notes: "It is our work in walking worthy to be about the work of putting off the old self that will seek to grumble and rise from its

dead state to kill us," suggesting that the old self, though crucified, can still influence believers if not actively resisted.

Practical Examples and Illustrations

Paul provides practical examples of what putting off the old self looks like. For instance, Ephesians 4:25 (NIV) says, "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor," using the same Greek verb "put off" (apotithemi) as in verse 22. This illustrates that putting off the old self involves rejecting specific sinful practices, such as lying, and embracing new, Christ-like behaviors. Similarly, Colossians 3:8-9 lists practices like anger, wrath, and malice to be put away, reinforcing the practical application of the positional truth.

Table: Comparison of Key Scriptures

Scripture Reference (NIV)	**Key Idea**	**Tense**	**Positional or Practical**
Romans 6:6	Old self crucified with Christ	Past	Positional
Romans 6:11	Count yourselves dead to sin	Present	Practical
Colossians 3:9-10	Taken off old self, being renewed	Past/Present	Positional/Practical
Galatians 5:24	Crucified the flesh	Past	Positional
Romans 8:13	Put to death misdeeds by Spirit	Present	Practical
Ephesians 4:22 (AMP)	Put off old unrenewed self	Present	Practical

This table highlights the interplay between past (positional) and present (practical) actions, showing how Ephesians 4:22 fits within the broader biblical narrative.

Conclusion

In summary, Ephesians 4:22’s command to "put off" the old self does not conflict with scriptures that describe the old nature as already crucified with Christ. Instead, it reflects the ongoing process of sanctification, where believers must actively live out their new identity in Christ. The old self is positionally crucified at salvation (Romans 6:6, Galatians 5:24), but believers must continually reject its influence and embrace the new self through the power of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:22-24, Romans 8:13). This dual reality ensures a holistic understanding of the believer’s transformation, balancing theological truth with practical application.

Key Citations

- Ephesians 4:22 commentary on putting off the old self Bible Study Tools
- What does it mean to put off the old man GotQuestions.org
- Put Off the Old Self Ephesians 4:22-24 A Clay Jar
- Ephesians 4:17-24 Put off the old self and put on the new self Theology in the Dirt
- Taking Off the Old Self and Putting On the New Self Theology of Work
- Colossians 3:9-10 lying life conversion transformation DailyVerses.net
- Romans 6 NIV Bible YouVersion
- What does Romans chapter 6 mean BibleRef.com
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- Romans 6 NIV & NVI Biblica
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- Colossians 3:9–10 NIV Biblia
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- Colossians 3:9-10 Do not lie to each other Bible Study Tools
- What Does It Mean to “Put on the New Self” Bible Study Tools
- Ephesians 4:17–24 Put off the Old Self Be Renewed Put on the New Self SATS
- What Does It Mean to “Put Off the Old Self” and “Put On the New Self” Faith Culture Medium
- 3-7 My “Old Self” and My “New Self” Disciplers Tool
- What does it mean when Paul says to put off the old self and put on the new self eBible
- Put on the New Person Desiring God
- Romans 6 Wikipedia

MEETING 34

Walking in Fullness of Life and Power Through Christ - Part 4

Walking in Fullness of Life and Power Through Christ – Part 4
Weapons of Warfare: Spiritual Power for Obedience and Confronting False Teachings

1. **Brief recap from last two meetings**
   - We dove into **Eph. 4:17-32 (Living as children of light)** which talked about ridding yourselves of the old self, being renewed in your minds and putting on the new self. We talked about "putting on the new nature." In this study we are going to dive deeper into the new nature a believer receives at salvation and what it means to put on this new nature. (***this may be part 5***)
   - We talked about being properly focused which we will touch on again in this study.
   - We talked about being intentional in regards to what we are told to "put off" and to "put on." I have attached some good homework on this.

2. **Walking out this New Life (Continued)**
   a) Two meetings ago we talked about being **properly dressed**, last meeting we talked about being **properly focused**. Being properly dressed and properly focused is one of the ways that we can "put on our new nature." Let's review the properly focused scriptures again and then I want to focus on the last item on this list: **2 Cor.10:4-6.**
      - **Heb. 12:1-2 (ESV)** – *"**Lay aside** every weight, run with endurance and looking to Jesus."*
      - **Col. 3:1-2 (NIV)** – *"**Set your hearts** on things above, **set your minds** on things above."*
      - **Mat. 6:33 (KJV)** – *"**Seek ye first** the kingdom of God."*
      - **2 Cor. 4:18 (NLT)** – *"**Don't look** at the troubles we can see now; rather, we **fix our gaze** on things that cannot be seen."*
      - **Ps. 16:8 (ESV)** – *"**Set** the Lord always before you."*
      - **Prov. 4:25-27 (AMPC)** – *"**Let your eyes look directly ahead** [toward the path of moral courage]. And **let your gaze be fixed** straight in front of you [toward the path of integrity]."*
      - **1 Cor. 15:58 (NKJV)** *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, **be steadfast**, **immovable**, always abounding in the work of the Lord, **knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord**."*
      - **1 Cor. 16:13-14 (AMP)** *"Be on guard; **stand firm in your faith** [in God, respecting His precepts and keeping your doctrine sound]. Act like [mature] men and be courageous; be strong."*
      - **Eph. 6:13 (NASB)** *"Therefore, **take up** the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist on the evil day, and having done everything, to **stand firm**."* **(NLT)** *"**put on every piece of God's armor**."* **(NIV)** *"**Put on** the full armor."*
      - ** **2 Cor. 10:4-5 (NKJV)** – *"For the **weapons** of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, **bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ**"*. ~ First: What are the weapons spoken of here?

      The verse itself does not explicitly list the weapons, but commentaries and related

scriptures provide insight into their nature. Reading the scriptures in full context suggests the weapons are spiritual, not physical, and include: **The Word of God**, **Prayer**, **Faith**, **Sharing the Gospel** (power to transform souls) and the **Fruit of the Spirit**. One commentary put it this way regarding the fruit of the Spirit: "*The fruit of the Spirit manifested can be a weapon against the enemy: love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control (see **Gal. 5:22-23**). It drives the devil crazy when you **walk in love** or **remain at peace**."*

b) Now I want to talk about **2 Cor. 10:6**. **V. 6** seems a bit harsh: *"<u>and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled</u>."*
Let's read all of **2 Cor. 10:4-6 (NKJV/AMP)** and talk about it.
Multiple commentaries:
- **What's Paul saying in v. 6?** He's fighting a spiritual battle against <u>ideas</u> and <u>people opposing</u> the gospel in Corinth. He's got the authority (and divine power) to deal with disobedience—<u>like those questioning his leadership</u>—but he's holding off. Why? He wants the Corinthians to get on the same page with him first, fully embracing obedience to Christ. Once that's solid, he'll address the **troublemakers**. (unbelievers and/or false teachers) - We can see this in **v. 5** *"casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God"*.
- **Why is it confusing?** The phrase "<u>once your obedience is complete</u>" sounds conditional or future-focused, and "<u>punish</u>" feels harsh. But it's less about vengeance and more about restoring order in the church. Paul's tone is confident yet patient—he's not rushing to crack down.
- **How does it fit?** Think of it like a general securing his troops' loyalty before disciplining deserters. Verses 3-5 describe the battle (tearing down false ideas); verse 6 is the cleanup phase, ensuring everyone's aligned with Christ. Paul was dealing with false teaching and confused messages due to the Roman culture/audience Paul addressing.

c) Let's read all of **2 Cor. 10:1-10 (AMP)** to help understand **v. 6**. Also note **v. 5** in the AMP. *"We are destroying **sophisticated arguments and every exalted and proud thing that sets itself up against the [true] knowledge of God**."* This is what Paul was up against.

d) A little more commentary on **vs 6** in regards to disobedience and obedience shall be made full: "***Disobedience***" here is among those who opposed Paul's apostolic authority, especially as a writer of God's Word via the Holy Spirit. Paul was ready to confront their disobedience to Christ. The enemies of Christ must suffer the consequences of holding to viewpoints that are not biblical. (what are the consequences?) The apostle intended to forthrightly deal with the intruders by confronting them with the Word. i.e. boldness.

e) "***Your obedience shall be made full***" … This does not mean that "the church's obedience is here yet to come"; but that it was to be made COMPLETE when Paul had disposed of "some"

who were enemies of the truth. There is in this passage an implied admission that their obedience, even at that time, was approaching fullness. The thing that would complete it was Paul's determination, or "readiness," to destroy the influence of the "some" who were still holding out against the truth. Paul was trying to protect the church from false teachings and/or confused teachings mixing in what Paul was teaching and what the Roman culture was teaching.

f) This ties into **Rom. 8:13 (NKJV/AMP) – This also ties into "obedience".**
(NKJV) – *"but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. "*
(AMP) – *"But if [you are living] by the [power of the Holy] Spirit you are habitually putting to death the sinful deeds of the body, you will [really] live forever."*
Rom. 8:14 is important to read with vs 13*:*
(NKJV) *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."*
(AMP) *"For all who are allowing themselves to be led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."*

g) You can also see Paul's heart for the sinner in **2 Cor. 2:3-11. (ESV)** "Note: **V. 6** specifically says: *"For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough."* Let's read all of **2 Cor. 2:3-11 (NKJV). (sub-title in NKJV "Forgive the Offender."** Paul is referring to someone who has been disciplined by the Corinthian church, and now he urges them to forgive and restore this person. It is interesting that this is also **v. 6** and is related to the **v. 6** in **2 Cor. 10:6. –** OK, now back to **2 Cor. 10:1-10.**

h) I also wanted to point out **2 Cor. 10:3-4 (AMP)** *"For though we walk in the flesh [as mortal men], we are not carrying on our [spiritual] warfare according to the flesh and using the weapons of man."* **There is a great commentary on this passage from the Believer's Bible Commentary***:*
"This verse tells us what is meant by "strongholds" in verse 4 ("pulling down strongholds"). Paul saw himself as a soldier warring against the proud reasonings of man, ***arguments which oppose the truth****. The true character of these arguments is described in the expression* ***against the knowledge of God****. It could be applied today to the* ***reasonings of scientists, evolutionists, philosophers****, and* ***religionists who have no room for God in their scheme of things****. The apostle was in no mood to sign a truce with these. Rather he felt committed to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. All men's teachings and speculations must be judged in the light of the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul would not condemn human reasoning as such, but would warn that we must not allow our intellects to be exercised in defiance of the Lord and in disobedience to Him."* Paul was coming up against those who would not believe the truth and/or where false teaching that were teaching another Gospel among the believers. - ~ Talk about the Roman Culture at the time for better context.

3. **Where we are heading… Let's explore what being a new creation really means.**
   - **Old sinful nature**: [Unrenewed self] - [The entire nature of man without the Holy Spirit] [What we were prior to salvation] - [The old man]

- **New Nature**: [Born Again] - [New Creation] - [Renewed in knowledge]
  [In Union with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] - [The New Man]
- In case you want to read ahead: **Rom. 6:6-18; 8:3-4, 13:4; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Pet. 1:3-5, 2:22; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Jn. 3:5; 1 Pet. 3:18; Col. 3:9-11; Eph. 4:22-24 (full context Eph. 4:17-32).** Pick your Bible version, but I highly recommend reading in the **(NLT, NKJV, NASB, ESV and AMPC).**

Homework:

The phrases "put off" and "put on" are often used in the context of a transformation from the sinful nature to a life that reflects Christ's character. These instructions are directed toward believers who are called to live out their new identity in Christ. Some passages (e.g., **Col. 3:5, Jam. 1:21**) use terms like "put to death" or "put away" instead of "put off," but the intent is similar, emphasizing the rejection of sinful behaviors.

The "put on" commands often imply adopting Christlike qualities or relying on God's provision (e.g., the armor of God, love, or the new self).

Here is a handy putt off/put on list:

Put Off the Old Self, Put On the New Self
Put Off: The old self (or old man), which is corrupt through deceitful desires.
Put On: The new self (or new man), created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
Ephesians 4:22–24

Put Off Falsehood, Put On Truthfulness
Put Off: Falsehood (lying).
Put On: Speaking the truth in love.
Ephesians 4:25

Put Off Anger, Put On Kindness and Forgiveness
Put Off: Anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk.
Put On: Compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and forgiveness.
Colossians 3:8, 12–13

Put Off Bitterness and Evil Behavior, Put On Love and Unity
Put Off: Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and all malice.
Put On: Kindness, tenderheartedness, forgiveness, and love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
Ephesians 4:31–32

Put Off Filthiness, Put On the Armor of God
Put Off: All filthiness and rampant wickedness.
Put On: The word of God (implied as righteousness and truth) and the full armor of God (in a related

context).
James 1:21

Put Off Sexual Immorality and Impurity, Put On Holiness
Put Off: Sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness (idolatry).
Put On: A heart of holiness and devotion to God (implied through sanctification).
Col. 3:5

Put Off the Works of Darkness, Put On the Armor of Light
Put Off: The works of darkness (sinful deeds like orgies, drunkenness, sexual immorality, sensuality, quarreling, and jealousy).
Put On: The armor of light and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Rom. 13:12–14

One scripture that brings out this intentionality I am talking about in this study is in **2 Pet. 1:5-8 (AMPC)**. You will notice the phrase: "exercising your faith to develop". This is intentionality. Putting your faith into practice. 2 Pet. 1:5-8 (AMPC) summarized: *"...adding your diligence [to the divine promises], employ every effort in exercising your faith to develop virtue: [exercising] Virtue to develop Knowledge, [exercising] knowledge to develop self-control, [exercising] self-control to develop steadfastness, [exercising] steadfastness to develop brotherly affection and [exercising] brotherly affection to develop Christian love."* We have gone over this passage as a group many times in the past but it is very applicable to this study.

All of this is intentionality. Things we are to do, to develop Christian character while at the same time allowing the Holy Spirit to help us with this process of sanctification, this process of "being conformed into the image of Christ". Conformed and transformed into the image of Christ:
Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:10; Gal. 4:19; Gal. 4:19.

"Conformed" in **Rom. 8:29** is summorphos (Greek), meaning to be shaped or fashioned into the same form. "Transformed" in **2 Cor. 3:18** and **Rom. 12:2** is metamorphoō (Greek), implying a change in form or nature, often used for the process of sanctification. Both terms support the idea of becoming like Christ, but "conformed" (as in **Rom. 8:29**) is more specific to taking on His image.

We believers are progressively being transformed into His image - **2 Cor. 3:18 (AMP)** *"...are progressively being transformed into His image from [one degree of] glory to [even more] glory, which comes from the Lord, [who is] the Spirit."*

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Additional bonus homework:

Paul was dealing with a culture that was steeped in Stoicism and Epicureanism. Understanding these ideas might help with the context of **2 Cor.10:4-6**.

Stoicism: A Hellenistic philosophy founded in Athens (c. 3rd century BCE) by Zeno of Citium, teaching that virtue (wisdom, courage, justice, temperance) is the highest good and leads to a life of rational self-control. Stoics believe in living according to nature's rational order, accepting fate calmly, and managing emotions to achieve inner tranquility (ataraxia), regardless of external circumstances.

Epicureanism: A Hellenistic philosophy founded by Epicurus (341–270 BCE), emphasizing pleasure as the highest good, defined as the absence of pain (aponia) and mental disturbance (ataraxia). Epicureans advocate simple living, cultivating friendships, and avoiding fear of gods or death, believing gods exist but are distant and uninvolved in human affairs.

For some additional context of **2 Cor. 10:4-6** I proposed this question to Grok 3 in DeepSearch mode pulling from full context Biblical text, several Bible commentaries, Bible studies and historical documents.

*"What was Roman culture like at the time when **2 Cor. 10:4-6** was written and exactly who were the troublemakers Paul was addressing in this passage?"*

To address your question about Roman culture at the time **2 Corinthians 10:4-6** was written and the identity of the "troublemakers" Paul was addressing, let's break it down systematically.

1. Roman Culture at the Time of 2 Corinthians (circa 55–57 CE)

2 Corinthians is generally dated to around 55–57 CE, written by the Apostle Paul during the mid-1st century CE, under the Roman Empire's rule, likely during the reign of Emperor Nero (54–68 CE). Here's a concise overview of Roman culture relevant to the context:

- **Political and Social Structure**: The Roman Empire was a highly stratified society with a strong emphasis on patronage, honor, and public reputation. Cities like Corinth, where Paul's audience resided, were bustling, cosmopolitan hubs. Corinth, a Roman colony in Greece, was a prosperous commercial center with a diverse population, including Romans, Greeks, Jews, and others. It was known for its wealth, trade, and cultural pluralism, but also for social competition and moral laxity, partly due to its history and the influence of the nearby Isthmian Games and temples like that of Aphrodite.
- **Religion and Philosophy**: Roman culture blended Greek, Roman, and local religious practices. Pagan temples, mystery cults, and philosophical schools (e.g., Stoicism, Epicureanism) were prevalent. In Corinth, traditional Greco-Roman worship coexisted with Jewish synagogues and emerging Christian communities. Rhetoric and public oratory were highly valued, and skilled speakers (rhetors) held significant influence, often judged by their eloquence and charisma.
- **Jewish and Christian Context**: Early Christian communities, like the one in Corinth, operated within this pluralistic environment. They faced tensions with both Jewish synagogue leaders (who often opposed Christian teachings) and Gentile converts influenced by pagan practices or secular philosophies. The Corinthian church, founded by Paul around 50–51 CE (Acts 18), was a mix of Jewish and Gentile believers, which led to cultural and theological clashes.

- **Roman Attitudes Toward Christians**: At this early stage, Christianity was not yet widely persecuted by Roman authorities, as it was often seen as a sect within Judaism. However, Christians faced social suspicion for their monotheism and rejection of pagan rituals, which could disrupt civic harmony.

2. Context of 2 Corinthians 10:4-6

The passage in 2 Corinthians 10:4-6 reads (NIV):

"The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete."

- **Literary Context**: 2 Corinthians is a deeply personal letter where Paul defends his apostolic authority against critics in the Corinthian church. Chapters 10–13, often called the "severe letter," are particularly intense, as Paul responds to challenges to his leadership. He contrasts his spiritual approach with worldly standards of power and persuasion
- **Cultural Influence on the Passage**: In Corinth, eloquence, wealth, and social status were measures of authority. Paul's opponents likely criticized him for lacking these qualities (e.g., his unimpressive speech or appearance, 2 Cor. 10:10). Paul counters by emphasizing spiritual weapons—truth, faith, and divine power—over worldly rhetoric or force, aligning with the countercultural nature of early Christianity.

3. Identity of the "Troublemakers" Paul Was Addressing

The "troublemakers" in 2 Corinthians 10:4-6 are not explicitly named, but scholars generally agree they were a group within or influencing the Corinthian church who challenged Paul's authority. Based on the text and historical context, here are the likely candidates:

Rival Missionaries or "Super-Apostles":

- Paul refers to "super-apostles" (2 Cor. 11:5, 12:11) who boasted of their credentials, possibly Jewish Christian missionaries who claimed superior apostolic authority. These individuals may have emphasized their rhetorical skills, spiritual experiences (e.g., visions, 2 Cor. 12:1), or adherence to Jewish law, contrasting with Paul's focus on grace and the cross.
- They likely criticized Paul's lack of polish, his physical presence, or his refusal to accept financial support (2 Cor. 11:7–11), which was a common expectation for teachers in Greco-Roman culture.

Judaizers or Jewish Christian Opponents

- Some scholars suggest these troublemakers were Judaizers, similar to those in Galatians, who insisted Gentile Christians follow Jewish customs (e.g., circumcision, dietary laws). In Corinth, they may have argued that Paul's gospel was too lenient, undermining Jewish traditions.
- Evidence: Paul's defense of his Jewish credentials (2 Cor. 11:22) suggests his opponents claimed Jewish heritage to bolster their authority.

Pagan or Secular Influences:

- Some Corinthian believers, influenced by Greco-Roman culture, may have valued charismatic leaders or philosophical wisdom over Paul's humble, suffering-based ministry. The "strongholds" and "arguments" (2 Cor. 10:4–5) could refer to intellectual or cultural objections to Christianity, such as skepticism about the resurrection or monotheism

Internal Factionalism:

- The Corinthian church was prone to division (1 Cor. 1:10–17). Some members may have formed cliques, favoring other leaders (e.g., Apollos or Peter, 1 Cor. 1:12) or local figures who challenged Paul's authority, perhaps seeing him as an absentee leader.

4. Specifics of Paul's Response

In 2 Corinthians 10:4–6, Paul addresses these troublemakers indirectly by:

Rejecting Worldly Standards: He contrasts "weapons of the world" (e.g., rhetorical flair, social status) with spiritual weapons empowered by God to dismantle false ideologies or "strongholds."

Targeting False Arguments: The "arguments" and "pretensions" likely refer to the teachings or boasts of his opponents, which elevated human wisdom or legalism over the gospel.

Asserting Authority: Paul warns of disciplining disobedience (v. 6), signaling his intent to confront these troublemakers directly when he visits Corinth, possibly to restore unity and correct false teachings.

