

Old Things... 2 Corinthians 5:17

by **Leon O. Poole**

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Old Things... 2 Corinthians 5:17, by Leon O. Poole, expounds on the important meaning of the verse at 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

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Old Things... 2 Corinthians 5:17

There is a wonderful fact stated in the Apostle Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, chapter five verse 17: *"Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* In order to appreciate what that wonderful fact is, we shall consider other Scriptures in God's Word that will help clarify it for us.

It is common for people to struggle with the concept of the salvation which God has provided for us in Christ Jesus. Other people seek hope from various religious perspectives. Please consider: had there been another way to reconcile sinful humanity to God, Jesus Christ of Nazareth needed not to have died on the cross at Calvary. It's inconceivable that God, being Love as the Apostle John identified Him in 1 John 4:8, would have subjected His only begotten Son to the villainy and criminal abuse that He suffered at Calvary, had there been another way.

Understand that there were other religions in the world at that time. Also, remember that God Personally gave His Covenants with the Jewish Patriarchs, and with the House of Israel, and also the Law of Moses, as His provision for mankind. But all of the world's religions and the Law Of Moses were all flawed systems that could not secure the redemption that mankind needed!

In regard to the Law of Moses, consider Hebrews 8:7-13: *"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, He saith, Behold, the days come saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not saith the Lord.*

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."

Consider also Romans 8:3: *"For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."* And finally, Romans 8:6-8: *"For to be carnally minded is death: but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."*

Such is the case with fallen, sinful human beings. We needed a way of dealing with our sinfulness which neither religion nor Divine Law could provide. Galatians 3:21: *"...for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law."*

The eternal redemption which Christ purchased for us rests upon these facts: Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, willingly gave His life for us by dying for us. He was buried, and the third day afterwards, rose to immortal life, in His physical, glorified body. The power of those facts rises out of the fact that at Calvary, Jesus was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. In fact upon the cross, Jesus was made a curse for us, that we might receive the blessing of Abraham through Him, that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith. Galatians 3:13-14.

According to Isaiah 53: 10-11: *"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities."*

Notice also Isaiah 59:15: *"Yea, truth faileth, and he that departs from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him."* Notice that it was not what sinful man could do, it is what God did of His Own volition. The reason is John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

The Lord Jesus also said: *"... I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me."* The Apostle Peter affirmed the same fact in Acts 4:12: *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* Finally, the Apostle Paul 'nails it down' in Ephesians 2:8-9: *"For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."*

In summation then, mankind can only be saved from our sins, and from eternal damnation, by God's grace, (His undeserved favor) through faith. We must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ alone as our Savior. No other religion, or religious leader dares claim what Jesus Christ did for us. No other religion or religious leader dares claim resurrection from the dead to IMMORTAL life, as Jesus Christ experienced, after His death on the Cross at Calvary. He is the firstbegotten from the dead, and God has made Him the propitiation (the atoning victim) for the sins of the whole world, 1 John 2:2. No other religious leader EVER, visibly, in view of many witnesses, ascended to heaven in his living, physical, immortal body, except Jesus Christ.

All of these facts are considered in this book as the basis for our opening text, 2 Corinthians 5:17. That being the case, we now need the answers to the question of how to get into Christ, and Scriptural grounds for assurance that we are there.

Again, we turn to the Apostle John's writing in St. John 20:31. *"But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."* Apostle Paul also verified that, in Acts 16:31: *"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."* Then notice what the Lord Jesus said in John 5:24: *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."*

In the first letter of John, he wrote: *"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God:..."* 1 John 5:1. In 1 John 5:20 he wrote: *"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."* John informs us that when we believe on Jesus Christ, God gives us an understanding to know Him, and that we are IN him that is true. Other proofs that John lists that affirms our being IN Christ include Love, doing righteousness, and keeping God's Word. Notice that those things do not purchase salvation for us, rather they are proofs that we have it.

One other important proof was given by Jesus Christ. In Luke 14:27 He said: *"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."* A daily commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior by following Him, doing what His Word teaches, is the final proof that we are His followers; i.e., disciples. Such Godly living incurs God's promised blessings. James 1:22-25: *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."*

James further explained the case in chapter 2:17-22: *"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works. Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"*

Therefore, we are to understand that 'saving faith' in Christ is not a vain profession, but a possession that is evidenced by works and self denial which the Scriptures enjoin. Again, we emphasize that such works are not the method of gaining salvation, or of coming into Christ, but they are the expression of Biblical faith, which is worked out in daily life. Philippians 2:12: *"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye 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."* It is this premise that furnishes the reasons for the rest of this book.

In Romans 10:9-10, the Scripture tells us exactly how to become born again, and thus to be found IN Christ, per our opening text, 2 