5. Conclusion

At the time of 2 Corinthians (mid-50s CE), Roman culture in Corinth was a melting pot of Greco-Roman, Jewish, and emerging Christian influences, with a strong emphasis on rhetoric, status, and religious pluralism. The troublemakers Paul addresses in 2 Corinthians 10:4–6 were likely rival missionaries or "super-apostles," possibly Jewish Christians or local leaders, who challenged his authority by boasting of their credentials, eloquence, or adherence to Jewish law. Paul counters their influence by emphasizing the divine power of his message and his apostolic mission, urging the Corinthians to align with the true gospel.

MEETING 35

Abiding in The Vine - Part 1 - The Anointing-How the Holy Spirit Teaches Us to Remain in Him

Abiding in The Vine – Part 1
The Anointing: How the Holy Spirit Teaches Us to Remain in Him

1. **Brief recap from last two meetings**
   - We talked about obedience, the weapons of our warfare and being conformed to Christ.
   - We also recapped what we are to put on and what we are to put off. Can you remember what some of those things were?
   - I had planned to do a deep dive into our Old sinful nature vs. our New Nature.
     Old sinful nature: [Unrenewed self] - [The entire nature of man without the Holy Spirit] [What we were prior to salvation] - [**The old man**]
   - New Nature: [Born Again] - [New Creation] - [Renewed in knowledge] [In Union with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] - [**The New Man**] …but I got completely sidetracked with **1 Jn. 2:20, 27-28**. The Holy Spirit showed me something I never saw before and I am excited to dive into this.
   - This is going to be a short series of studies on "Abiding in The Vine" **Jn. 15:1-17**, however this first study is going to focus on The Holy Spirit because as we will find out, The Holy Spirit (*The Helper*) is key to abiding.
2. **The Anointing** (talk about the audience that John was writing to)
   a) Let's start with reading **1 Jn. 2:20, 27-28 (NLT, NASB, AMP).** Note: All three translations end the verse by linking the Spirit's teaching to abiding/remaining in Christ (e.g., "remain in fellowship with Christ" in **NLT**) i.e. The Holy Spirit teaches us how to abide in Christ! 😊
   First, I want to talk about how the "anointing" mentioned in this passage is the Holy spirit.
   v. **2:20** – *"You have an "anointing" from the Holy One."* The "Holy One" here is Christ (we can see this in **Jn. 6:69** as one example). So, we see here that Jesus is the giver. The "anointing" is something given by Him (Christ) that enables spiritual discernment. This is the context of this passage. This leads to the question, what is the "anointing"? **1 Jn. 2:27** says this anointing abides in believers and this same anointing teaches all things and is true and is not a lie and will teach believers how to abide in Christ.
   Here John describes the "anointing" as:
   - **Received** from Christ
   - **Abiding** in the believer.
   - **Teaching** all things.
   - **Truthful**, not deceptive.

   b) We can see this same description in **John 14:16-17, 26, 15:26-27, 16:8-11, 13-15 (NLT, NKJV)**. Notice: The Spirit **Abides**, **teaches,** and **guides**. Identical functions to the "anointing" mentioned in **1 Jn. 2:27**. This is how we know that the "anointing" referenced in **1 Jn. 2:20** and **2:27** is the Holy Spirit.
   c) Also, something very interesting about **1 Jn. 2:20, 27:** Let's look at the Greek word for: "**The Anointing**" *χρῖσμα* (*chrisma*) - Meaning: Literally, "an anointing" — something applied, like oil, but in the NT figurative sense it is a spiritual consecration or endowment.
   d) **Strong's G5545**: From chriō (to anoint). In the NT, this word "chrisma" occurs only in **1 Jn. 2:20** and **1 Jn. 2:27**.

- **Lexical Note:** In secular Greek, it could mean ointment or smearing; in the NT, <u>John uses it figuratively of the Holy Spirit given to believers.</u>

e) Now let's read this in full context: **1 Jn. 2:18-29 (NLT, AMP)** – John was warning the believers about false teachers and how the Holy Spirit acts as an internal teacher and guide, protecting against deception and illuminating truth. John was encouraging the believers that they have the Holy Spirit in them which will teach them truth from lies and will also teach them how to abide in Christ, i.e. how "to remain in fellowship with Christ."
f) What has excited me about **1 Jn. 2:27** is understanding the fact that the Holy Spirit will teach me how to abide in Christ. I need to allow the Holy Spirit to teach me how to abide in Christ, how to "remain in fellowship with Him".
g) One scripture that I struggled with as an early Christian was **Gal. 5:16** "walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." Which led me to constantly ask God, "How do I walk in the Spirit?" **<u>Abiding in Christ is the answer!</u>** …and the Holy Spirit helps us abide in Christ. This is the answer to "how do I walk in the Spirit?" that I have been looking for.
h) Note in **Rom. 8:14 (NLT, AMP)** *"…all who are allowing themselves to be led by the Spirit."* We need to "allow" the Holy Spirit to teach how to abide in Christ.
i) This also ties into **2 Peter 1:3-4 (NKJV, NLT)** which talks about *"partaking in His divine nature"* which I have talked about in earlier studies. We can see in vs. 3 that "*God has given us everything we need to live a Godly life." (which includes the Holy Spirit that teaches us how to abide in Christ)* And that we have "through the knowledge of Him" (NLT) *"received all of this by coming to know Him."* Receiving the Holy Spirit is an integral part of *"coming to know Him."* We can also see in **1 Peter 1:3** that He has given us believers great and precious promises and that these promises enable us to partake in His divine nature. Salvation and receiving the Holy Spirit are some of these great and precious promises!
j) I feel this ties in nicely with **1 Cor. 2:10-12 (NLT).** Specifically, vs. 12 *"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but <u>the Spirit who is from God</u>, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God"*. We "believers," have been given great and precious promises which allow us to partake in His divine nature. The Holy Spirit in us believers, as a result of salvation by grace through faith in Christ, is one of these great and precious promises.

There is a progression that emerges here for me: - *How do I walk in the Spirit? Abide in Christ.* **->** *How do I abide in Christ? Partake of His divine nature.* **->** *How do I partake in His divine nature? Through the great and precious promises, He has given to believers.* **->** *The Holy Spirit is one of these great and precious promises that is given to the believer and we see that in 1 Jn. 2:27, the Holy Spirit teaches us how to Abide in Christ. If you are abiding in Christ you are walking in the Spirit and as a result will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Abiding is a free-will choice.*

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

<u>Deeper study</u>:

Notes for reference:

A little background on the audience John was writing to in 1 John:

1 John is a general letter in the New Testament, not addressed to a specific individual or church by name, unlike some other epistles such as those by Paul. Instead, it was written to a community of early Christians, believers in one or more congregations facing internal challenges from false teachings and heresies. This context suggests the recipients were part of a broader network of house churches dealing with early doctrinal divisions in the late first century AD. These recipients were already familiar with the gospel and apostolic teachings but needed encouragement to persevere amid false teaching, doctrinal threats, and moral laxity promoted by "false prophets", false “teachers” or "antichrists" who had caused a schism by seceding from the group.

Key Characteristics of the Audience

- **Demographic and Background**: The readers were faithful Christians, possibly including a mix of Jewish and Gentile believers, though some historical interpretations suggest a primarily Gentile audience who had converted without prior Jewish ties. They were described as "children" or "dear friends" in the letter, indicating a pastoral, familial tone (i.e. family) from John, who had a close, established relationship with them. The community was depleted and disturbed by the departure of heretics, leading to feelings of inferiority and doubts about their faith.
- **Purpose and Context for the Audience**: The letter aimed to reassure these struggling believers of their salvation, urge them to love one another, test spirits/teachings, confess sins, and reject the influence of traveling false teachers who were still attempting to proselytize (convert or attempt to convert (someone) from one religion, belief, or opinion to another.). It emphasized fellowship with God and Christ, providing tests for genuine faith to help the audience discern truth amid apostasy and heresy (false teachings).

Summary of the intent of this study:

At salvation we received the finished work of the cross (all of the blessings of the New Covenant), yet we need to be intentionally focused on Jesus and obedient to the Holy Spirit to enjoy and live the abundance we have received." But that is not the end of the story. We don't receive the finished work of the cross and have all we need to live a Godly life and then just chill out and do nothing. We Partake in His divine nature through being intentionally focused on Jesus and obedient to the Holy Spirit. The "partaking" is an intentional free-will choice.

Additional breakdown of the Holy Spirit references in 1 John:

Verses Describing the Holy Spirit in John 14, 15, and 16

NKJV

John 14:16-17
"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another **Helper**, that **He may abide with you forever**— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."
(Describes the Holy Spirit as a Helper who remains forever, indwells believers, and serves as the Spirit of truth.)

John 14:26
"But the **Helper**, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach you all things**, **and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you**."
(Highlights the Holy Spirit's role in teaching all things and reminding believers of Jesus' words.)

John 15:26-27
"But when the **Helper** comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, **He will testify of Me**. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning."
(The Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of truth, will testify about Jesus, and the disciples must also testify.)

John 16:7
"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the **Helper** will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you."
(Jesus' departure enables the coming of the Helper, whom he will send.)

John 16:8-11

NLT

John 14:16-17
"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another **Advocate**, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who **leads into all truth**. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you."
(Describes the Holy Spirit as an Advocate who remains forever, leads into truth, and indwells believers.)

John 14:26
"But when the Father sends the **Advocate** as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—**he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you**."
(Highlights the Holy Spirit's role as a representative who teaches everything and reminds believers of Jesus' teachings.)

John 15:26-27
"But I will send you the **Advocate**—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and **will testify all about me**. And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry."
(The Holy Spirit, as the Advocate and Spirit of truth, will testify about Jesus, and the disciples are called to testify as well.)

John 16:7
"But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the **Advocate** won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you."
(Jesus' departure is necessary for the Advocate to come, whom he will send.)

John 16:8-11

"And when He has come, **He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment**: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."
(The Holy Spirit will convict the world regarding sin, righteousness, and judgment.)

"And when he comes, **he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment**. The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me. Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more. Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged."
(The Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin, God's righteousness, and the coming judgment.)

John 16:13-15
"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, **He will guide you into all truth**; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and **He will tell you things to come**. **He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you**. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that **He will take of Mine and declare it to you**."
(The Holy Spirit guides into all truth, speaks what he hears, reveals the future, glorifies Jesus, and declares what he receives from Jesus.)

John 16:13-15
"When the Spirit of truth comes, **he will guide you into all truth**. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. **He will tell you about the future**. **He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me**. All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, '**The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me**.'"
(The Holy Spirit guides into all truth, speaks what he hears, reveals the future, glorifies Jesus, and shares what he receives from Jesus.)

These verses from John 14, 15, and 16 (NKJV and NLT) cover all instances where Jesus directly discusses the Holy Spirit's roles with his disciples.

Note: Only KJV and AMP describe the Holy Spirit as the comforter.

Jn. 14:26 KJV "But the **Comforter**, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you**."

Jn. 14:26 AMP "But the **Helper** (**Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor—Counselor, Strengthener, Standby**), the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], **He will teach you all things. And He will help you remember everything that I**

have told you."

Another interesting note is that in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, explicit descriptions of the Holy Spirit's role by Jesus are less detailed compared to John 14–16. The specific description of the Holy Spirit as a "Helper" (NKJV) or "Advocate" (NLT), using the Greek term Parakletos, is found only in the Gospel of John (14:16-17, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7). In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus does not use this term. However, in Mark 13:11 and Luke 12:11-12, Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as assisting believers by providing words or teaching them what to say during persecution, which conveys a helping role conceptually similar to John's "Helper" but without the explicit term Parakletos. These passages suggest a guidance function, but the unique designation of the Holy Spirit as "Helper" or "Advocate" is exclusive to John.

Thus, the explicit description of the Holy Spirit as the "Helper" (or "Advocate") is only found in the Gospel of John in the New Testament Gospels.

So combining all of the above descriptions of the Holy Spirit we see that the Holy Spirit is described as and having the function of:

<u>The Holy Spirit is described as</u>:

- **Helper**
- **Advocate**
- **Comforter**
- **Intercessor—Counselor**
- **Strengthener**
- **Standby**

<u>The Function of The Holy Spirit in believers</u>:

- **Abides in the believer forever, leads/guides believers into all truth**
- **Will teach all things and will bring to remembrance all the things which the Savior had taught**
- **Will testify of Christ**
- **Will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of the coming judgment**
- **Will guide/lead you into all truth**

- **Will tell you about the future**
- **Will bring Christ glory by telling you whatever he (The Holy Spirit) receives from Christ**
- **Will tell believers whatever he (The Holy Spirit) receives from Christ.**

Jn. 14:26 commentary: "14:26 But the Holy Spirit would reveal more. He was sent by the Father in the name of Christ on the day of Pentecost. The Spirit came in Christ's name in the sense that He came to represent Christ's interests on earth. He did not come to glorify Himself but to draw men and women to the Savior. "He will teach you all things," said the Lord. He did this first of all through the spoken ministry of the apostles; then through the written Word of God which we have today. The Holy Spirit brings to remembrance all the things which the Savior had taught. Actually, the Lord Jesus seems to have presented in germ form all the teaching which is developed by the Holy Spirit in the rest of the NT."

In the commentary above, "germ" refers to the origin or seed of an idea, the initial stage of something that will later develop. The sentence suggests that Jesus' teachings in the Gospels contain the fundamental or basic elements that are later expanded upon and explained more fully by the Holy Spirit in the rest of the New Testament.

MEETING 36

Abiding in The Vine - Part 2 - The True Vine-Fruitfulness, Pruning, and the Danger of Withering

Abiding in The Vine – Part 2
The True Vine: Fruitfulness, Pruning, and the Danger of Withering

1. **Brief recap from last two meetings.**
   - We talked about how the "Anointing" mentioned in **1 Jn. 2:20, 27-28** refers to the Holy Spirit and how the Holy Spirit teaches us how to abide in Christ. Vs **2:20** – *"You have an "anointing" from the Holy One."* **Vs 2:27** *"the anointing which you received from Him remains [permanently] in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you."* - This parallels with **Jn. 14:26** *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things"*.
   - We talked about how John was writing to believers reminding them that they have been given the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit abides in them and that He (The Holy Spirit) guides and teaches them all they need to know and part of that teaching is how to abide in Christ.
   - We discussed **1 Jn. 2:20-28** and how John was warning the believers about false teachers and how the Holy Spirit acts as an <u>internal teacher and guide</u>, <u>protecting against deception and illuminating truth</u>.
   - We discussed how believers have received the Holy Spirit that will teach them all things, even how to abide in Christ. **1 Cor. 2:12 (AMP)** "*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the [Holy] Spirit who is from God, so that we may know and understand the [wonderful] things freely given to us by God."*
   - Now we are going to dive into when a believer receives the Holy Spirit and more on abiding in Christ, the true vine. <u>Jesus Christ is the True Vine</u> and the <u>Father is the Vinedresser</u>.
2. **When does the believer receive the Holy Spirit?**
   a) When they believe in Christ. **Eph. 1:13-14, Gal. 3:2,5,14, 2 Cor. 1:22, Jn. 14:16-17 (NLT/AMP)** The above scriptures are for homework: These passages directly show that believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit at the moment they believe in Christ and receive Him as Lord, with the Spirit serving as a permanent guarantee (abiding fully). They teach that the Holy Spirit is received through faith in Christ, tying it to the moment of belief. They teach that God seals believers with the Holy Spirit in their hearts as a guarantee, received upon being established in Christ through faith in Christ. They teach that Jesus promises the Holy Spirit as a permanent Helper who will be in believers forever, abiding fully from reception at salvation. (**See homework below for more on then the believer receives the holy Spirit. There are a couple of passages in Acts that can be confusing**.)
   b) It is important to understand that we believers are filled with the Holy Spirit and that as we talked about in our last study, the Holy Spirit in us will teach us how to abide in Christ.
   c) Now let's dive into abiding.
3. **Abiding in The Vine**
   a) Let's start with reading about abiding in the True Vine which is Jesus Christ. Let's read **Jn. 15:1-17 (NKJV/AMP)** and then back up and focus on **Jn. 15:1-8 (NKJV/AMP)**. There is a lot to unpack in this passage. ~ Discuss…
   b) At first glance, the language of "taking away" unfruitful branches and "pruning" fruitful ones might evoke a sense of judgment or threat—implying rejection for failure (Abide or else God is going to get you!) or painful cutting for the sake of productivity.

However, when viewed through the lens of historical vine dressing practices in the ancient Near East, particularly in springtime (the likely season of Jesus' teaching during Passover), the passage unfolds as a profound encouragement to abide in the Vine. - The Father's role as vinedresser is one of tender, restorative care, aimed at nurturing every branch toward greater fruitfulness, rather than arbitrary condemnation.

c) As practiced in first-century Galilee, grapevines were not left to sprawl unchecked on the ground. Vines were often trained on trellises or poles to optimize sunlight, airflow, and dew evaporation—essential for healthy growth and fruit production. Weak or nonfruiting branches, which trailed low and were vulnerable to rot, pests, or smothering soil, were not immediately discarded. Instead, a skilled vinedresser would lift them up during the spring growing season, gently tying them to supports with cords or props. This "lifting" (from the Greek airō, which can mean both "to take away" and "to lift up") exposed the branches to better conditions, allowing sap to flow freely and encouraging latent buds to sprout and bear fruit in the coming cycles.

d) Let's look at the encouraging translation of "taking away". **Jn. 15:2** *"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away."* Strong/s concordance for "takes away": Greek word: **airw** / Pronounce: **ah'-ee-ro** / Strongs Number: **G142 -** A primary root; **to lift up**; by implication, to take up or away; figuratively, to raise (the voice), bear (up), carry, lift up, loose, take (away, up) - To raise up, elevate, lift up. To raise from the ground, take up. This lines up with how the Vinedresser takes care of the grapevine.

e) But then there is **Jn. 15:6** *"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned."* This gives the image of something useless to be thrown away. This is the strong encouragement to abide.

f) **What is abiding? – Jn. 15:4** - Abide: Original Word: **μένω** / Pronunciation: **meh'-no** - continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry for, to continue to be present, to be held, kept, continually, to remain as one, (of a relationship) to exist permanently in, inseparably united.

g) **How do we Abide in the True Vine (Christ)?** - To abide in the True Vine, Jesus Christ, we must cultivate a deep and intentional life-giving relationship with Him, anchoring our lives in His teachings and presence. This begins with fixing our gaze on Christ, keeping Him as the focal point of our faith and daily walk, just as a runner focuses on the finish line. We prioritize seeking God's Kingdom above all else, aligning our desires with His will. By putting on the full armor of God, we equip ourselves to stand firm against spiritual challenges, while clothing ourselves in Christ—the new self—marked by humility and righteousness. Abiding also involves consistent worship, prayer, immersive Bible study (in full context), and renewing our minds daily to align our thoughts with God's truth. This allows the word of Christ to dwell richly within us. This involves trusting in Christ's sufficiency and relying on His strength rather than our own.

h) We can abide by laying aside every weight and sin that hinders us, running the race of faith with endurance, while intentionally turning away from distractions to focus on Jesus. Furthermore, we set our hearts and minds on heavenly things, bringing every thought into submission to Christ's authority, ensuring our lives reflect His truth and love. These practices—rooted in devotion and discipline, deepen our connection to the True Vine, enabling us to bear lasting fruit for God's glory. (**Jn. 15:4-5, Heb. 12:1-2, Mat. 6:33, Eph. 6:11, Rom. 13:14, Col. 3:12, 3:16, 2 Cor. 10:5, Rom. 12:2**) Abiding is how we walk in the Spirit. Abiding in Christ (staying connected to the True Vine) is how we progress towards the goal of being conformed into the image of Christ. **2 Cor. 3:18**.

The process of being conformed to His image is ongoing and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Let The Holy Spirit teach you how to abide in Christ. 🔥

i) **What is the benefit of Abiding in Christ?** - Bearing much fruit. Remaining connected to the vine provides spiritual nourishment and strength to live a Godly life. Christ is the vine; we are the branches… apart from Him we can do nothing". The benefit of abiding is remaining connected to the vine and experiencing Christ's love and joy, the abundant life He promised to believers, growth Through God's Pruning, transformation, and a Renewed Mind. Abiding in Christ is one of the ways we can daily renew our minds. Also note in **Jn. 15:7** *"<u>If you abide in Me</u>, and <u>My words abide in you</u>, <u>you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you</u>."*

j) **What are the consequences of not abiding?** The first thing that jumps out from the passage as a result of not abiding is "Withering." This can be <u>self-imposed disconnection</u> (self-imposed uselessness) which leads to withering and drifting, thus cutting themselves off from the flow of life from the vine, often through neglect of relationship, neglect of prayer and studying/meditating on the Word of God, worldly entanglements that choke fruitfulness (cares of the world, love of the world) and self-reliance (depending on self rather than God - pride). The result? The non-abiding branches become "thrown away" (not uprooted from salvation but set aside as unproductive), gathered like pruned debris, and burned. This imagery draws from ancient vineyard practices, where withered branches were useless for anything but fuel—evoking loss. Not abiding can result in loss of reward and making it into Heaven as [one who barely escapes] through fire. **1 Cor. 3:15 (AMP)** *"But if any person's work is burned up [by the test], he will suffer the loss [of his reward]; yet he himself will be saved, but only as [one who has barely escaped] through fire."*

I would rather abide in Christ and experience abundant life as a result than not abide and wither and make it into Heaven as one who has barely escaped through fire.

If you abide, there will be pruning for more growth, however pruning can be painful, but it is way better than withering. I'd rather be pruned than wither, cut off, useless and burned.

This question arises: When does it change from the vinedresser tending and "lifting up" the withering branch to being cast out and burned in the fire? This brings up the debate of once saved always saved or you can lose your salvation. Salvation is secure or you could lose it by not abiding. This brings up the Heb 6. A quick summary on Heb 6.

Heb. 6 *describes the dire spiritual state of someone who has experienced genuine spiritual blessings—enlightenment, partaking of the Holy Spirit, and tasting the good word of God—but then falls away, leading to an impossible-to-renew state of spiritual death because they've essentially rejected and brought shame upon Christ. While the passage is debated, it functions as a stark warning against spiritual complacency and calls believers to move on to maturity in faith, rather than falling back into a state where there is no further sacrifice for their sin.*

There is debate on **Heb. 6** because there are a lot of scriptures that point to our salvation being secure, i.e. "once saved always saved. Worst case for the believer being **1 Cor. 3:15 (AMP)**.
A believer being saved but only as [one who has barely escaped] through fire and being without rewards!

k) There are three main interpretations for **Jn. 15:1-17** (**Abiding in the Vine**)
   - Interpretation 1: Refers to False Professors (Never Truly Saved, Leading to Eternal Judgment)
   - Interpretation 2: Refers to Apostate Believers (True Believers Who Fall Away, Losing Salvation)
   - Interpretation 3: Refers to Unfruitful Believers (Discipline or Loss of Rewards, Not Salvation)
     a. I fall into the camp of interpretation 3. (Secure salvation for the true believer)
     b. This also ties into <u>the parable of the soils</u>: **Mat.13:1–23, Mk. 4:1–20, and Lk. 8:4–15.**
     c. This also ties into partaking of the His divine nature in **2 Pet. 1:1–11 (2 Pet. 1:4)**
        i.e. Partaking is a choice which is similar to abiding in the vine being a choice.
     d. This also ties into the building your house on a rock parable found in **Mat. 7:24-25**.

I personally believe in a secure salvation for the true believer: Here are some "permanence of the new birth", and "the sealing work of the Holy Spirit" scriptures for homework:
Jn 10:27-29, Jn 5:24, Rom 8:38-39, Phil 1:6, Eph 1:13-14, 1 Jn 5:13, Jude 1:24, Jn 6:37, Eph 4:30, Heb 7:25, and **Rom 8:1**. There are other scriptures that can be interpreted in a way to have different views on this which is why there are three main interpretations as shown above.

Next study: Connection Between <u>Abiding in Christ</u>, <u>Dying to Self</u>, and the <u>process of Sanctification</u>. I'm very excited about this connection!

Homework:
Abiding in the True Vine: **Jn. 15:1-17 (NKJV/AMP).** Meditate on this passage.
How do we abide? **Jn. 15:4-5, Heb. 12:1-2, Mat. 6:33, Eph. 6:11, Rom. 13:14, Col. 3:12, 3:16, 2 Cor. 10:5, Rom. 12:2, 2 Cor. 3:18 (NLT/AMP).**
When does the believer receive The Holy Spirit? **Eph. 1:13-14, Gal. 3:2,5,14, 2 Cor. 1:22, Jn. 14:16-17 (NLT/AMP).**

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Deeper Study
I have placed below some extended study on when the believer receives the Holy Spirit.

Note: Below is an A.I. response to my challenging question and is pulling from the entire text of the Bible in these versions AMP, AMPC, ESV, KJV, NASB, NIV, as well as many commentaries, it is always wise to dig into the Word of God yourself and read the scriptures in full context while allowing the Holy Spirit to teach you as you dive in. Ask this same question yourself and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal truth as you dig into the word for the answers. Use the question and answer below for deeper study.

Question:
How do I reconcile Acts 19:2 where the believers did not know about the holy spirit and where then prayed for and received the holy spirit with all of the new covenant scriptures that talk about how when someone believes in Jesus Christ they instantly receive the Holy Spirit the moment they believed such as noted in these passages: Eph. 1:13-14 (NLT, AMP), Gal. 3:2,5,14 (NLT, AMP), 2 Cor. 1:22 (NLT/AMP), 1 Cor. 3:16 (NLT/AMP), 1 Cor. 6:19 (NLT/AMP), 2 Timothy 1:14 (NLT/AMP), 1 Jn. 4:13 (NLT/AMP), 2 Cor. 1:21-22 (NLT/AMP). One theory I have is that in the book of acts we are reading about believers who believed in Christ and were followers of Christ while He was still here on earth when the Holy Spirit had not yet come. In Acts 19:2 we are dealing with followers of John the Baptist, not actual followers of Christ. So when they believed, they had not yet received the Holy Spirit because He had not yet come. What they actually believed in was John the Baptist's message about Christ to come, which was an incomplete message. They were also baptized in John's baptism which is different from believing in Christ and receiving salvation. Because they were disciples of John the Baptist they only had John's teachings about Jesus Christ to come. They had an incomplete teaching of the Gospel and of the Holy Spirit being received upon faith in Christ. Also taking into account that in Acts 18:24–26 there is a similar situation where Apollos also had incomplete knowledge of the gospel because he was a follower of John the Baptist and only had John's teachings to go by. The timing in Acts is very important to take into account while trying to reconcile the Acts references with Eph. 1:13-14 (NLT, AMP), Gal. 3:2,5,14 (NLT, AMP), 2 Cor. 1:22 (NLT/AMP), 1 Cor. 3:16 (NLT/AMP), 1 Cor. 6:19 (NLT/AMP), 2 Timothy 1:14 (NLT/AMP), 1 Jn. 4:13 (NLT/AMP), 2 Cor. 1:21-22 (NLT/AMP) that speak of immediate reception of the Holy Spirit, the moment of belief in Christ, and the Holy Spirit's full, abiding presence in believers from that point onward.

Answer:
The query revolves around harmonizing the account in Acts 19:1-7—where Paul encounters about 12 "disciples" in Ephesus who claim to have believed but haven't received (or even heard of) the Holy Spirit until after further explanation, rebaptism in Jesus' name, and the laying on of hands—with New Covenant passages like Ephesians 1:13-14, Galatians 3:2,5,14, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19, 2 Timothy 1:14, and 1 John 4:13 (across translations like NLT and AMP). These epistles consistently describe the Holy Spirit's reception as an immediate, sealing, indwelling reality upon genuine faith in Christ, serving as a guarantee of salvation and abiding fully from that moment onward, without any delay or secondary step.

Your expanded theory—that these were disciples influenced by John the Baptist's preparatory ministry, with incomplete knowledge of the full gospel (lacking details on Jesus' death, resurrection, and the post-

Pentecost outpouring of the Spirit), baptized only in John's repentance-focused baptism, and possibly holdovers from before the Holy Spirit's arrival at Pentecost—provides a solid framework for reconciliation. It emphasizes the transitional timing in the Book of Acts, where the early church was still spreading the complete message, and ties directly to the similar case of Apollos in Acts 18:24-26, who "knew only the baptism of John" until Priscilla and Aquila explained "the way of God more accurately." This interpretation avoids contradictions by viewing their initial "belief" as partial or anticipatory, not the full saving faith in Christ that triggers the Spirit's instant indwelling as described in the epistles. Below, I'll outline how this aligns with broader theological perspectives, drawing from a range of scholarly and denominational sources to represent diverse stakeholders.

Evangelical and Reformed Perspective: Incomplete Faith in a Transitional Context

In many evangelical and Reformed traditions, your theory is widely affirmed as the key to reconciliation. These "disciples" are not considered full Christians initially; their faith was rooted in John's messianic expectation but lacked the specifics of Jesus as the fulfillment (Acts 19:4). They were essentially in a pre-Christian or Old Covenant-like state, isolated from the gospel's spread, which explains why they hadn't received the Spirit—mirroring how believers before Pentecost (like the apostles themselves) awaited the Spirit's coming (John 7:39; Acts 1:4-5). Once Paul clarifies the gospel, they believe in Jesus explicitly, are baptized accordingly, and receive the Spirit immediately upon that true faith—perfectly matching the epistles' emphasis on instant sealing (e.g., Ephesians 1:13: "When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit").

- **Timing and Transitional Nature**: Acts documents the historical expansion of the church from Jerusalem outward, capturing unique moments where the Spirit's outpouring confirms new groups entering the faith (Jews at Pentecost, Samaritans in Acts 8, Gentiles in Acts 10). Acts 19 fits this as a "mini-Pentecost" for these fringe disciples, not a normative pattern for post-Acts believers. The laying on of hands and visible signs (tongues, prophecy) authenticate the message in this early era, but the epistles (written later) normalize the Spirit's reception as invisible and concurrent with belief, without such externalities required.
- **No Contradiction with Indwelling**: Passages like Romans 8:9 ("If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ") underscore that all true believers have the Spirit from the start. If these Ephesians were already saved, lacking the Spirit would violate this—hence, their faith was incomplete until Paul's instruction.
- **Link to Apollos**: As you noted, Acts 18:24-26 shows Apollos as "fervent in spirit" but limited to John's teachings, needing correction. This pattern suggests isolated pockets of John's followers persisted, and Acts 19 resolves one such group, reinforcing that full gospel knowledge is essential for the Spirit's reception.

This view prioritizes the doctrinal clarity of the epistles over Acts' narrative descriptions, seeing no need for a "second blessing" and affirming the Spirit's full, abiding presence from conversion onward.

Pentecostal and Charismatic Perspective: A Distinct Subsequent Experience

In contrast, Pentecostal interpretations often see Acts 19 as evidence for the "baptism in the Holy Spirit" as a separate empowerment event after initial salvation, distinct from the indwelling at belief. Here, the Ephesians are viewed as genuine believers (called "disciples" who "believed" in Acts 19:1-2), but they

required a subsequent filling, often evidenced by tongues or prophecy, to equip them for ministry. Paul's question ("Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?") implies this could be post-conversion, and the delay until laying on of hands supports a two-stage process: regeneration (with indwelling) at faith, then empowerment.

- **Reconciliation with Epistles**: The epistles describe the sealing/indwelling at conversion (e.g., Galatians 3:2,14), while Acts highlights a normative but separate "baptism" for all believers today, not just transitional. Critics of this view argue it introduces division not explicit in the epistles, potentially implying incomplete Christians. Your theory partially aligns but is reframed: their incomplete knowledge delayed the full experience, yet the pattern encourages seeking a post-conversion filling.
- **Critique from Other Views**: Evangelicals counter that this overemphasizes Acts' descriptives, risking legalism around signs like tongues.

Catholic Perspective: Linked to Confirmation

Catholic exegesis often connects Acts 19 to the sacrament of Confirmation, where the laying on of hands (by a bishop or apostle-like figure) imparts the Holy Spirit's fuller gifts after baptism. These disciples had a valid but incomplete initiation via John's baptism, requiring Christian baptism and confirmation for the Spirit's reception. This reconciles with the epistles by seeing the Spirit's sealing as tied to the sacraments, immediate in effect but sometimes administered in stages. The timing in Acts reflects apostolic authority in the early church, not a universal delay.

Steps for Personal Application

To reconcile this in your study:

- Compare translations (NLT/AMP highlight immediacy) and contexts: Acts is historical narrative; epistles are doctrinal.
- Read full commentaries representing views, like David Guzik (evangelical) or Pentecostal resources from Assemblies of God.
- Pray for clarity, as the core truth— the Spirit's abiding presence in believers—is unanimous across traditions (John 14:16-17).

Ultimately, your theory holds strong in evangelical circles, resolving any tension by emphasizing Acts' unique historical window, while ensuring the New Covenant's promise of instant, full indwelling remains intact.

—-
A little bit more on the confusion that can arise due to the timing of Acts being historical rather than doctrinal and the teachings of John the Baptist vs. the Teachings of Christ.

Acts. 19:2 is Luke writing about the actions of Paul. Paul was speaking to Twelve men who were disciples of John the Baptist (followers of John the Baptist) but had not yet heard the full Christian message. The disciples in Ephesus did not know about the Holy Spirit because their religious knowledge was incomplete. They were followers of John the Baptist but had not yet heard or understood the message of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

Their limited understanding can be explained as follows:

They had only received John's baptism: These men had undergone John's baptism of repentance, which prepared people for the coming Messiah. They knew about the need to turn away from sin and were aware that someone greater was coming.

Their teacher had limited knowledge: The text mentions that Apollos, a powerful Old Testament teacher, had previously been in Ephesus but only knew the "baptism of John" until Priscilla and Aquila explained the way of God more accurately to him (Acts 18:24–26). It is possible that these twelve men were followers of Apollos or other teachers with similarly limited knowledge.

They were unaware of Pentecost: John the Baptist had prophesied that the Messiah would "baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matthew 3:11). These men knew the prophecy but were unaware that it had been fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, which occurred about 20 years earlier. Their statement "We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit" was likely an admission that they were unaware the promised Holy Spirit had arrived in this new, powerful way.

They were "incomplete Christians": Paul's encounter revealed that they had repented but had not yet placed their faith in Jesus as the Messiah. They lacked both sufficient knowledge and saving faith. After Paul explained the gospel of Jesus, they believed and were baptized in the name of Jesus, and subsequently received the Holy Spirit.

They had received "John's baptism": They were baptized for repentance based on John the Baptist's message, which called people to prepare for the coming Messiah. However, this was an incomplete message that did not include the fulfillment of John's promise.

They lacked a full understanding of Jesus: When Paul questioned them, their knowledge of Jesus Christ was incomplete. The Holy Spirit was not given until after Jesus' death and resurrection on the Day of Pentecost. Since the men did not know about Jesus' role as the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit, they lacked both the necessary knowledge and saving faith required for the Spirit to indwell them.

The historical gap: As disciples of John, they were stuck in an earlier stage of redemptive history. They knew about the promised Messiah but were unaware that the events of Pentecost had already occurred, and the promise of the Holy Spirit had been fulfilled through Jesus.

The inadequacy of Apollos's teaching: Some scholars suggest these men may have been influenced by Apollos, an eloquent Jewish believer in Ephesus who had also been baptized only with John's baptism before being taught the complete gospel by Priscilla and Aquila. This would explain how their knowledge of Jesus was incomplete.

MEETING 37

Abiding in The Vine - Part 3 - Abiding in Christ Through Dying to Self-Empowered by the Holy Spirit

Abiding in The Vine – Part 3
Abiding in Christ Through Dying to Self: Empowered by the Holy Spirit

1. **Brief recap from last two meetings.**
   - We briefly touched on when a believer receives the Holy Spirit. We went through these scriptures: **Eph. 1:13-14, Gal. 3:2,5,14, 2 Cor. 1:22, Jn. 14:16-17 (NLT/AMP).** These passages show that a believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit the moment they believe in Christ and receive Him as Lord, with the Spirit serving as a permanent guarantee (abiding fully). They teach that the Holy Spirit is received through faith in Christ and that Jesus promises the Holy Spirit as a permanent Helper who will be in believers forever.
   - This is important because it ties in with what we also talked about which is that the Holy Spirit can help us abide in Christ.
   - We dove into the allegory of <u>abiding in the vine</u> in **Jn. 15:1-17 (NKJV/AMP).** We talked about how strongly Jesus was encouraging his disciples to abide in Him and how we can practically abide. **Jn. 15:1-17** is a message for believers. Those who abide in the vine will produce much fruit. Jesus also highlighted the importance of "remaining in Him." This speaks of ongoing relationship.
   - We also talked about the benefits of abiding and remaining in Him (bearing much fruit) and consequences of not abiding (withering).
2. **How dying to self helps us abide in Christ**
   a) Let's start with this encouragement from **Rom. 8:1-5, 13 (NKJV/AMPC).**
   b) **Rom. 8:1-5, 13** is crucial to the "remaining in Him" and "Abiding" that we spoke of in our last study. Two very important things I want to point out in this passage:
      1. Notice in v. 4 (NKJV and others such as ESV, NIV, NASB) it says "**walk**" and (AMPC) it says "**live and move**". Most English translations render the key phrase based on the Greek verb peripateō (περιπατέω) as something like *"who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit"*. The original Greek in **Rom. 8:4** uses peripateō (peh-ree-pah-TEH-oh), a metaphorical term meaning "**to walk**" or "**to conduct one's life.**" In biblical Greek, it often describes the habitual pattern or manner of daily living—<u>how one orders their behavior, choices, and overall lifestyle.</u> It is not just literal walking but a way of life. - The AMPC renders it as *"who live and move not in the ways of the flesh but in the ways of the Spirit."* This addition of *"and move"* is there to convey the comprehensive, all-encompassing nature of this **Spirit-governed life**. It draws from **Acts 17:28**—*"For in Him we live and move and have our being"*—where *"live and move"* describes <u>total dependence on God for existence, activity, and every aspect of being</u>. In the context of **Rom. 8:4** it focusing on dependance on the Holy Spirit. *"Live and Move"*:
         Our basic existence (live). - Our actions, motions, and daily conduct (move). - Every sphere of life, from routine decisions to broader patterns of behavior. We are strongly encouraged to *"live and move"* in the ways of the Spirit. This is how we can live the abundant life Jesus spoke of in **Jn. 10:10**: "*I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (or "to the full")*.
         <u>Abundant life</u>: a life directed not by selfish human desires (the flesh) <u>but by the Spirit's guidance and empowerment</u>. The abundant life isn't mere survival, material wealth, or fleeting happiness—it's a rich, overflowing existence marked by **deep peace, joy, purpose, victory over sin, fruitful relationships, and intimate fellowship with God, even amid trials**.
         *Also note *"controlled by the desires of the Spirit"* in **Rom 8:5. ~ Discuss…**

2. **Rom. 8:13**: There is a very important key direction for believers in this passage that will lead to remaining in Him, abiding in Him and living the abundant life: (NKJV) *"but **if by the Spirit** you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live"*, (AMPC) *"**But if through the power of the [Holy] Spirit** you are [habitually] putting to death (making extinct, deadening) the [evil] deeds prompted by the body, you shall [really and genuinely] live forever."*

3. **Dying to self and how doing so leads to abiding in the vine and not withering.**
   a) Before diving into all the "dying to self" scriptures, please note that **Rom. 8:13** is the answer to achieving what is in these "dying to self" passages we are going to read.
   b) **Connection Between Dying to Self and Abiding in Christ:**
   Dying to self directly enables us to abide in Christ, while self-sufficiency creates separation—like a branch fooling itself into thinking it can survive alone, hoarding nutrients it can't produce.
   Abiding requires vulnerability, humility, surrender, and staying rooted in Christ's words and love (**Jn. 15:4-5, 7**: "Abide in me"; **Jn. 15:9-10**: "Abide in my love").
   Picture a branch tangled in weeds—those weeds are the passions and desires of the flesh as mentioned in (**Gal. 5:24**). These entanglements block the life-giving flow from the vine (Jesus).
   By dying to self through the Holy Spirit's power (**Rom. 8:13** *"if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body"*), we clear the pathway. This makes it far easier to remain connected to the true Vine and bear lasting fruit.
   Jesus calls us to abide in Him, which means relying on Him rather than ourselves. Abiding is a daily choice—and denying self is choosing to abide.
   c) **The Tension: Religion vs. relationship**.
   "Hard Work" (Risking Legalism) vs. Spirit-Empowerment (Rooted in Relationship): "Dying to self" commands like "put to death" (**Col. 3:5)** or "deny yourself daily" (**Lk. 9:23**) can sound like exhausting toil—a gritty battle with the flesh, like Paul's cry, "What a wretched man I am!" (**Rom. 7:18-25**). What about Jesus saying, *"I will give you rest for your souls"* and *"My yoke is easy and my burden is light* (**Mat. 11:28-30**)? How does that fit into the equation of Dying to self?
   I believe **Rom. 8:13** offers hope with its gentle "if": a gracious invitation, not a threat.
   "By the Spirit" infuses explosive power (Dunamis - dynamite), enabling true death to self because of relying on the Helper rather than self. Dying to self = Deeper abiding which leads to rest for your soul.
   d) Let's dive into some "dying to self" passages and keep in mind that the "if" that is in **Rom. 8:13** *"if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body"*, will help us be successful with these "dying to self" passages in our lives. If by the flesh we will certainly fail.
   e) Dying to self: **Lk. 9:23; Jn 12:24-25; Rom. 6:6-8; 8:13; Gal. 2:20; 5:24; Phil. 3:7-11; Col. 3:5; 1 Pet. 2:24 …**and all these scriptures when put into practice with the help of the Holy Spirit will help us abide in the vine and remain in Him. – I felt that **Jn. 12:25** needed some commentary.
   f) **Believe's Bible Commentary on Jn. 12:25** *"He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."* - "Many people think that the important things in life are food, clothing, and pleasure. They live for these things. But in thus loving their lives, they fail to realize that the soul is more important than the body. By neglecting their soul's welfare, they lose their lives. On the other hand, there are those who count all things loss for Christ. To serve Him, they forego things highly prized among men. These are the people who will keep their lives for eternal life. To hate one's life means to love Christ more than one loves his own interests."

Charles Spurgeon Devotional

“It is ever the Holy Spirit’s work to turn our eyes away from self to Jesus; but Satan’s work is just the opposite of this, for he is constantly trying to make us regard ourselves instead of Christ. He insinuates, ‘Your sins are too great for pardon; you have no faith; you do not repent enough; you will never be able to continue to the end; you have not the joy of his children; you have such a wavering hold of Jesus.’ All these are thoughts about self, and we shall never find comfort or assurance by looking within. But the Holy Spirit turns our eyes entirely away from self and onto Christ.

We cannot ignore the reality of spiritual warfare. Satan does not want us to abide in Christ; he wants us focused on flesh-driven life rather than a Spirit-led one. If there were no battle, Scripture would not strongly encourage us with passages like:

1 Tim. 6:12 *“Fight the good fight of the faith [in the conflict with evil]; take hold of the eternal life.”*
Heb. 12:1-2 *"run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus."*
1 Cor. 9:24-27 *"run that you may obtain it."*
2 Tim. 4:7 *"I have finished the race."*
Phil. 3:14 *"press on toward the goal."*

Yet we must avoid two extremes:
Hyper-grace, which pretends there is no fight at all; and legalism, which has us striving in our own flesh to keep the law. True abiding comes through a Spirit-led life of surrender—not frantic striving to stay connected but remaining in Him through continual yielding.

This brings us full circle to **Rom. 8:13**: *“but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”* This yielding to the Spirit helps us abide in Him and abiding produces joy that is noted in (Ps. 37:4) *"Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart"*.

Homework: Reread Jn. 15:1-17 (NKJV/AMP) and then dive into the full context of these passages: **Lk. 9:23; Jn 12:24-25; Rom. 6:6-8; 8:13; Gal. 2:20; 5:24; Phil. 3:7-11; Col. 3:5; 1 Pet. 2:24** and read **Rom. 8:13** before each one. Also, while reading through these passages see how they connect with abiding in the Vine.

Next study: Self-denial and rule keeping vs relationship: surrender and identity in Christ through union by The Holy Spirit **Col. 2:20 - 3:17**.

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

Deeper Study (Below is context pulled from several commentaries)

"Dying to self" is a profound biblical theme that captures the call to surrender our sinful, self-centered nature to live fully for Christ. Below is a curated list of key drawn from across the New Testament. I've included brief context notes for each to highlight its connection to the theme. These verses emphasize crucifixion of the old self, denial of personal desires, and fruitful new life in Christ.

Scripture	Quote	Context
Luke 9:23	"Then he said to them all: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.'"	Jesus' direct call to discipleship during His ministry, stressing ongoing self-denial as essential for following Him, not a one-time act.
John 12:24-25	"Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life."	Spoken by Jesus near the end of His earthly life, using agricultural imagery to illustrate sacrificial death leading to spiritual fruitfulness.
Romans 6:6-8	"For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him."	Paul's explanation of baptism and union with Christ's death/resurrection, portraying "dying to self" as freedom from sin's power.
Galatians 2:20	"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."	Paul's personal testimony of transformation, showing dying to self enables Christ's indwelling life through faith.
Galatians 5:24	"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."	In the context of walking by the Spirit vs. the flesh, this verse links dying to self with belonging to Christ and freedom from sinful impulses.
Colossians	"Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your	Paul's practical exhortation to

Scripture	Quote	Context
3:5	earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry."	believers in Colossae, urging active mortification of sin as part of heavenly-minded living.
Philippians 3:7-8	"But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ."	Paul's reflection on his former achievements, revaluing them as worthless compared to intimacy with Christ— a mindset shift in dying to self.
1 Peter 2:24	"'He himself bore our sins' in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; 'by his wounds you have been healed.'"	Peter's encouragement to suffering believers, connecting Christ's atonement to our freedom to die to sin and embrace righteous living.
Romans 8:13	"For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live."	Paul's contrast between fleshly living (leading to death) and Spirit-empowered mortification, emphasizing reliance on the Holy Spirit.
Matthew 16:24-25	"Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.'"	Parallel to Luke 9:23, spoken after Peter's confession, underscoring the paradox of losing life to truly find it in Christ.

These verses collectively paint a picture of dying to self as both a decisive act at conversion and a daily rhythm of surrender.

Deep Dive: What "Dying to Self" Means Practically for the Believer

Theologically, "dying to self" is rooted in the believer's union with Christ's death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4, NIV: "Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life"). It's not self-annihilation or masochism but a transformative exchange: the "old self"—our sin-dominated, self-exalting nature (Ephesians 4:22, NIV: "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires")—is crucified so Christ can live vibrantly through us

(Galatians 2:20). This echoes Jesus' own path: He "humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:8, NIV), modeling surrender for our redemption.

Practically, for the believer, this means shifting from autonomy to dependence:

- Renouncing Self-Reliance: It's letting go of the illusion that we control our lives apart from God. As Jesus taught, clinging to "this life" (self-preservation, comfort, reputation) leads to loss, while releasing it yields eternal gain (John 12:25).
- Mortifying Sin: Actively confronting and "putting to death" habits like pride, lust, or greed (Colossians 3:5; Romans 8:13), not through willpower alone but by the Spirit's power—recognizing sin's roots in self-worship.
- Embracing Christ's Priorities: Daily choices reflect His lordship, like forgiving enemies (as in Luke 9:23's "follow me") or serving others selflessly (Mark 10:45, NIV: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many").
- Fruitful Paradox: Like the seed in John 12:24, death to self isn't barren—it's multiplicative, producing character (Galatians 5:22-23), ministry impact, and joy in God's presence (Psalm 16:11, NIV: "You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence").

In context, this isn't abstract mysticism; it's the heartbeat of New Testament ethics. Paul, writing to real communities facing persecution or cultural pressures, frames it as empowerment for holy living (2 Corinthians 5:15, NIV: "And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again"). It's both positional (accomplished in Christ's work) and progressive (ongoing sanctification).

Putting It into Practice Without Falling into Legalism

The danger of "dying to self" is twisting it into a checklist of dos and don'ts—legalism—where effort becomes the measure of spirituality, breeding guilt or pride (Colossians 2:20-23, NIV warns against "self-made rules" that lack true power). Jesus critiqued this in the Pharisees, who "neglect the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness" (Matthew 23:23, NIV). The antidote? Anchor everything in grace and relationship, as dying to self flows from Christ's finished work, not our striving (Ephesians 2:8-9, NIV: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God").

Remember, progress isn't linear—setbacks are opportunities to reaffirm faith in Christ's sufficiency (2 Corinthians 12:9, NIV: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness"). If legalistic tendencies creep in (e.g., measuring holiness by performance), return to the gospel: You're already dead to sin and alive to God (Romans 6:11). Dying to self, done right, liberates you to love boldly, free from self's tyranny. If this resonates deeply, consider meditating on Galatians 2:20 this week—let it reframe your day.

And let's go even deeper…….

Practical Meaning for the Believer and Putting It into Practice Without Legalism

Delving deeper, dying to self isn't ascetic self-loathing or Stoic endurance; it's the glad renunciation of illusions that choke joy—the mirage that I am the center, sustainer, and endpoint of existence. Biblically, it's the outworking of imago Dei restored: created for union (Genesis 1:27), fractured by autonomy (Genesis 3:6), redeemed to reflect Christ (Romans 8:29). Practically, this manifests in the mundane: yielding the last word in an argument (echoing Philippians 2:3-4's "consider others better"), fasting from social media to hunger for God's voice (Psalm 42:1), or stewarding work as worship rather than ladder-climbing (Colossians 3:23). It's the slow alchemy where self's dross—fear of man, lust for control—melts under Calvary's heat, unveiling capacities for empathy, creativity, and boldness we never knew.

Yet, as you noted, implementation risks legalism's snare: a performance treadmill where "dying" becomes another metric for self-justification, inverting the gospel (Galatians 3:3: "Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?"). The safeguard? Anchor in already-not-yet grace: You're positionally dead (Romans 6:11), progressively pruning (John 15:2), and eternally secure (John 10:28-29).

Tying in John 15:1-8: How Dying to Self Helps One Abide in Christ (and Vice Versa)

John 15:1-8's vineyard tableau is no mere metaphor—it's Jesus' Upper Room legacy (John 13-17), spoken hours before betrayal, imprinting abiding as the antidote to orphan-hearted isolation. "I am the true vine" (v. 1) contrasts Israel's failed fruitfulness (Isaiah 5:1-7); the Father-gardener prunes (kathairō: cleanses/cuts) for abundance, but fruitless branches face excision—not vindictiveness, but mercy's severity to restore purpose.

Deeper linkage: Dying to self facilitates abiding because self-sufficiency is the primal disconnect—the branch's delusion of independence, hoarding nutrients it can't produce. Abiding (menō) demands vulnerability: remaining in Christ's words (v. 7), love (v. 9-10), and answered prayer as overflow. Self-death clears the sapline: Imagine a branch entangled in weeds (passions, per Galatians 5:24)—it starves the vine's flow. By "hating life in this world" (John 12:25), we uproot those, yielding to the Father's shears. Reciprocally, abiding sustains dying: Immersed in the vine, self's clamor quiets; we "ask whatever" (v. 7) for pruning grace, bearing fruit that evidences discipleship (v. 8)—not self-manufactured, but Christ-expressed (John 15:5: "apart from me you can do nothing").

Practically elaborated: In relational friction, abide by reciting v. 4 ("Remain in me"); die to self by releasing offense, praying for the offender (Matthew 5:44). Over seasons, this cultivates orchard-deep roots: Seasons of barrenness? Trust the Gardener's cut (Hebrews 12:11: "No discipline seems pleasant... but painful. Later, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness"). The synergy? Dying loosens soil for abiding's roots; abiding nourishes dying's harvest. It's cyclical communion, glorifying the Father through lives that whisper, "Not I, but the Vine."

The Tension of "Hard Work" vs. Spirit-Empowerment in Romans 8:13

Your insight pierces the paradox: Commands like "put to death" (Colossians 3:5) or "deny yourself daily" (Luke 9:23) evoke ascetic toil, a gritty wrestling match with the flesh (as in Romans 7:18-25's "wretched man" cry). Yet Romans 8:13 reframes: The "if" is conditional invitation, not threat—"by the Spirit" (pneumati) injects dynamite (dynamis, same root) into our agency. It's not effortless passivity (we do the putting) nor Pelagian sweat (Spirit authors the capacity). Deeper: This echoes Exodus' manna—gathered daily by human hands, yet heaven-sourced. The "hard work" is the friction of incarnation: Spirit-wind billows our sails, but we hoist them; He ignites the fire, but we fan it (2 Timothy 1:6). Flesh-life? A slow suicide by self-strangulation. Spirit-life? Vivid co-resurrection, where misdeeds wither not from willpower's whip but Love's gaze.

This tension guards against extremes: Hyper-grace ignores the fight (1 Timothy 6:12: "fight the good fight"); duty-ism orphans the Helper. Instead, it's Trinitarian dance—Father prunes, Son models, Spirit empowers—turning drudgery to delight (Psalm 37:4). When verses weigh heavy, pause: "Spirit, this death is Yours to wield in me." Abiding blooms here: Not striving to remain, but remaining through yielded struggle, as branches sway in the Vine's unforced rhythm.

MEETING 38

Abiding in The Vine - Part 4 - Beyond Rules - Spirit-Empowered Surrender and Deeper Union with Christ

Abiding in The Vine – Part 4
Beyond Rules: Spirit-Empowered Surrender and Deeper Union with Christ - Deeper Abiding

1. **Brief recap from last meetings. Last meeting we talked about:**
   - The connection between dying to self, abiding in Christ, how dying to self helps us "remain in Him" and how relying on self creates separation from the vine.
   - How abiding requires vulnerability, humility, surrender, and staying rooted in Christ's words and love **Jn. 15:4-5, 7**; **Jn. 15:9-10**. Putting these together along with **Col. 3:16**: ***"Abide in Christ, abide in His Love, abide in His Word and let His Word abide in you."***
   - How the passions and desires of the flesh as mentioned in (**Gal. 5:24**) are like weed entanglements that block the life-giving flow from the vine (Jesus).
   - How abiding is a daily choice—and denying self is choosing to abide.
   - How important **Rom. 8:13** is in regards to dying to self. *"if <u>by the Spirit</u> you put to death the misdeeds of the body."* If by the Spirit we will be successful with "dying to self" and abiding, if by the flesh we will certainly fail.
   - **If by the flesh = religion / If by the Spirit = Relationship.**
   - Do we want a flesh-driven life or a Spirit-led life of surrender.
2. **Grasping the Crucial Difference: Flesh-Powered vs. Spirit-led Obedience.**
   a) Let's walk through **Col. 2:20–23 (NLT)** and **Gal. 3:1–4 (NLT)** together, and then move into **Col. 3:1–17 (NLT).** We will see a huge shift. Col. 2:23 is very important to noticed prior to moving onto Col. 3. The earlier passages warn against futile, flesh-powered rule-keeping, while chapter 3 shows us the beautiful alternative: a <u>Spirit-led life rooted in surrender and our new identity in Christ which leads to abiding in the True Vine</u>. This is the key—we're no longer striving in our own strength ("just try harder"), but **learning to live the new life through the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us**. ~ This is deeply connected with Abiding in the Vine which we have discussed in Part 1-3 of this study.
   b) In the last study we talked about how important **Rom. 8:13** is. Let's apply this to **Col. 3:5**.
      - **Rom. 8:13 (NLT)** *"For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live."*
      - **Col. 3:5 (NLT)** *"So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world."*
      - **Putting them together (application):** *"But <u>if through the power of the Holy Spirit</u> you put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you, you will live."* This is how we obey **Col. 3:5**, not by gritting our teeth in self-effort, but by relying on the Spirit's power to <u>mortify sin</u> and experience true life in Christ**. This requires yielding to the Holy Spirit for help which all leads to deeper abiding in the Vine.**

c) Let's look at **Col. 3:5 (AMPC):** *"So kill (deaden, deprive of power) the evil desire lurking in your members [those animal impulses and all that is earthly in you that is* <u>*employed in sin*</u>*]."* (**AMP**) says *"…[with its sensual, self-centered instincts]" in lieu of "Animal impulses."*
Here, "employed" means engaged in, occupied with, or devoted to sin. We're putting to death the evil desires that lead to sinful actions.
This can only happen by the Spirit's power, not our own fleshly efforts. We can muster willpower for ordinary things—like getting up early, exercising, or skipping that second Oreo—but deep spiritual battles (truly killing sinful desires lurking within us) require the Holy Spirit. Dying to self is, at its core, a spiritual fight and is vital to abiding.

d) **Col. 2:23 (NKJV)** declares that self-imposed rules *"are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh,"* or in the words of the NLT, *"they provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires."* "They" refers to those human regulations and the fleshly effort to keep them. - This should encourage us to focus on the <u>Spirit-led "rule keeping"</u> that is mentioned in **Col. 3:1-17** - where true transformation and victory over sin happens. <u>Victory over sin leads to deeper abiding</u>. **How does this lead to deeper abiding?**

- Sin disconnects a believer from the True Vine (Jesus) by breaking the vital, life-giving connection needed for spiritual nourishment, causing spiritual dryness, unfruitfulness, and eventual separation, much like a branch severed from the vine, which withers and becomes useless. Victory over sin helps keep the believer connected to the Vine.
- As mentioned in our last study: Sins are like weed entanglements that block the life-giving flow from the vine (Jesus).

e) I also want to link in **2 Pet. 1:5-7** with the above passages because it ties in well.

- **2 Peter 1:5-7 (NKJV)** *"But also for this very reason,* <u>*giving all diligence*</u>*,* <u>*add to your faith*</u> *virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love."* (ESV and others) say "<u>Make every effort</u>".
- Peter urges us to *"give all diligence"* (NKJV) or *"make every effort"* (ESV) to supplement our faith with these virtues. But here's the key—this language can sound like rule-keeping if we miss the context. We can easily slip into legalism, trying in the flesh to force these qualities, instead of letting God work in us through the Holy Spirit's power to produce these qualities.

f) Linking **2 Pet. 1:5-7** to Spirit-led Obedience in **Col. 3:1-17**: Both passages describe progressive Christian growth—moving from faith toward mature Christ-likeness through a sequence of virtues. They use imperative (urgent) language such as ("put on," "add to," "give all diligence," "make every effort"), which can sound like rule-keeping, e.g. do this or else! However, the context in each shows this effort is not legalistic self-effort; it is **faith-fueled, grace-enabled, Spirit-empowered diligence**.

g) Also notice how the fruit of the Spirit (**Gal. 5:22-23)** lines up with **2 Peter 1:5-7**.
Gal. 5:22-23 Holy Spirit produces: " love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control".
2 Peter 1:5-7 add to your faith: "virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love."
   - Allowing the Holy Spirit to produce this fruit requires yielding to the Holy Spirit. Yielding to the Holy Spirit is the open door and the starting point to how we abide in the True Vine (**Jn. 15:1-17**). This abiding that is mentioned in **Jn. 15:1-17** has an outflow of all characteristics that are mentioned in **2 Pet. 1:5-6** and in **Gal. 5:22-23**.

h) **Phil. 2:12–13** also ties into the above passages and beautifully ties all this together:
"Therefore, my beloved… work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."
This passage captures the divine-human cooperation in sanctification perfectly. We are called to diligent, active effort—Work out our own salvation (**Phil. 2:12–13)**, putting to death sin (**Col. 3**), putting on Christlike virtues, and making every effort to supplement our faith (**2 Pet. 1:5–7**)—yet the desire and power to do so come from God Himself. E.g. We should be intentionally allowing the Holy Spirit produce good fruit.

i) What is the main theme of abiding in **Jn. 15:1-17**? Abiding and bearing much fruit!

3. The Spiritual battle

Our spiritual battle is real, but it should not be mere fleshly self-effort or legalism. Rather, it should be grace-empowered and Spirit-led, relying on the Holy Spirit rather than on ourselves.

- Be encouraged: the God who commands your obedience is the very One working in you to make it possible. Let God work in you. Yield and surrender daily to the Holy Spirit's power, cooperating with Him in dying to self so you can add to your faith and abide in Christ (**Jn. 15:1–11**) and as a result remain "in Him" and bear lasting fruit.

"I see yielding to the Holy Spirit in faith and in surrender, as being crucial to adding to my faith…mentioned in **2 Pet. 1:5**. As I read the Word, the Holy Spirit teaches me about these promises spoken of in **2 Pet. 1:4** and through faith and by the Spirit I can walk in these promises. The "adding to" mentioned in **2 Pet. 1:5-7** is me allowing the Holy Spirit to produce in me good fruit. "Yielding and letting **Gal. 5:22-23**, **Rom. 8:13**", versus "trying and failing **2 Pet. 1:5-7**". I have tried to work out **2 Pet. 1:5-7** in my flesh in the past and have failed miserably. Yes, there is intentionality involved, but allowing the Holy Spirit to help me with this intentionality through faith is key. That is why I say yielding to the Holy Spirit is the open door and the starting point to how I abide in Him **Jn. 15:1-17**. This abiding that is mentioned in **Jn. 15:1-17** has an outflow of all of the characteristics that are mentioned in **2 Pet. 1:5-6** and in **Gal. 5:22-23**.

Homework:

1. Read all of **Col. Chapter 2** and **3**. As you read, make note of every reference to rules, self-effort and human regulations, (**chapter 2**) and every call to "put off/put to death" or "put on" virtues (**chapter 3**).
2. Then read **Jn. 15:1–11**. Ask yourself: How does the warning against powerless self-effort in **Col. 2** connect to the danger of being cut off from the Vine and withering? How does the Spirit-led obedience of Colossians 3 help us "remain in Christ", "stay connect to the vine" and "bear lasting fruit"?
3. Read through **2 Pet. 1:5-7**, **Gal. 5:22-23**, **Rom. 8:13** and see how they are all connected with abiding in the Vine **Jn. 15:1-17**.
4. Note on "mortify" that is mentioned in **Rom. 8:13** & **Col. 3:5**: To subdue or deaden (the body or its sinful desires) through self-denial and discipline—but, as we'll see, empowered by the Spirit.

   Extended homework for deeper study online here:
   https://christinyoustudymap.com/biblestudies/

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

For deeper study:

Key Points on Reconciling These Passages

- **Yielding to the Holy Spirit as the Foundation**: Research suggests that the "make every effort" in 2 Peter 1:5-7 is not solely human striving but a cooperative process empowered by the Spirit, avoiding the pitfalls of fleshly attempts that lead to failure.
- **Integration of Effort and Grace**: The virtues in 2 Peter overlap significantly with the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23, indicating that personal intentionality (like adding to faith) is enabled by divine provision, not independent of it.
- **Abiding in Christ as the Key Mechanism**: John 15:1-17's emphasis on abiding in the vine aligns with this, where remaining in Christ produces fruit naturally, connecting to the Spirit's work in Romans 8:13 for putting to death sinful deeds.
- **Practical Balance**: While intentional actions are involved, yielding in faith prevents burnout, as evidenced by personal experiences and biblical exhortations to walk by the Spirit.

Understanding the Role of Yielding

I see yielding to the Holy Spirit in faith and surrender as crucial to adding to my faith, as mentioned in 2 Peter 1:5. This isn't about striving in my own strength but allowing the Spirit to work through me, transforming my character from the inside out.

Connecting Scripture Reading and Promises

As I read the Word, the Holy Spirit teaches me about God's promises in 2 Peter 1:4, and through faith, empowered by the Spirit, I can live them out. This process makes the "adding to" in 2 Peter 1:5-7 a matter of letting the Spirit produce good fruit in me, rather than forcing it myself.

Contrast Between Yielding and Striving

It's like yielding and letting the Holy Spirit bring forth the fruit of Galatians 5:22-23 and the mortifying power described in Romans 8:13, versus trying in my own flesh and failing at 2 Peter 1:5-7. I've tried working out these virtues on my own in the past and failed miserably—yes, there's intentionality required, but the Holy Spirit helps guide that intentionality through faith.

Abiding as the Starting Point

That's why I believe yielding to the Holy Spirit is the open door and starting point for abiding in Him, as outlined in John 15:1-17. This abiding naturally outflows into all the characteristics mentioned in 2 Peter 1:5-7 and Galatians 5:22-23, creating a harmonious growth in my walk with God.

In exploring the reconciliation of 2 Peter 1:5-7 with Galatians 5:22-23, Romans 8:13, and John 15:1-17, it's essential to recognize the interplay between human responsibility and divine empowerment in the Christian life. The passage in 2 Peter 1:5-7 instructs believers to "make every effort" to supplement faith with a series of virtues: moral excellence (or goodness), knowledge, self-control, perseverance (or patient endurance), godliness, brotherly affection (or kindness), and love. This list builds progressively, starting from faith as the foundation and culminating in love, emphasizing a diligent pursuit of spiritual maturity. At first glance, this call to effort might seem to rely on human willpower, potentially conflicting with the idea in Galatians 5:22-23 that such qualities—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—are "fruit" produced by the Holy Spirit, not manufactured by us.

However, a closer examination reveals harmony rather than contradiction. The virtues in 2 Peter overlap substantially with the fruit of the Spirit: for instance, love appears in both as the pinnacle, self-control is explicitly shared, patience aligns with perseverance, kindness with brotherly affection, and goodness with moral excellence. This suggests that Peter's exhortation is not about self-generated righteousness but about cooperating with the Holy Spirit's transformative work. As one source notes, these qualities are developed through God's provisions—His glory, excellence, and promises (2 Peter 1:3-4)—which enable believers to partake in the divine nature, escaping worldly corruption. Human effort, then, is the **diligent response to grace, not its replacement**; it's about **applying what God has already supplied**, much like Philippians 2:12-13 urges working out salvation because God works in us.

This reconciliation becomes clearer when incorporating Romans 8:13, which states that "if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." Here, the emphasis is on the Spirit's power for mortifying sin, contrasting with fleshly efforts that lead to failure. **Attempting to "add to" faith in 2 Peter through mere human strength often results in discouragement**, as personal testimonies and biblical warnings against legalism illustrate. Instead, yielding to the Spirit—surrendering in faith—allows for genuine progress, **where intentional actions like studying Scripture or practicing self-discipline are empowered rather than self-reliant**. The Holy Spirit illuminates God's promises during Bible reading, fostering knowledge and moral excellence, and enables self-control and perseverance amid trials.

John 15:1-17 further ties these together through the metaphor of abiding in the vine. Jesus describes Himself as the true vine, with believers as branches that must remain in Him to bear fruit—fruit that includes love (John 15:9-17) and aligns with the characteristics in both 2 Peter and Galatians. **Abiding involves ongoing communion with Christ through prayer, obedience, and reliance on the Word, which naturally produces the Spirit's fruit**. Without this connection, efforts are fruitless (John 15:4-5), echoing the futility of fleshly striving. **Yet, abiding requires intentionality**: **choosing to yield daily, which opens the door to the Spirit's production of virtues**.

This abiding outflows into godliness, brotherly affection, and love, fulfilling Peter's progression and Paul's list.

Personal reflection often highlights this dynamic—many believers report failing when trying to cultivate these traits independently, **only to experience growth through surrender and Spirit-led intentionality**. For example, pursuing knowledge through Scripture isn't mere intellectual exercise but Spirit-illuminated insight that builds self-control and endurance. **This process is lifelong**, as Peter warns that neglecting it leads to spiritual shortsightedness (2 Peter 1:8-9), while Galatians affirms that walking by the Spirit avoids gratifying the flesh (Galatians 5:16).

To visualize the overlaps, consider the following table comparing the key elements:

Aspect	**2 Peter 1:5-7 Virtues**	**Galatians 5:22-23 Fruit**	**Connection to John 15 & Romans 8:13**
Foundation	Faith (gift from God)	Produced by Holy Spirit	Abiding in Christ (vine) as source; Spirit empowers faith
Moral/Goodness	Moral excellence	Goodness	Fruit from abiding; putting to death evil deeds by Spirit
Knowledge/ Wisdom	Knowledge	(Implied in Spirit-led living)	Word abiding in you (John 15:7); mind set on Spirit (Rom. 8)
Discipline	Self-control, perseverance	Self-control, patience	Endurance through trials; mortifying flesh by Spirit
Relational	Godliness, brotherly affection	Kindness, gentleness, faithfulness	Love one another (John 15:12); life in the Spirit
Capstone	Love	Love	Greatest command; evidence of abiding and Spirit's work

This table underscores the unified biblical theme: **growth involves effort, but it's Spirit-dependent, rooted in abiding**.

In summary, yielding to the Holy Spirit in faith and surrender is crucial to adding to faith as in 2 Peter 1:5. As believers read the Word, the Spirit teaches about promises (2 Peter 1:4), enabling walking in them through faith. The "adding to" is allowing the Spirit to produce fruit (Galatians 5:22-23), contrasting with fleshly failures. Intentionality is key, but Spirit-aided through faith, making yielding the entry to abiding in John 15, outflowing these characteristics.

Double bonus deeper study on Abiding

What is abiding? – Jn. 15:4 - Abide: Original Word: μένω / Pronunciation: meh'-no - continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry for, to continue to be present, to be held, kept, continually, to remain as one, (of a relationship) to exist permanently in, inseparably united.

There are scripture that say the moment we believe in Christ we are in Christ and we abide in Him and He in us and there are other scriptures that encourage us to remain in Him, to continue to abide. Below I have placed a reconciliation question and answer for study.

Note/disclaimer: Below is an A.I. response to my challenging question and is pulling from the entire text of the Bible in these versions AMP, AMPC, ESV, KJV, NASB, NIV, as well as many commentaries, it is always wise to dig into the Word of God yourself and read the scriptures in full context while allowing the Holy Spirit to teach you as you dive in. Ask this same question yourself and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal truth as you dig into the word for the answers. Use the question and answer below for deeper study and a starting point for your own study.

Question:
How do I reconcile 1 John 4:13 (AMP) "13 By this we know [with confident assurance] that <u>we abide in Him</u> and He in us, because He has given to us His [Holy] Spirit." that says a believer abides in Christ because they have the holy spirit which speaks of the new position of a believer, that they are now in union with the father, son and holy spirit and now abide in Christ with scriptures like John 15:4-7 which talks about abiding in the true vine which is a strong encouragement to abide in Christ or be cut off from the vine and wither. As I study the Word, I am seeing that abiding in Christ happened at salvation, e.g. the believers position changes to now being "in Christ" and at the same time is an ongoing process/choice through intimate relationship with Christ. At salvation a person's position changes to now being in Christ/abiding in Christ but abiding is an also ongoing choice similar to a believer having been sanctified (set apart) at salvation and is being sanctified, an ongoing process?

Grok 4's answer:
The verses you're comparing—1 John 4:13 and John 15:4–7—use the same Greek word for "abide" (menō, meaning "remain, dwell, continue"), but biblical scholars widely recognize that the word is applied in two distinct senses across Scripture: positional abiding (permanent union with Christ) and experiential/practical abiding (ongoing fellowship and fruit-bearing). These are not contradictory; they describe different aspects of the Christian life. Your observation is exactly on target: salvation grants a new, unbreakable position in Christ, while abiding in the John 15 sense is an ongoing choice to walk in intimate dependence on Him.

1. Positional Abiding (Permanent Union) – 1 John 4:13

At the moment of salvation, every true believer is placed "in Christ" and receives the indwelling Holy Spirit as the seal and guarantee of that union.

- 1 John 4:13 (AMP): "By this we know [with confident assurance] that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given to us His [Holy] Spirit."
- This is objective assurance: the presence of the Holy Spirit is evidence that we are permanently in union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Supporting passages:
    - Ephesians 1:13–14: Believers are "sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it."
    - Romans 8:9: "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ."
    - John 14:16–17, 20: Jesus promises the Spirit will "be in you" and "you in me, and I in you" — a permanent indwelling and mutual abiding that begins at salvation.
    - 2 Corinthians 1:21–22; Ephesians 4:30: The Spirit is God's seal and deposit, and we are sealed "for the day of redemption."

This positional reality is irreversible. No true believer can ever be "cut out" of this union (John 10:28–29; Romans 8:38–39).

2. Experiential/Practical Abiding (Ongoing Fellowship) – John 15:4–7

In the vine-and-branches metaphor, Jesus is speaking to His disciples (already believers) about remaining in vital, dependent relationship with Him in order to bear fruit.

- John 15:4–7 (key points):
    - "Abide in me, and I in you" — a command and invitation.
    - The branch that "does not abide" cannot bear fruit, withers, and is "thrown away… gathered… cast into the fire and burned."
    - Yet fruit-bearing branches are "pruned" (disciplined) so they bear more fruit (v. 2).

This is not about losing salvation but about:

- Fruitfulness vs. fruitlessness in daily life.
- Answered prayer, joy, and effectiveness flowing from close communion (vv. 7, 11).

- Divine discipline for believers who drift into self-reliance or sin (Hebrews 12:5–11; 1 Corinthians 11:30–32).

The “cutting off” and “burning” language refers to:

- Temporal judgment/discipline (loss of fruit, effectiveness, joy, rewards), or
- Removal from positions of service/fruitfulness in this life, or
- In some interpretations, exposure of false professors who were never truly attached to the vine (see Judas in the Upper Room context of John 13–17; 1 John 2:19).

But for genuine believers, the warning is motivational: choose daily dependence on Christ (through His Word, prayer, obedience, reliance on the Spirit) to experience the fullness of the positional union we already have.

Reconciliation Summary

- At salvation: You are grafted into the Vine positionally and permanently. The Holy Spirit’s indwelling is the proof and seal of this abiding/union (1 John 4:13; Romans 8:1, 9).
- In daily living: You are exhorted to abide experientially—to remain in close, obedient fellowship—so that Christ’s life flows through you, producing fruit, answered prayer, and joy (John 15:4–11; Colossians 2:6–7: “As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him”).
- The same Spirit who guarantees your position also empowers your practical abiding (Galatians 5:16–25; Romans 8:13–14)

Your distinction—positional change at salvation vs. ongoing choice in relationship—is the classic biblical resolution taught by many sound teachers (e.g., union vs. communion; justification vs. sanctification in its progressive sense). The warnings in John 15 are loving encouragements to live out the reality you already possess, not threats to undo the finished work of salvation. Keep studying—these truths bring great assurance and motivation to draw near to Him daily (James 4:8).

Tripple bonus deep-dive into Col. 2:23

Understanding the Warning in Colossians 2:23

V. 23 (NIV) "Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility, and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence."

V. 23 (NLT) “These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person’s evil desires.”

(In some translations like the one you cited, it uses "pious self-denial" and "severe bodily discipline.")

This is part of a larger passage (Colossians 2:20–23) where Paul is warning the Colossian church against false teachings—likely a mix of early Gnostic-like ideas, Jewish legalism, and ascetic practices—that promoted human-made rules ("Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!" v. 21). These rules emphasized external acts of self-denial (e.g., strict dietary restrictions, extreme physical austerity) as a way to achieve spiritual superiority or conquer sin. Paul says they **appear** wise and devout, but they are ultimately ineffective because they rely on human effort and willpower alone, without addressing the heart or depending on Christ's power.

The key problem: This type of "pious self-denial" is **self-imposed** (human tradition, not God's command) and produces only a **false humility**. It does not truly conquer evil desires because it bypasses the gospel.

Scriptures That Encourage Self-Denial ("Dying to Self")

The New Testament repeatedly calls believers to self-denial, but it is framed very differently. Here are key examples:

- **Matthew 16:24–25** (also Mark 8:34–35; Luke 9:23): "Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.'" → This is a call to radical surrender to Christ, not optional rules.
- **Luke 14:27, 33**: "And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple... In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples." → Self-denial here means prioritizing Jesus above possessions, comfort, and personal ambitions.

- **Romans 6:6–11**: "For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with… Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." → "Dying to self" is a spiritual reality accomplished through union with Christ's death and resurrection.
- **Galatians 2:20**: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God…" → Paul describes true self-denial as Christ living through us, not our own striving.
- **Galatians 5:24**: "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." → Enabled by the Spirit, not human rules.
- **Philippians 3:7–8**: "But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ… I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ." → Paul "denies" his former achievements and status for the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus.
- **2 Corinthians 5:14–15**: "…those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."

How to Compare and Reconcile Them: Key Distinctions

The Bible does **not** contradict itself—both the warning and the encouragements are consistent when we see the differences:

Aspect	Colossians 2:23 (Warning Against)	Positive Calls to Self-Denial ("Dying to Self")
Source	Human commands and teachings (v. 22)	Command of Christ and the gospel
Motive	Appearance of wisdom, false humility, spiritual superiority	Love for Christ, gratitude for grace, desire to follow Him
Method	External rules, harsh physical discipline, self-imposed religion	Internal transformation through union with Christ and the Spirit
Power Source	Human willpower and effort alone	Christ's death/resurrection and the Holy Spirit
Outcome	No real help against evil desires; temporary or illusory restraint	True freedom from sin's power; new life in Christ
Focus	Denying the body to earn merit or	Denying the sinful self (ego, pride, flesh)

suppress desires	to let Christ reign

Summary of the difference:

The "pious self-denial" Paul criticizes is **legalistic asceticism**—rules people invent to look spiritual while relying on their own strength. It fails because it doesn't change the heart.

True biblical self-denial is **gospel-centered**—we "die to self" not to earn salvation, but because we **already have** salvation in Christ. It is a joyful response of surrender, empowered by the Holy Spirit, that actually produces lasting victory over sin.

In practice: Fasting, simplicity, or disciplining the body can be good when done in dependence on Christ (e.g., Jesus' own fasting in Matthew 4). But when they become rules for earning favor or impressing others, they fall into the Colossians 2 trap.

This distinction protects us from both extremes: legalism (human rules) and license (no discipline at all). True self-denial flows from grace, not toward it.

MEETING 39

Intimacy with Christ Through Deeper Abiding - Part 1

Intimacy with Christ Through Deeper Abiding – Part 1
Drawing Near: The Path to Deeper Fellowship

1. **Brief recap from last meetings. Last meeting we talked about:**
   - The crucial difference between flesh-powered obedience vs. Spirit-led obedience.
     - Flesh-powered rule-keeping vs. a Spirit-led life rooted in surrender and our new identity in Christ which leads to abiding in the True Vine.
     - If by the flesh = religion / if by the Spirit = relationship
   - Learning to live the new life through the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.
   - Putting **Rom. 8:13** and **Col. 3:5** together. My paraphrase: *"<u>But if through the power of the Holy Spirit</u> you put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you, you will live."* This is how we obey **Col. 3:5**'s directive of "put to death", not by gritting our teeth in self-effort, but by relying on the Spirit's power to mortify sin and experience true life in Christ.
   - How this requires <u>yielding to the Holy Spirit</u> for help which leads to deeper abiding.
   - How the virtues we're called to add to our faith in **2 Pet. 1:5-7** align closely with the fruit of the Spirit in **Gal. 5:22-23**. <u>Note</u>: The fruit that the Holy Spirit produces. Let's read both.
   - This abiding that is mentioned in **Jn. 15:1-17** (abiding in the Vine) has an outflow of all the characteristics that are mentioned in **2 Pet. 1:5-7** and in **Gal. 5:22-23**.
   - The difference between trying in our own flesh and failing vs. yielding and letting the Holy Spirit produce fruit and guide our intentionality through faith.
2. **<u>Intimacy with Christ</u> is the fruit of intentional abiding.**
   a) I want to start with reading **Jas. 4:7-10 (NLT, NKJV, AMP).** This is a power-packed passage of 4 verses! I want to break down each verse, but I want to start with **v. 8.** *"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."*
      - I want to ask an honest question: How do we reconcile this concept of *"if we draw near to God, He will draw near to us"* with all the scriptures in the New Testament that talk about how **believers are in union with Christ** and how **Christ is in the believer**? You can't get much "nearer" than that. This question is what led me to this study.
      - **Answer**: James is speaking of deeper experiential intimacy through humility → surrender → cleansing and repentance, all of which require intentional steps on our part.

   b) **Jas. 4:8** is a call to repentant action: (*There is a lot to unpack in this one verse!)*
      - "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you" → intentional pursuit of God's presence through humility and repentance, met by His gracious response.
      - "Cleanse your hands" → outward behavior.
      - "Purify your hearts" → inward motives.
      - "You double-minded" → stop trying to love both God and the world. (**Hinders abiding!)**

   c) In Christ, you are "seated in the heavenly places" (**Eph.2:6**). However, **Jas. 4:7-10** addresses the experience of that reality—moving from having Christ "in" you to "abiding" in Him.

3. **The Distinction: Union vs. Communion**

a) To understand how we "draw near" to someone already living inside us, we must look at the difference between Union and Communion.
   - **Union (Position)**: When you believed, you were joined to Christ. You are "in Him." This is a fixed, legal reality. You cannot get "closer" to God in terms of your acceptance; you are already 100% accepted in the Beloved and are in union with Him.
   - **Communion (Abiding):** This is the relational intimacy. Just as two people can live in the same house but be "miles apart" emotionally because of an argument, sin creates a "relational distance" even while our "legal union" remains intact.

b) One thing that is at the root of **Jas. 4:7-10** is true humility and true repentance.
   Jas. 4:7-10 is often regarded as one of the most concentrated "how-to" guides for repentance in the New Testament. It moves beyond a mere feeling of guilt and provides a tactical roadmap for turning back to God. (Full context: **Jas. 4:1-6** – what to repent from?)

c) In **Jas. 4:7-10**, James outlines this roadmap to repentance: a process that involves the mind, the will, and the emotions:
   - **Submission and Resistance (v. 7)**: Repentance starts with a change in allegiance. You cannot "resist the devil" until you have first "submitted to God." It is a dual-action move: submissively pivoting toward the Creator while actively pushing away the tempter. "Submit" (hupotasso) is a military term meaning to "rank under." Repentance isn't just saying "I'm sorry"; it's a voluntary realignment of your life under God's authority.
   - **Drawing Near (v. 8a)**: This is the heart of repentance - a deliberate relational pursuit. While sin creates a functional distance between the believer and God, repentance acts as the decisive doorway that closes the gap. If repentance is the turn that brings us through the door, humility is the ongoing hallway that leads to deeper abiding; it is the posture that maintains the intimacy of our union with Christ that already exists."
   - Regarding *"Draw near to God,"* A Precept Austin commentary puts it this way: *"this is a conditional promise. God is always present, but the experience of His presence is reserved for those who actively seek Him. It's a "reciprocal movement": as we take the step, He meets us there."*
   - **External and Internal Cleansing (v. 8b)**: *"Wash your hands"* refers to outward actions (conduct), while *"purify your hearts"* refers to inward motives (sanctification). James addresses the *"double-minded"* person who tries to love both the world and God.
   - **Grief Over Sin (v. 9)**: This is the emotional weight of repentance. James uses strong language—"*be wretched*," *"mourn*," and *"weep"*—to describe godly sorrow. (conviction) It's the opposite of a *"cheap grace"* mentality; it recognizes the gravity of offending a holy God.
   - **The Goal: Humility (v. 10)**: The process ends where it began: low at the feet of God. The promise is that when we humble ourselves, He is the one who does the lifting.

d) While every true believer is already positionally united to Christ and indwelt by His Spirit (permanent union), experiencing deeper intimacy, fellowship, and the felt nearness of God remains a daily choice we make in response to His grace. **This is abiding**! This daily choice is also *"taking up your cross daily"* **Lk. 9:23 (NLT/AMP)** Same goes for all of section "e" below.

- **Think of it this way: God never moves away from us, but the more we intentionally draw near to Him, the more deeply and intimately we experience His nearness.**

e) In recent meetings we have seen that deeper abiding requires intentional cooperation with the Holy Spirit. Scripture calls us to active responses such as:
   - put to death the deeds of the body (**Col. 3:5; Rom. 8:13**),
   - put off the old self and put on the new (**Col. 3:9–10; Eph. 4:22–24**),
   - have nothing to do with sinful desires (**Col. 3:5**),
   - flee immorality (**1 Cor. 6:18**),
   - add to our faith the virtues listed in **2 Peter 1:5–7**,
   - make every effort to grow in Christlikeness **(2 Pet. 1:5),**
   - clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness & patience **(Col. 3:12).**

f) All these imperatives are fulfilled not through fleshly self-effort or rule-keeping which lead to failure and frustration, but through a Spirit-led life rooted in surrender, repentance, humility, and dependence on Christ—the True Vine **(Jn. 15). This is all empowered by the Holy Spirit as we yield to Him daily.**

g) This intentionality is not legalism; it is the natural outflow of abiding. When we choose to draw near to God in repentance, humility, and faith which lead to abiding and deeper nearness to God, He promises to draw near to us **(Jas. 4:8).** Though Christ is always objectively near—living in us by His Spirit—we can still experience relational distance when we allow sin, busyness, or self-reliance to hinder fellowship. Choosing to abide daily restores and deepens the believer's nearness to God.

Homework

Jas. 4 is a practical, confrontational chapter addressing the root causes of conflict, worldliness, and pride among believers, while calling them to humility, repentance, and dependence on God. It flows in four main sections, building to a climax of grace-enabled response:

Read through the entire chapter of Jas. 4 and note the following breakdown of this chapter:

- The Source of Conflicts and Wrong Desires (vv. 1–3) ← *Important for full context.*
- Warning Against Worldliness and Pride (vv. 4–6) ← *Important for full context.*
- The Call to Humble Submission and Repentance (vv. 7–10) ← *Focus of this study.*
- Applications: Judging Others and Presuming on the Future (vv. 11–17) ← *A warning!*

Recommended book:

Union and Communion: A Devotional Study of How the Song of Solomon Reveals a Believer's Union with Jesus Christ by J. Hudson Taylor (originally published in 1893)

↓----below study material for outside of the group meeting----↓

For deeper study:

My question on reconciling the following:
James 4:8 says, “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.” At first glance, this seems to sit in tension with the New Testament’s teaching on the believer’s union with Christ—that Christ already dwells in us, we are filled with the Holy Spirit, and we are inseparably joined to the Triune God. After all, how could we get any nearer than that?

I believe the resolution lies in the distinction between our unchanging position in Christ and the varying degree of our experiential fellowship with him. Through abiding, we can cultivate a deeper, more intimate relationship with Christ. Even though He never leaves us, we can feel distant when we allow ourselves to be lured away by the things of the world. In that sense, we remain in union with him, yet we are not walking closely with him.

The command to “draw near,” therefore, calls for intentionality on our part. Scripture assures us that God is always near to his people, but whether we enjoy the sweetness of his presence often depends on whether we earnestly seek to draw near to him.

Help me reconcile James 4:7–10—particularly verse 8, “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you”—with the New Testament teachings on the believer’s unchanging position in Christ: we are united with him, he dwells in us, and we are already seated with him in the heavenly places (Eph 2:6). Jas. 4:8 has the appearance the God will draw near to us only if we draw near to Him, but that is in tension with the believer’s union with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that is already in place through faith in Christ.

Note/Disclaimer: Below are (2) A.I. responses to my challenging question and is pulling from the entire text of the Bible in these versions AMP, AMPC, ESV, KJV, NKJV, NASB and NIV, as well as many commentaries, it is always wise to dig into the Word of God yourself and read the scriptures in full context while allowing the Holy Spirit to teach you as you dive in. Ask this same question yourself and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal truth as you dig into the word for the answers. Use the question above and answer below for deeper study and a starting point for your own study.

James 4:7–10 (especially v. 8: “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you”) is **not** teaching that God is distant from true believers or that we must somehow re-establish a broken union. Instead, it’s calling us to **experiential** or **relational** nearness—deeper intimacy, fellowship, and practical abiding—while our **positional** nearness (permanent union with Christ) remains unchanging and unbreakable.

Here’s how to reconcile this with the New Testament’s overwhelming emphasis on the believer’s union with Christ (e.g., Christ in us, we in Him, sealed by the Spirit):

1. Positional Nearness/Unbreakable Union (Already True at Salvation)

At the moment of genuine faith, every believer is:

- Permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19).
- United to Christ in an inseparable, eternal way ("in Christ" — over 80 times in Paul's letters).
- Sealed as God's possession until the day of redemption (Ephesians 1:13–14; 4:30).

Key verses that emphasize this objective, irreversible closeness:

- John 14:20 — "In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."
- Colossians 3:3 — "You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."
- Romans 8:38–39 — Nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- Hebrews 13:5 — "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

You cannot get objectively "nearer" than this. Christ is **in** you, and you are **in** Him—permanently. The Holy Spirit's indwelling is the guarantee and proof of this union.

2. Experiential/Relational Nearness (Ongoing Choice for Intimacy)

Even though Christ is always positionally near (and we are filled with His Spirit), we can **feel** and **experience** distance because of:

- Unconfessed sin.
- Worldly entanglements.
- Self-reliance or pride.
- Grieving the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30).

This is where James 4:7–10 comes in. James is writing to believers who are drifting—fighting, coveting, friendship with the world (vv. 1–4). He calls them to **intentional repentance and surrender** so they can experience the sweetness of God's presence again.

The flow in James 4:7–10:

- **Submit** to God → resist the devil (v. 7).
- **Draw near** to God → He will draw near to you (v. 8).
- **Cleanse** hands, **purify** hearts (v. 8).
- **Be wretched, mourn, weep** (godly sorrow, v. 9).

- **Humble** yourselves → He will exalt you (v. 10).

This “drawing near” is **our initiative in response to grace**—through repentance, humility, and returning to dependence on Him. When we do, God responds by lifting us into fresh experiential closeness: renewed joy, peace, answered prayer, and deeper communion.

3. This Matches the Abiding Distinction in John 15 and Your Study Notes

Your Meeting 38 notes already nailed this exact tension in the “Double bonus deeper study on Abiding” (pages 8–10):

- **Positional abiding** = permanent union (1 John 4:13; sealed by the Spirit).
- **Experiential/practical abiding** = daily choice to remain in vital fellowship (John 15:4–7).

James 4:8 is the experiential side. We are already grafted into the Vine positionally, but we must **choose to abide** (draw near) daily so His life flows freely—producing fruit, joy, and intimacy. If we drift into worldliness, we wither experientially (dryness, unanswered prayer, lack of fruit), even though we remain in the Vine positionally.

4. Practical Summary

- God is **always near** to the believer objectively (union).
- We can **feel far** when we allow sin or the world to hinder fellowship.
- “Draw near” is our intentional response: repent, submit, humble ourselves, seek Him in His Word and prayer.
- God’s promise: when we take that step, **He draws near** in fresh, tangible ways—restoring joy, power, and intimacy.

It comes down to do we want to be near to Him. He never moves away from us positionally, but He invites us to move toward Him relationally. That desire itself is evidence of the Spirit’s work in you.

This truth gives both **great security** (He’ll never leave) and **great motivation** (why would I settle for distance when deeper fellowship is offered?). Keep pressing in—He delights to draw near to hearts that seek Him.

Here is another response from a more refined question:

Your question is excellent and gets to the heart of a classic theological tension that many believers wrestle with: How can James 4:8 command us to "draw near to God" (with the promise that He will then draw near to us) when the New Testament repeatedly teaches that believers are already permanently united to Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and seated with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph 2:6)?

The short answer is that Scripture distinguishes between two realities that are both true at the same time:

1. **Positional (or judicial) nearness** – This is unchanging, irreversible, and based entirely on Christ's finished work.
2. **Experiential (or relational/fellowship) nearness** – This can vary according to our daily walk, obedience, and humility.

Positional Nearness: Already and Forever True

Through faith in Christ, every believer is:

- Permanently united to Christ (Rom 6:5; 1 Cor 6:17; Gal 2:20 – "Christ lives in me").
- Indwelt by the Holy Spirit as a seal and guarantee (Eph 1:13–14; 4:30; 1 Cor 6:19).
- Seated with Christ in the heavenly places right now (Eph 2:6; Col 3:1–3).
- Accepted in the Beloved (Eph 1:6) and brought near by the blood of Christ (Eph 2:13).

Nothing can separate us from God's love or presence in this sense (Rom 8:38–39). Christ has promised, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb 13:5; cf. Matt 28:20). This nearness is not conditional; it is a done deal the moment we are justified.

Experiential Nearness: Can Fluctuate

James 4 is written to believers who are in danger of spiritual drift. The context (James 4:1–10) is about quarrels, worldly desires, friendship with the world (which is enmity with God, v. 4), pride, and double-mindedness. These attitudes create a felt distance from God even though He has not moved.

When we harbor unconfessed sin, pride, or worldly affections, we grieve and quench the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30; 1 Thess 5:19). We do not lose the Spirit's indwelling, but we can lose the joyful sense of His presence and power. Scripture often describes this as God "hiding His face" (Isa 59:2; Ps 66:18) or believers being "far from God" in their hearts (cf. Mark 7:6).

James 4:8 is therefore a call to repentant action:

- “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you” → intentional pursuit of God’s presence through humility and repentance, met by His gracious response
- “Cleanse your hands” → outward behavior
- “Purify your hearts” → inward motives
- “You double-minded” → stop trying to love both God and the world

The command to “draw near” is an invitation to return to close communion through humility and repentance. God’s promise that He will draw near is not a threat that He will abandon us if we fail, but a gracious assurance that when we turn back to Him in sincerity, He eagerly meets us with fresh experiences of His presence, forgiveness, and grace (cf. 1 John 1:9).

Helpful Illustrations from Scripture

- **Marriage analogy**: A husband and wife are legally and covenantally one flesh. Nothing can undo the marriage union. Yet if one spouse is cold, distant, or unfaithful in daily affection, the felt intimacy suffers. Reconciliation requires intentional drawing near—apology, repentance, renewed affection—even though the union itself remains intact.
- **Father-child relationship**: A child is always the father’s child by birth. The legal relationship never changes. But if the child is rebellious or distant, the daily enjoyment of the father’s love and presence is hindered until the child returns in humility (Luke 15:11–32 – the prodigal son).

Summary

James 4:8 is not teaching that God’s presence in the believer is conditional or that we must earn nearness. Rather, it is a pastoral call to believers who have allowed sin and worldliness to cloud their enjoyment of the nearness they already possess positionally. God is always near in union; He draws experientially near in fresh ways when we humbly seek Him.

Your own phrasing of the distinction—“unchanging position in Christ” versus “varying degree of our experiential fellowship with him”—is spot-on and reflects the classic Reformed/evangelical understanding of this issue. You’re not alone in this reconciliation; it’s the same resolution offered by teachers across centuries (e.g., John Owen in *Communion with God*, Andrew Murray in *Abide in Christ*, and many contemporary pastors).

Deeper study bonus notes!

Below are some study notes to work with regarding the path of this study: **abiding → surrender/yielding → deeper intimacy → peace and joy** and a breakdown of the Song of Solomon as a **progressive journey** of the soul/Church toward ever-deeper union with Christ.

Here is a curated list of **New Testament (New Covenant) scriptures** that directly support the themes in tis study: *"Intimacy with Christ: How Abiding Leads to Intimacy – Part 1."*

Some brief notes on **abiding → surrender/yielding → deeper intimacy → peace and joy**, while avoiding worldly distractions that hinder communion.

1. Core Passages on Abiding in Christ (the foundation)

- **John 15:1–11** (the Vine and branches)
  The primary text for abiding. Jesus repeatedly commands "abide in Me" and links it to bearing fruit, answered prayer, complete joy, and remaining in His love through obedience. Perfect anchor text for how abiding produces intimacy and joy.
- **John 15:12–17**
  Continues the theme: abiding in Christ's love leads to loving others as friends (not servants), deeper relational intimacy with Him, and full joy.
- **1 John 2:24–28**
  "Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you… abide in Him." Promises confidence and no shame at His coming when we abide.
- **1 John 4:12–16**
  "If we love one another, God abides in us… Whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." Mutual abiding rooted in love.

2. Surrender / Yielding the Will / Living Sacrifice

- **Romans 12:1–2**
  "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice… do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Directly ties to the Hudson Taylor quote about avoiding worldly conformity and the danger of activity without communion.
- **Galatians 2:20**
  "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." Classic surrender text—death to self leads to Christ's indwelling life.
- **Romans 6:11–14, 19**
  Reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive to God; yield your members to righteousness. Full surrender enables Christ to live through us.

- **James 4:7–10**
  "Submit yourselves therefore to God… Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you." Surrender → cleansing → drawing near (intimacy).
- **Philippians 3:7–11**
  Counting all as loss to gain Christ and be found in Him; pressing on to know Him intimately through surrender.

3. Yielding to / Being Led by the Holy Spirit

- **Galatians 5:16–25**
  "Walk by the Spirit… led by the Spirit." The fruit of the Spirit includes love, joy, peace—direct outcome of yielding rather than gratifying the flesh.
- **Romans 8:1–17** (especially vv. 5–6, 14–16)
  Setting the mind on the Spirit = life and peace; "led by the Spirit" = sons of God; Spirit bears witness with our spirit (intimate fellowship).
- **Ephesians 5:18–21**
  Be filled with the Spirit… submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

4. Intimacy / Union / Bride-Bridegroom Language

- **Ephesians 5:25–32**
  Christ loves the church as His bride; "the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church." Beautiful New Testament parallel to Song of Solomon.
- **John 17:20–26** (Jesus' high priestly prayer)
  "That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you… I in them and you in me… that the love with which you have loved me may be in them." Ultimate intimacy through oneness.
- **2 Corinthians 11:2–3**
  Paul's jealousy for the church as a pure virgin betrothed to one husband, Christ; warns against minds being led astray from sincere and pure devotion.
- **Revelation 19:6–9** & **21:2, 9**
  The marriage supper of the Lamb; the bride (the church) made ready. Future consummation of the intimacy begun now through abiding.

5. Peace and Joy as Fruit of Intimacy

- **John 16:22–24**
  After sorrow, "your joy will be full"; ask in My name and receive "that your joy may be full."
- **John 14:27**
  "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you… Let not your hearts be troubled."

- **Philippians 4:4–7**
  Rejoice always… prayer with thanksgiving → "the peace of God, which surpasses understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."
- **Romans 15:13**
  "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."
- **1 Peter 1:8–9**
  "Though you have not seen him, you love him… believing in him you rejoice with joy inexpressible and filled with glory."

6. Warnings Against Worldly Distraction / Activity Without Communion

- **1 John 2:15–17**
  "Do not love the world or the things in the world… the world is passing away." Exactly what you highlighted from Hudson Taylor.
- **Romans 12:2** (already listed) – not conformed to this age.
- **Colossians 3:1–4**
  "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth… your life is hidden with Christ in God."
- **Luke 10:38–42** (Martha & Mary)
  Mary chose the "better portion" – sitting at Jesus' feet. Jesus gently rebukes activity that crowds out communion.
- **2 Timothy 2:4**
  "No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him."

These passages form a strong New Testament backbone that complements the Song of Solomon typology in *Union and Communion*. For deeper study use John 15 as the central hub, then branch into surrender (Rom 12, Gal 2:20), Spirit-led living (Rom 8, Gal 5), bridal intimacy (Eph 5, John 17), and the resulting peace/joy.

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The Song of Solomon (also called Song of Songs or Canticles) is one of the most beautifully poetic books in the Bible, and in Christian tradition—especially in devotional and mystical writings—it is widely interpreted **typologically** (or allegorically) as a picture of the intimate love relationship between **Christ (the Bridegroom/King)** and **His Bride (the Church collectively or the individual believer)**.

Why Typological Interpretation?

- The New Testament explicitly uses bride/bridegroom imagery for Christ and the Church:
    - Ephesians 5:25–32: Christ loves the Church as a husband loves his wife; "this mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church."
    - Revelation 19:7–9 and 21:2, 9: The marriage supper of the Lamb; the New Jerusalem as a bride adorned for her husband.
    - Matthew 9:15, John 3:29, 2 Corinthians 11:2: Jesus as Bridegroom, the Church as betrothed virgin.
- Early church fathers (Origen, Gregory of Nyssa), medieval mystics (Bernard of Clairvaux, John of the Cross), and later writers (Madame Guyon, Watchman Nee, J. Hudson Taylor) all saw the Song as a divine portrait of spiritual intimacy, not merely a human love poem.
- The literal reading (a celebration of romantic/sexual love between Solomon and the Shulamite) is valid and God-honoring (marriage is God's gift), but the typological layer reveals deeper Christ-centered truth without contradicting the literal.

Common Typological Framework

Most typological readings see the Song as a **progressive journey** of the soul/Church toward ever-deeper union with Christ. It mirrors the believer's spiritual growth: initial love → testing/separation → surrender → mature, fruitful intimacy.

Here is a widely accepted chapter-by-chapter typological outline (drawn from classic commentators, including Hudson Taylor's *Union and Communion*):

1. **Chapter 1: Initial Longing and Awakening**

- The Bride's desire for the Bridegroom's love and presence ("Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!").
- Typology: The new believer's first love for Christ; awareness of sin/darkness ("I am very dark") yet accepted in His grace ("lovely" in His eyes).
- Theme: Unsatisfied longing until full surrender.

2. **Chapter 2: Early Communion and Joy**

- Mutual delight; the Bridegroom calls her to rise and come away.
- Typology: The joys of early fellowship with Christ; resting in His love ("under the apple tree").
- Warning: "Little foxes" that spoil the vines—small compromises that hinder intimacy.

3. **Chapters 3–4: Seeking, Finding, and Admiration**

- Night searching (3:1–5): The Bride seeks her Beloved in restlessness.
- Wedding procession and mutual praise (3:6–4:16).
- Typology: Seasons of feeling distant from Christ; disciplined seeking leads to deeper revelation of His beauty and invitation into the "garden" (the soul's life yielded to Him).

4. **Chapter 5: Testing, Failure, and Costly Restoration**

- The Bride's lethargy ("I slept, but my heart was awake"); delay in opening to Him.
- Loss, searching, suffering, yet testimony to others.
- Typology: Backsliding or spiritual laziness; the pain of broken communion drives renewed pursuit; surrender becomes more complete.

5. **Chapters 6–7: Restoration and Maturing Love**

- The Bridegroom's lavish praise; the Bride's growing confidence.
- Typology: Christ's unchanging love restores the repentant believer; the Bride begins to see herself as He sees her—beautiful, set apart.

6. **Chapter 8: Unbreakable Union and Fruitfulness**

- "Love is strong as death"; the Bride's desire that He make haste.
- Sealed upon the heart; call to bring others.
- Typology: Mature, unbreakable intimacy; full abiding that produces fruit and zeal for Christ's return.

How This Ties to Your Study Theme

- **Abiding → Surrender → Intimacy → Joy/Peace**: The Song beautifully illustrates that partial surrender (the Bride holding back her "vineyard," possessions, or will) leads to unrest and distance, while full yielding opens the door to ever-increasing communion, delight, and fruitfulness—exactly paralleling John 15's "abide in Me."
- Hudson Taylor emphasizes this in *Union and Communion*: Distrust causes hesitation; activity without personal communion weakens service; full surrender is the remedy for the unsatisfied life.
- The danger of "Martha-like" busyness (Luke 10:38–42) vs. Mary's choice of sitting at His feet is echoed here—zeal without intimacy diminishes both joy and effectiveness.

This typology richly complements your New Covenant passages (John 15, Ephesians 5, Romans 12:1–2, etc.) and provides vivid imagery for teaching how abiding in Christ deepens bridal intimacy, resulting in the "full joy" and "perfect peace" He promises.

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Watchman Nee (1903–1972), a prominent Chinese church leader and teacher, wrote a profound devotional commentary titled **Song of Songs** (published in English collections of his works), where he interprets the Song of Solomon as a **typological portrait of the intimate love relationship between Christ (the Bridegroom) and the individual believer** (the seeking lover/Shulamite). Unlike some interpreters who emphasize the corporate Church, Nee focuses primarily on the **subjective, personal experience** of the believer pursuing deeper union with Christ.

Core Principles in Nee's Interpretation

- **Christ and the Individual Believer**: The Song depicts the highest level of spiritual life—the "divine romance." It is not primarily about human marriage (though that is honored) but about the believer's progressive experience of loving Christ, being transformed, and entering into mutual indwelling.
- **Progressive Spiritual Growth**: Nee sees the book as a **journey of maturation** through distinct stages. The believer moves from initial salvation and superficial love to full consecration, death to self, resurrection life, and ultimate oneness with Christ. This progression requires the cross (self-denial) and the Holy Spirit's discipline.
- **Overcomer Emphasis**: The Shulamite represents the "overcomer" (Revelation 2–3) who presses on to the deepest intimacy, beyond ordinary Christian experience.
- **Mutual Satisfaction**: True intimacy is Christ satisfying the believer and the believer satisfying Christ through full surrender and fruit-bearing.

Nee's Stage-by-Stage Outline

Nee divides the Song into **seven main stages** of spiritual experience, each building on the previous. This is one of the most distinctive features of his teaching:

1. **Initial Love and Dissatisfaction (1:2–2:7)**
   The new believer loves Christ ("Let him kiss me…") but is still attached to self and worldly things ("Do not gaze at me because I am dark"). Christ draws her into fellowship ("My beloved is mine, and I am his"), yet she remains immature.
   Key: Early joy in salvation, but the believer must be drawn away from self-reliance.
2. **The Call to Consecration and Separation (2:8–3:5)**
   Christ calls her to "rise up and come away" (2:10, 13)—a call to full surrender and separation from worldly entanglements. She experiences the cross ("I slept, but my heart was awake").
   Key: The believer must respond to Christ's call to deeper commitment, leaving comfort for His purpose.

3. **Living in Ascension (3:6–5:1)**
   The wedding procession and mutual admiration. The believer begins to live in Christ's ascension life ("Come into my garden"). This is the enjoyment of full union after consecration.
   Key: The "banqueting house" stage—Christ's full satisfaction in the surrendered believer.

4. **Failure and Discipline of the Holy Spirit (5:2–6:3)**
   The believer becomes lethargic ("I have taken off my robe—how can I put it on again?"), leading to temporary loss of fellowship. Through suffering and searching, she is disciplined and restored ("I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine").
   Key: Backsliding is allowed to expose remaining self; the cross deepens surrender.

5. **Victory over Self (6:4–8:4)**
   Christ praises her maturity ("You are beautiful… terrible as an army with banners"). The believer overcomes self-love and fleshly strength, becoming strong in Christ.
   Key: The believer is no longer divided but fully set apart for Christ.

6. **The Work of the Overcomer (8:5–7)**
   "Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved?" The mature believer co-works with Christ, bearing fruit that satisfies Him. Love becomes "strong as death."
   Key: Ministry flows from intimacy; the overcomer brings others to Christ.

7. **Full Maturity and Mutual Possession (8:8–14)**
   The believer possesses Christ fully ("Make haste, my beloved"). The little sister is brought to maturity, symbolizing the completion of God's purpose.
   Key: Ultimate oneness—Christ fully possesses the believer, and the believer fully possesses Christ.

How This Relates to Your Study Theme

- **Abiding → Surrender → Intimacy → Joy**: Nee strongly parallels John 15. Partial surrender (stages 1–3) leads to unrest; full surrender through the cross (stages 4–5) produces abiding in resurrection life, resulting in mutual satisfaction, peace, and joy.
- **Dangers of Activity Without Communion**: Like Hudson Taylor, Nee warns that busyness, self-effort, or worldly attachment hinders intimacy. The cross must deal with the self-life before true union is possible.
- **Bridal Paradigm**: Nee's focus on the individual believer makes this especially powerful for personal devotion—how **you** can experience Christ as your personal Bridegroom.

Nee's interpretation is deeply experiential and has influenced generations (including many in the charismatic and deeper-life movements). It complements Hudson Taylor's *Union and Communion* by adding a stronger emphasis on the cross and spiritual stages.

MEETING 40

Intimacy with Christ Through Deeper Abiding - Part 2

Intimacy with Christ Through Deeper Abiding – Part 2
Walking in the Spirit: Living by His Power Instead of Our Own

1. **Brief recap from last meetings.**

Last time we focused on **intentional abiding** in Christ and studied **Jas. 4:7-10 (NKJV)**. We saw the clear progression in this passage:
humility → surrender → cleansing → repentance → humility
beginning and ending with humility before the Lord.

We discussed "drawing near" in **Jas. 4:8** and wrestled with this question: *How can we draw near to Someone who already lives inside us through His Spirit, and how can God draw near to us when He is already as close as He can possibly be? * Read fuller context:* **Jas. 4:7-10.**

This naturally led us to the key distinction between **Union** and **Communion** with Christ:

- **Union** is our permanent position in Christ the moment we are born again.
- **Communion** is our ongoing, daily relationship with Him as we abide in Him.

We summed it up like this: *God never moves away from us, but the more we intentionally draw near to Him, the more deeply and intimately we experience His nearness.*

We also explored what **true humility** and **true repentance** really mean. Repentance isn't just saying "I'm sorry" — it's a voluntary realignment of our entire life under God's authority.

We also discussed how sin, busyness, or self-reliance can create relational distance and hinder fellowship — yet daily abiding restores and deepens our nearness to God.

The progression we talked about in our last meeting leads to walking in the Spirit (walking in step with the Spirit). This is where we are now heading with this study.

Humility → surrender → cleansing → repentance → humility → Drawing near **→ Walking in The Spirit**

2. **Living by the Spirit vs. Walking in the Spirit/Keeping in Step with the Spirit (important subtle differences)**

   a) **"Live by the Spirit" (Rom. 8:5, 13; Gal.5:25 NLT/AMPC)** – (Our Indwelling power source)
      - The Holy Spirit's presence in every believer is a permanent state of being — a positional reality that comes from our union with Christ. The moment we are born again, the Spirit regenerates us, giving us new life, and He takes up residence inside us forever. He is the Spirit of Christ, which means "Christ in us" is now possible. Christ in us is our new identity; the Holy Spirit is our constant power source, actively conforming us to the image of Jesus.

- Because the Spirit already dwells in us 24/7, we face a daily choice: we can live by His power or fall back into self-reliance and live according to the flesh. We can choose flesh-powered obedience (which quickly becomes religion and striving) or Spirit-led obedience (which is a living relationship). Paul gives us these clear choices in the ESV:
    - *"Those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:5).*
    - *"If you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." (Rom. 8:13).*
    - *"If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25).*
- Each statement is an invitation: we can make the less wise choice of working things out in our own strength, or we can yield to the Holy Spirit.
  **See Rom. 8:13 commentary below regarding spiritual death.*

b) **"Walking in the Spirit/Keeping in Step with the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16, 25 ESV/AMPC)**
A continuous, daily decision (daily obedience / practical conduct / communion & abiding).

- This ties the two together: John Wesley's Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible (1765) *"If we live by the Spirit — If we are indeed raised from the dead, and are alive to God, by the operation of His Spirit. Let us walk by the Spirit — Let us follow his guidance, in all our tempers, thoughts, words, and actions."* (on **Gal. 5:25**)
- **Gal. 5:25** *"If we live by the [Holy] Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit (AMPC)", "If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit (ESV)", "Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives (NLT)."*
- Both *'walking by the Spirit'* (**Gal. 5:16**) and *'keeping in step with the Spirit'* (**Gal. 5:25**) refer to <u>living a life under the daily guidance and empowering of the Holy Spirit</u>.
- **How do we practically do this? How do we let/allow the Holy Spirit to guide our lives?**
- Intentionally abiding in Christ (**Jn. 15:4-5**) discussed in previous studies is a big part of this.
- The progression we have been discussing in previous studies is also a big part of this:
- **Jas. 4:7-10** Humility → surrender → cleansing → repentance → humility → Drawing near
- All of this leads to → **living by the Spirit** (<u>Christ in us being our new identity and the Holy Spirit being our power source</u>) and **walking/keeping in step with the Spirit** (daily obedience and relying on the Holy Spirit's guidance).
- Keeping in step with the Holy Spirit is a <u>habitual lifestyle of dependence</u>; it is the <u>practice</u> of **staying sensitive to His promptings, responding with quick obedience, and consistently yielding our own desires to His**.
- This is the command and the choice. "<u>Walk</u>" (Greek peripateō) means our everyday lifestyle and conduct. "<u>Keep in step</u>" (Greek stoicheō) is a military term — march in line, stay in rhythm, follow the leader's pace without running ahead or lagging. (**Walk in union with.**)

These two realities — **living by the Spirit** (our indwelling power source) and **Walking in the Spirit/Keeping in Step with the Spirit** (our daily obedience) — are beautifully illustrated when we contrast life in the flesh with life in the Spirit and recognize the Holy Spirit as the very Spirit of Christ within us.

3. **Living in the Flesh vs. Living in the Spirit and The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ (These two concepts are closely tied together)**
   a) Living in the Flesh vs. In The Spirit/By the Spirit (ESV)
      - **Gal. 3:3** – *"… Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"*
      - **Zech. 4:6** – "*This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts."* – Note: Might and power in this passage represent human effort.
      - **Jn. 15:5** – *"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."*
      - **Jer. 17:5–7** – *"Thus says the Lord: 'Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord… Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord."*
      - **Prov. 3:5–6** – *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and He will make straight your paths."*
      - **2 Cor. 12:9** – *"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me."* (NLT: *'so that the power of Christ can work through me.'*)

        * Read commentary below about how Paul stopped striving and started yielding.

Feature	The Flesh (Own Strength)	The Spirit (God's Power)
Source	**Human willpower and logic**; relying on **human "effort", "might" or physical "power"**; leaning on **one's own limited understanding**; and making **"flesh" one's primary strength**.	**The Holy Spirit is the power source** **Divine grace and revelation**; the active **enablement of the Holy Spirit**; **abiding in Christ** as a branch in a vine; and **Christ's power** working through us in our weakness.
Outcome	**Burnout** and **"vain labor";** an inability to be perfected or finished by **human effort**; a state of **doing nothing** of eternal value. We are to "**strive to enter His rest**" (**Heb. 4:11**), yet we must not waste our lives by **habitually gratifying the flesh**.	**Spiritual fruitfulness and peace**; being **perfected** through the same Spirit that began the work; **bearing "much fruit"** through a vital connection to Jesus and **by allowing the Holy Spirit to produce fruit**; and having **"straight paths"** guided by the Lord.
Feeling	**Heavy, anxious, and striving**; the **frustration** of attempting to finish in the flesh what was started in the Spirit; and the **burden** of trusting in man rather than God.	**Empowered and the "easy yoke"**; finding that **God's grace is sufficient** even when we feel at our weakest; and a **heart of total trust** that does not lean on self. **Yielding to the Holy Spirit and waiting on His guidance.**
Glory	**Goes to the individual**; centers on **human boasting**; and highlights the **limitations of man**.	**Goes entirely to God**; allows us to **boast in our weaknesses** so that Christ's power is visible; and honors the **Lord of hosts**.

b) <u>The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ (ESV)</u>

The Bible clearly links the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ. Although they are distinct Persons within the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is the means by which Jesus dwells in believers today—essentially making Him the "presence of Jesus" within us. This fulfills the positional reality that Christ lives in believers, as Paul declares in Col. 1:27: "...Christ in you, the hope of glory."

- **Rom. 8:9** – "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the **Spirit of God** dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit **of Christ** does not belong to Him."
- **Phil. 1:19** – "for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit **of Jesus Christ** this will turn out for my deliverance,"
- **Gal. 4:6** – "And because you are sons, God has sent **the Spirit of his Son** into our hearts, "crying, 'Abba! Father!"
- **Acts 16:7** – "And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but **the Spirit of Jesus** did not allow them."
- **2 Cor. 3:17** – "**Now the Lord is the Spirit**, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." (The first half of that last verse—"**Now the Lord is the Spirit**"—is often overlooked, yet it shows the Holy Spirit is how the risen Jesus Himself is present with us.)

Point	**The Significance of The Holy Spirit being the Spirit of Christ.**
Unity	It proves the Holy Spirit isn't a "third-party" force; He is the very life of Christ in us.
Character	Since He (The Holy Spirit) is the Spirit of Christ, **His primary work is to transform/conform us into the image of Christ.** (process of sanctification).
Presence	Jesus promised "I am with you always" (Matt. 28:20); He fulfills this promise specifically through the Holy Spirit.

"Living by the Spirit" is the glorious, unchanging reality of our union with Christ — the Holy Spirit is already our 24/7 indwelling power source. "Walking in the Spirit" or "keeping in step with the Spirit" is the daily invitation to yield, abide, and obey. When we stop relying on our own strength and instead surrender to the very Spirit of Christ within us, we step out of exhausting religion and into joyful relationship. The benefits are life-changing: the fruit of the Spirit grows naturally, burnout gives way to rest, our new identity in Christ shines clearly, and the intimacy we long for becomes our everyday experience. So today — and every day — let us choose to live by His power and keep in step with the One who lives inside us.

Note on 2 Cor. 12:9

Paul's personal testimony makes this truth come alive (2 Cor 12:7-12). A "thorn in the flesh" — a messenger of Satan meant to harass him — was allowed to remain so Paul would not become conceited. Three times he pleaded with the Lord in his own strength, begging for the thorn to be removed. But God answered with the secret of Spirit-powered living:

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Therefore, Paul stopped striving and yielded. He chose to boast gladly in his weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities so that "the power of Christ may rest upon me." He learned the life-changing truth: "When I am weak, then I am strong."

That "power of Christ" is none other than the Holy Spirit — the very Spirit of Christ who already lives inside us believers. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead now rests on us precisely when we stop relying on our own strength and yield to the Spirit's sufficiency.

Commentary on 2 Cor. 12:7-8

In 2 Cor. 12:7-8 Three times Paul asks God to remove the thorn in his flesh, but God's answer is not what he expected... The answer in vs. 9-10 was God's grace is sufficient and that there is power in weakness.

2 Cor. 12:7-12 (ESV) *"7 So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."*

Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament - 2 Cor. 12:9-10

"9-10 The answer to Paul's prayer did not take the form he had expected. The thorn remained, but so did his recollection of the divine reply. In the distress inflicted at various times by his ailment, God promised that Paul would never lack sufficient grace to overcome it (cf. Ro 8:35-37). This grace of Christ (2 Cor. 13:11) was adequate for him precisely because divine power finds its full scope and strength only in human weakness—the greater the Christian's acknowledged weakness, the more evident Christ's enabling strength (cf. Eph 3:16; Php 4:13). The cross of Christ forms the supreme example of "power-in-weakness" (2 Corinthians 13:4 ESV For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him,...)."

With this spiritual lesson well learned, Paul indicates he would prefer to boast about the sorts of things that exposed his weakness rather than to pray for the removal of the thorn. It was not, however, in the weaknesses themselves that Paul took delight but in the opportunity that such sufferings endured "for Christ's sake" afforded him for Christ's power to be effective in his life.

Commentary on Rom 8:13 – "*If you live according to the flesh you will die…*"

Romans 8:13 aligns closely with the immediate context and the consistent teaching of Paul in this chapter (and the broader New Testament). Paul is speaking directly to **believers** ("brothers" in v. 12; the same group addressed throughout Romans 8 as those "in Christ Jesus" with "no condemnation," v. 1). He is not threatening the loss of eternal salvation or the "second death" reserved for unbelievers (Matt. 25:46; Rev. 21:8; 2 Thess. 1:9). Instead, he is warning about a very real **temporal/spiritual death**—a withering of fellowship with God, loss of joy, power, and the abundant life (John 10:10) that the Spirit intends for every child of God. The alternative *"but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."* is vibrant, Spirit-empowered living. This is a classic sanctification warning, not a justification issue.

Scripture Mining: Key Cross-References That Illuminate **Romans 8:13.**

Paul's language here ("live according to the flesh," "put to death the deeds of the body," "you will live") echoes and expands several other passages that develop the same contrast between flesh and Spirit. These show that the "death" in view is experiential and relational, while the "life" is the full, overflowing experience of what we already possess in Christ.

- **Colossians 3:5–10** (the closest parallel): "Put to death [mortify], therefore, what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry… You have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator."
  Paul uses the exact same Greek verb for "put to death" (thanatōsate). The "deeds of the body" are the outward expressions of the old, earthly nature. This is active, ongoing warfare enabled by the Spirit—not self-effort.

- **Galatians 5:16–25** (the most extended treatment): "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh… And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit."
  This is the practical "how" of Romans 8:13. The Spirit does the killing; we cooperate by walking in Him. The result is the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace…) instead of the works of the flesh.

- **Galatians 6:8**: "For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption [phthora—decay, ruin], but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."
  "Corruption" here is not hell but the withering, decaying experience of a believer who keeps feeding the flesh. It matches the "death" of Romans 8:13 exactly.

- **Romans 6:11–13** (same letter, earlier chapter): "So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus… Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life…" Paul has already taught that believers are positionally dead to sin; now in ch. 8 he shows the practical outworking: we must actively refuse to live as though that were not true.

- **Ephesians 5:14** and **Ephesians 4:22**: "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you… put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires."
  Believers can fall into a sleep-like "death" of spiritual lethargy and still be saved.

- **1 Corinthians 11:30** and **1 John 5:16–17** add the sobering note that unaddressed sin in believers can even lead to physical death or "sin that does not lead to death" (i.e., discipline, not damnation).

These passages together form a clear biblical theology: the flesh still clamors, but the indwelling Spirit gives us both the desire and the power to kill its deeds. Failure brings relational/spiritual death in the present; success brings the abundant life we were saved for.

Insight from Commentaries

- **GotQuestions.org** (a clear, widely used evangelical resource): "Paul is not talking about salvation in Romans 8:13. He's not saying that we will lose our salvation if we indulge the flesh. Instead, Paul points out the inherent result of becoming a child of God and being filled with God's life-giving, behavior-transforming Spirit… The secret to putting to death the deeds of the body is living by the Spirit… in close fellowship with God."
- **Verse-by-Verse Commentary** (Robert L. Deffinbaugh / Bible Exposition): "Living here has to do with the Spirit-filled life, not salvation, and death is spiritual failure… The subject here is not eternal death in hell but the death of the spiritual life… If we live according to the flesh we are on the point of dying spiritually in time… God does not give temporal life but eternal life at salvation." The principle: "God warns believers with a great red light that living under the sin capacity will result in time-based death of our spiritual lives."
- **BibleRef.com**: For true believers, the second half means "we will really live, spiritually speaking, on this side of eternity… experiencing the abundant life that God intends for us." The warning is real, but it sits inside the unbreakable "no condemnation" of v. 1.
- **John Owen** (the Puritan classic *Mortification of Sin*, still the gold standard on this verse): "Be killing sin or it will be killing you." Owen spends an entire treatise showing that this is a lifelong, Spirit-powered battle for believers—never a threat to our standing in Christ, but a daily necessity if we want to enjoy communion with Him.

Rom. 8:13 does not teach that a true believer can lose eternal life. It teaches that a true believer will not be content to let sin reign; the Spirit will produce the mortification that leads to life.

Practical Takeaway: Believers who drift into flesh-living experience a real "death"—distance from God, dryness in prayer, loss of joy and power, sometimes even physical consequences—yet they remain saved. The remedy is not trying harder in the flesh but yielding moment-by-moment to the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16). He is the one who actually kills the deeds; our part is to agree with Him, confess quickly (1 John 1:9), renew our minds with Scripture, and walk in dependence.

This passage is one of the most liberating warnings in the Bible: because we are already "not debtors to the flesh" (v. 12), we are free—and empowered—to kill its deeds and really live. The whole of Romans 8 explodes with hope once you see this distinction clearly.

MEETING 41

The work of and the Relationship with the Holy Spirit — Part 1

The work of and the Relationship with the Holy Spirit Part 1
Resisting, Grieving, and Quenching: The Unbeliever's Resistance and the Believer's Relational Response

1. Brief recap from last meeting

In our recent studies we have been pressing deeper into **intimacy with Christ** through abiding in Him by being intentional with our relationship with Christ, living in the Spirit, walking with the Spirit, and keeping in step with the Spirit.

At the heart of our last study was this powerful insight from John Wesley on Galatians 5:25:

"If we live by the Spirit — If we are indeed raised from the dead, and are alive to God, by the operation of His Spirit. Let us walk by the Spirit — Let us follow his guidance, in all our tempers, thoughts, words, and actions." (on Gal. 5:25) – To that I would simply add: let us be intentional about this.

We also saw a clear pattern emerge across the previous studies:

Humility → Surrender → Cleansing → Repentance → Humility → Drawing Near

…and how this pathway leads us into **living by the Spirit** (where Christ is now our new identity and the Holy Spirit is our power source) and **walking / keeping in step with the Spirit** (daily obedience and moment-by-moment reliance on the Holy Spirit's guidance).

In this study we are now going to dive into full context of what it means to resist, grieve and quench the Holy Spirit which will lead us into our next study which will be Pleasing the Holy Spirit and how **the Holy Spirit is the One who helps us work out what God is working in us** — that is, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight. **Note:** I wanted to teach on pleasing the Holy Spirit which is pleasing to the Lord, but I had to teach on resisting, grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit first for full context.

2. Resisting the Holy Spirit

a) What the Bible has to say about <u>resisting</u> the Holy Spirit?

- **Resisting the Holy Spirit** (a message to unbelievers)
    - **Acts 7:51** is the only place in all of Scripture that explicitly speaks of "resisting the Holy Spirit." Let's dig into this, I went on a deep dive into this, very fascinating.

b) **Acts 7:51 (NKJV)** *"You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears!* ***You always resist the Holy Spirit****; as your fathers did, so do you."* Full context **Acts 7:51-53**.

c) So, let's set the scene for this passage:

- Stephen (a believer and filled with the Holy Spirit) is speaking to the (Sanhedrin).
- The audience (Sanhedrin) = unsaved, non-believers.

d) The "Sanhedrin" was the highest Jewish governing body in Jerusalem during the time of Jesus and the early church (roughly 200 BC – AD 70). It functioned as a combination of Supreme Court, Senate, and religious authority for the Jewish people under Roman occupation.

e) At this early point in church history (Acts 7 is roughly AD 31–34), these leaders (Sanhedrin) had rejected Jesus as the Messiah. They orchestrated His crucifixion, persecuted the apostles, and are now about to stone Stephen. They are actively opposing the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit. Stephen's accusation ("you always resist the Holy Spirit") is aimed squarely at unbelievers who are hardening their hearts against God's gracious drawing and conviction.

f) The Sanhedrin was made up of Sadducees, Pharisees, Elders and Scribes. Their representation in the Sanhedrin in order of power was:
   - **Sadducees** - Very strong — they controlled the High Priesthood and the majority of seats.
   - **Pharisees** - Significant but minority — they had real influence but were outnumbered by Sadducees.
   - **Elders & Scribes** – mixed and less power than the Sadducees and Pharisees.

g) I want to tie in *"Him who called us"* in **2 Pet. 1:3** and the Father's universal drawing mentioned in **Jn. 6:44** to this story of Stephen telling the Sanhedrin that they were "resisting the Holy Spirit". This is a bit long but crucial to this passage:
   In **2 Pet. 1:3** the apostle writes that God has given us everything we need for life and godliness *"through true and personal knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence"*.
   This "calling" is not a secret decree limited to a few "elect" people. It is the same gracious drawing Jesus described in **Jn. 6:44**: *"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him."*
   The Father calls all people to the Son through the gospel and the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. This is God's grace on display: an open invitation extended to every human being, not just a select few.
   All of humanity has free will to respond: we can believe in Christ and receive salvation and eternal life, or we can reject Him and receive eternal death. The Sanhedrin in Acts 7 is a tragic example: these religious leaders were actively resisting the Holy Spirit and rejecting the very Christ to whom the Father was drawing them. * Yes, the Father was drawing even the Sadducees, Pharisees, Elders & scribes to the Son as well.
   Thus, when Peter speaks of "Him who called us," he is referring to believers who have already responded to the Father's universal call. The same God who draws every person by His glory and excellence **now works inside every believer who has said "yes"** — empowering them to please Him (**Heb. 13:21; Phil. 2:13**) through the Holy Spirit.

h) **The Sanhedrin:** The Sadducees, Pharisees, Elders & Scribes were all united in their opposition to Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the early church. Stephen's accusation of them being a stiff-necked people and resisting the Holy Spirit was aimed at this mixed but hardened group of Jewish leaders who had seen God's work but chose to reject it. To put it simply, the Sanhedrin were unbelievers that were resisting the Holy Spirit.

i) **This led me to ask the question**: *"are there any scriptures that talk about the believer resisting the Holy Spirit?"* The answer is no. **Acts 7:51** is the only scripture in the entire Bible that talks about "resisting the Holy Spirit" which was specifically about the unbelieving Sanhedrin.

j) This is where we get into **grieving** and **quenching** the Holy Spirit. For those who are already saved and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, Scripture uses different (but very related) language which is "grieving" and "quenching" the Holy Spirit.

3. **Grieving and Quenching the Holy Spirit** (a message to believers)

a) **Grieve: Eph. 4:30 (ESV**) *"And do not **grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."*
   - Written directly to believers (the church at Ephesus).
   - "Grieve" means to cause sorrow, pain, or distress.
   - The context (Eph. 4:25–32) lists specific sins believers are to put away: lying, anger, stealing, corrupt talk, bitterness, slander, etc. When we live like the old self instead of the new, we make the Holy Spirit sorrowful.
   - This is the closest parallel to "resisting" for a believer: it is <u>relational resistance</u> that damages fellowship, even though the Spirit remains sealed in us.

b) **Quench: 1 Thes. 5:16-22 (ESV)** *"16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19* ***Do not quench the Spirit.*** *20 Do not despise prophecies. 21 Test all things; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil."*
   - Also written to believers in the church at Thessalonica.
   - "Quench" means to extinguish or stifle a fire. The Holy Spirit is pictured as a flame burning within us.
   - Right in context: "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good" (vv. 19-21). It includes **rejecting or ignoring the Spirit's promptings**, gifts, or leading (including through Scripture and godly counsel).
   - Other ways believers quench the Spirit: neglecting spiritual gifts (1 Tim.4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6), refusing to walk by the Spirit (Gal.5:16-25), or choosing the desires of the flesh over the fruit of the Spirit.

Summary:

Unbelievers can resist the Holy Spirit's drawing and convicting work (Jn. 6:44; Acts 7:51; 2 Pet. 1:3) — and that resistance can be final if they never believe.

Believers (those who have already responded to the call) cannot "resist" in the sense of rejecting salvation again, because through faith in Christ, they are sealed by the Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30). However, they can grieve or quench Him through ongoing disobedience or neglect. This hinders the Holy Spirit from helping believers "work out what God is working in us" (Phil. 2:12-13; Heb. 13:21) — the very topic of our next study.

Our next study will be:

Pleasing the Holy Spirit: How He Helps Us Work Out What God Is Working in Us

Hebrews 13:20-21 – "God of peace... working in us that which is pleasing in his sight"

We "get to" please Him, because we are already pleasing to Him.

The same God who works in us (Phil. 2:13; Heb. 13:21) does so through the Holy Spirit.

Homework:

So in this study we learned all about resisting, grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit, the next study will be all about **pleasing the Holy Spirit even though God is already pleased with us**.

Passages to dive into through the summer for this upcoming study: Living to gratify, please, or sow toward the Holy Spirit: **Rom. 8:5-8; Gal. 5:16, 6:8; Eph. 5:10; Col. 1:10 (NLT, ESV, AMPC).**

"Seek those things which gratify the [Holy] Spirit" can be found in **Rom 8:5 AMPC**. This is striking because it shifts the focus from just avoiding the negative (like **grieving** and **quenching** the Holy Spirit to **actively pursuing what brings Him pleasure and satisfaction**. Here are key scriptures that carry the same idea of living to gratify, please, or sow toward the Holy Spirit:

Gal. 6:8: "…those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit."
Gal. 5:16: "Let the Holy Spirit guide your lives…"
Rom. 8:5: "…those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit."
Rom. 8:8: "…those who are living the life of the flesh cannot please or satisfy God…"
Eph. 5:10: "try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord…"
Col. 1:10: "…fully pleasing to him…"

These verses show that "**gratifying/pleasing the Holy Spirit**" looks like <u>setting your mind on spiritual things</u>, <u>walking in step with Him</u>, and <u>choosing kindness</u>, <u>forgiveness</u>, and <u>dependence instead of bitterness or self-centeredness</u>. **Yielding to the Holy Spirit is pleasing to the Lord**.

Rom. 8:5 in the AMPC highlights a profound contrast in mindset and pursuit. It ties directly into the broader New Covenant theme of pleasing the Lord (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) not as a works-based obligation, but as the natural overflow of being united with Christ—abiding in Him, walking by the Spirit, and responding to grace with love and gratitude.

2 Corinthians 5:9: "We make it our aim to please him."
Colossians 1:10: "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him."
Ephesians 5:10: "try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord."
Hebrews 13:21: God works in us "that which is pleasing in his sight."
And many others (**Rom. 12:1-2; 14:17-18; 1 Jn. 3:22**, etc.).

MEETING 42

The work of and the Relationship with the Holy Spirit — Part 2

The work of and the Relationship with the Holy Spirit Part 2
The Holy Spirit at Work in the Unbeliever and the Believer: Resisting and Ignoring the Holy Spirit Hinders the Work of the Holy Spirit

1. Brief recap from last meeting

In our last meeting we saw that "resisting the Holy Spirit" is not a general phrase used throughout Scripture. **Acts 7:51** is the only place the Bible uses the exact words "resists the Holy Spirit." Stephen spoke those words to the Sanhedrin — unsaved religious leaders (Sadducees, Pharisees, elders, and scribes) whom he called stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears: *"You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you."* Our deep dive into that speech showed that Stephen was describing unbelievers hardening themselves against the Father's drawing and the Spirit's conviction.

We also talked about how the Scriptures that warn us not to **grieve** or **quench the Holy Spirit** were given as a message to believers. **Unbelievers (without the Holy Spirit) can resist – Believers (with the Holy Spirit) can grieve, quench or ignore.**

We then discussed whether Scripture ever specifically says a believer resists the Holy Spirit. It does not. Those who have already believed and been sealed by the Holy Spirit (**Eph. 1:13–14; 4:30**) are warned in different, though related, language: do not grieve the Spirit (**Eph. 4:30**) and do not quench the Spirit (**1 Thess. 5:19**). **Ignoring His leading** is how that happens in practice, which is a lot like resisting the Holy Spirit. We will dive more into this concept in this study.

2. The Spirit's work before and after salvation - *(* See homework for Jn. 16:8-11.)*

a) Let's dive into **Jn. 6:44**; **Jn. 16:8-11 (ESV)** and see how they are connected - These two passages describe God's work toward the unbeliever: the Father draws, and the Holy Spirit is the agent of that drawing. In **Acts 7:51** Stephen was telling the unbelieving Jewish leaders that they were resisting the Holy Spirit. This is pointing to the fact that the Holy Spirit was and is still involved in the Father drawing people towards the Son, but they were resisting that drawing. They were resisting the Holy Spirit who was at work in the drawing by *"convicting the world of the sin of not believing in the Son"*.

b) We will see that conviction and condemnation for the unbeliever are closely related and **Rom. 8:1 (ESV)** is the good news for the believer which we will get to shortly.

c) **Drawn to the Son, then walking with the Spirit - Jn. 6:44** and **Jn. 16:8–9** describe the Father's drawing through the Spirit's conviction of the sin of unbelief. That conviction is how people are drawn to the Son. **Drawing is not yet salvation**; it brings a person to the point of hearing the gospel. Then, by faith, they receive the Son and are saved (**Jn. 1:12; 3:16; 6:47; Rom. 10:9 ESV**). At that same moment the Holy Spirit — who is the Spirit of Christ — comes to dwell in them. At salvation a person receives **the person of the Holy Spirit**. That is how "Christ in you" becomes true of the believer (**Jn. 3:5–8; Jn. 7:38–39; Gal. 3:2; Eph. 1:13–14; Col. 1:27**).
   * One can also reject through unbelief and not receive. (free will)

d) The Spirit who first convicted us of not believing now lives in a believer as Helper (**Jn. 14:16–17, 26; 16:7, 13**). A believer is not standing in court waiting to hear if God will accept them. That verdict is already in. He still deals with remaining sin: He opens our eyes to it, makes it bitter, makes Christ sweet, pulls our desires toward God, and walks us into repentance. **Before salvation** He convicts of unbelief. **After salvation** He indwells the believer and helps us fight the flesh. There is still a check in your spirit — an awareness of sin — but it is no longer the conviction bound up with condemnation (**Rom. 8:1**). The Spirit now helps us refuse the flesh and walk in what pleases the Lord (**Gal. 5:16–17; Rom. 8:13**).

3. **The unbelievers "Resisting" in Acts 7:51, and what believers can still refuse or ignore**
   a) Scripture uses the exact words "resist the Holy Spirit" only in **Acts 7:51**. Stephen said that to unbelieving leaders who were hardening themselves against the Father's drawing and the Spirit's conviction. That is not the Bible's language for those already sealed by the Spirit (**Eph. 1:13**). *At salvation a believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit.*
   b) What Scripture does say to believers is: do not grieve the Spirit (**Eph. 4:30**) and do not quench the Spirit (**1 Thess. 5:19**). Grieving and quenching do not undo the seal. They hinder fellowship and the Spirit's work in us.
   c) That is where free will still matters after salvation. We can ignore His influence. We can push past the check in our spirit when we want to satisfy the flesh. We can forget who we are in Christ and refuse the Spirit's help to resist temptation. That is not **Acts 7:51** all over again — we are not unsaved people slamming the door on the gospel — but it is a real refusal of His present help over the flesh. **Ignoring Him functions like resisting His influence in the life He already indwells**.
   d) Do not grieve, quench, or ignore Him. The Spirit in you can be treated as Lord or treated as if He were not there.
      - Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed (**Eph. 4:30**).
      - Do not quench the Spirit (**1 Thess. 5:19**).
      - Walk by the Spirit; keep in step with the Spirit (**Gal. 5:16, 25**).
      - Do not neglect the Helper already in you (**Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19**).
   e) You have full access to the Helper. Access is not the same as attention. A believer can have the Spirit and still walk in the flesh, live in fear, or stay silent. **The problem is never that He is only partly present. The problem is ignoring the One who is fully present**. Ignoring the Holy Spirit's help, guidance, or promptings can lead to giving in to the flesh, dulling spiritual sensitivity, weakening fruitfulness, and hardening the heart. We should aim toward being *"responsive to and controlled and guided by the Spirit]"* **Gal. 5:16-17 (NASB/AMPC).**
   f) The contrast looks like this:
      - **Before faith**: The Spirit convicts of unbelief so that we might come to the Son.
      - **After faith**: The Spirit lives in us to wage war against the flesh (**Gal. 5:16–17**), help us put to death the deeds of the body (**Rom. 8:13**), helps us in our weakness (**Rom. 8:26–27**), Sheds the love of God abroad into our hearts (**Rom. 5:5)** and reminds us what the Word says (**Jn. 14:26**). When we ignore that help, we are not losing the Spirit. **We are choosing the flesh over the Helper who is already ours**.

g) So, the study question is not, *"Can a sealed believer become an* ***Acts 7:51*** *resistor of the gospel?"* It is, *"Will we listen when the Spirit checks us, or will we ignore Him in order to gratify the flesh?"* Walking by the Spirit is how we do not gratify the flesh (**Gal. 5:16**). Setting our minds on the things of the Spirit is how we seek what gratifies Him (**Rom. 8:5 AMPC**). **Note**: only the AMPC uses "*gratify the Holy Spirit*". Most other translations only say *"but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit."* *"Gratify the Holy Spirit"* is the AMPC's amplification of this context. That is the believer's side of the relationship: **not ignoring the One who already lives in us, but yielding to His help against the flesh**.

4. **Conviction and condemnation**
   a) **Jn. 16:8–9** is courtroom language. The Spirit "convicts" (elegchō — expose, prove guilty) the world concerning sin "because they do not believe in me." That is not first a list of bad habits. It is the charge that leaves a person under God's verdict. Unbelief is the sin that keeps every other sin unforgiven.
   b) That is why this conviction sits so close to condemnation:
      - *"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe* ***is condemned already****, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God"* (**Jn. 3:18**).
      - *"Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life,* ***but the wrath of God remains on him****"* (**Jn. 3:36**).
      - The same paragraph in **Jn. 16** adds judgment: *"concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged"* (**Jn. 16:11**).
   c) Before faith, the Spirit's work toward a person is bound up with that verdict: you do not believe; you stand guilty; judgment is real. That conviction can be resisted (**Acts 7:51**). It can also be the drawing that brings someone to hear the gospel and receive the Son.
5. **After a person is in Christ, the verdict changes.**
   a) "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (**Rom. 8:1**). The case that **Jn. 16:8–9** was pressing — unbelief, guilt, coming judgment — is closed. The Spirit who once stood over the sinner as prosecutor now lives in the believer as the Spirit of Christ (**Rom. 8:9–10**). You are not on trial for salvation again.
   b) That does **not** mean the Spirit goes silent about sin. It means the kind of work changes.
   c) **Condemnation** says: you do not belong to Christ; the wrath of God remains. **The Spirit's work in a believer** says: you belong to Christ; this does not fit who you are; do not gratify the flesh; walk with Me.
   d) Scripture describes that second work in several ways, and none of them put the believer back under **Rom. 8:1's** cancelled verdict:
      - He **grieves** when we give the flesh room (**Eph. 4:30**).
      - He can be **quenched** when we shut down His leading (**1 Thess. 5:19**).
      - He **wars against the flesh** so we do not do whatever we want (**Gal. 5:16–17**).
      - By the Spirit we **put to death the deeds of the body** (**Rom. 8:13**).

- He **guides into all truth** (**Jn. 16:13**) and **conforms us to the image of the Son** (**Rom. 8:29**; **2 Cor. 3:18**).
- He produces **godly sorrow that leads to repentance**, not despair (**2 Cor. 7:9–10**).
- The Father **disciplines sons**, which is love, not condemnation (**Heb. 12:5–11**).
- "When we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may **not be condemned along with the world**" (**1 Cor. 11:31-32 AMPC) –** This is fatherly correction, not final condemnation.

e) The last item on the list above about **not being condemned with the world** ties it together nicely. * The enemy can make you feel like you are still condemned. The Role of the Enemy - The enemy often tries to make believers feel condemned by:
   - **Accusations**: Reminding them of past sins or failures.
   - **Lies**: Suggesting that they are unworthy of God's love and forgiveness.
   - **Emotional Manipulation**: Causing feelings of guilt that can lead to spiritual discouragement.

f) **Rom. 8:1** and **1 Cor. 11:32** belong together. One states the believer's standing. The other shows how God still deals with a believer's sin without touching that standing.

g) "There is therefore now no condemnation (katakrima) for those who are in Christ Jesus."
   - katakrima: Condemnation, judgment
   - Phonetic Spelling: (kat-ak'-ree-mah) = an adverse sentence (the verdict); the results of judgment; the exact sentence of condemnation handed down after due process.
   - That is the verdict of the gospel. In Christ the case is closed. A believer is no longer under the world's sentence. No longer condemned.

h) The difference between conviction prior to salvation and after salvation:
   - **Jn. 16:8–9 / Jn. 3:18** — conviction bound up with condemnation for the unbeliever.
   - **Rom. 8:1** — that condemnation is gone in Christ.
   - **1 Cor. 11:32** — remaining sin is still addressed, but as the Father's discipline, not as the Judge's final sentence.

i) The Spirit's "check" in a believer fits **1 Cor. 11:32** better than Jn. **16:8–9**. It is not "you are condemned." It is "you are Mine; this will not be ignored; come back." That is the Holy Spirit at work in us, helping us wage war against the flesh (**Gal. 5:16–17; Rom. 8:13**).

So, the "check in your spirit" when you want to gratify the flesh is real. It can feel like conviction of sin — and in a sense it is: the Spirit is exposing something that does not belong in a life He indwells. But it is not **Jn. 16:8–9** all over again. It is not *"you are condemned because you do not believe."* It is *"you are in Christ; do not set your mind on the flesh."*

The issue after salvation is not, "Am I still under condemnation?" **Rom. 8:1** has answered that. The issue is, "Will I ignore the indwelling Spirit and gratify the flesh, or will I listen to His check and seek what pleases the Lord?" Forgetting who you are in Christ and refusing His help against temptation is how a believer resists His influence.

Summary:

The believer's active relationship with the Holy Spirit: You walk with Him, keep in step with Him, are filled by Him, pray in Him, listen to Him, refuse to grieve or quench Him, and sow toward Him. The Spirit already lives in the believer.

The Holy Spirit's relationship with the believer: He lives in you, teaches. reminds you what the Word says, guides you into all truth, intercedes for you, seals you, bears witness that you are God's child, leads you, pours out the love of God into your hearts, and produces His fruit in you.

This study covered resisting and ignoring the Holy Spirit and relationship with the Holy Spirit. In the next few studies, we will be heading towards:

a.) Being filled with the Spirit. b.) Pleasing the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
c.) Those who are in Christ and those who belong to Christ.

Homework: Dig into this!

Below is a breakdown of **Jn. 16:8-11 ESV** - "*And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning **sin** and **righteousness** and **judgment**: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*"

1. **Sin** - The Spirit convicts of sin because they do not believe in Jesus (John 16:9). Unbelief is not a small extra sin; it is the sin that defines the unbeliever. Every other sin stays unforgiven because the person refuses the only Savior who can take it away. Unbelief is the sin. – **deeper**: Jn. 3:18-20; 8:24; 15:22-24; Acts 2:36-37.

2. **Righteousness** - The Spirit convicts of righteousness because Jesus goes to the Father (John 16:10). The world is wrong about Jesus and about itself. Unbelievers are unrighteous. They have no righteousness God accepts. Jesus' return to the Father proves He is the Righteous One, and His righteousness is the only righteousness that counts. Only through faith in Christ does a person become righteous. At salvation the believer receives Christ's righteousness and is made right with God (Romans 3:22–26; 10:10). Unbelief keeps a person outside that gift. Faith receives it. – **Deeper**: Jn. 16:28; Acts 2:32-36; Rom. 3:21-26; 10:9-10.

3. **Judgment** - The Spirit convicts of judgment because the ruler of this world is already judged (John 16:11). Unbelief leaves a person on Satan's side—the side already under sentence (John 3:18, 36). Unbelief does not wait for a future verdict. It already stands under the judgment that fell on the world's ruler.
Deeper: Jn. 3:18, 36; 8:24, 12:31, 48; 14:30; Col. 2:15, 2 Thess. 2:12.

Unbelief is the **sin**, unbelief rejects the only **righteousness** God gives, and unbelief leaves a person under the **judgment** already passed onto the ruler of this world. Faith in Christ is the only way out of all three.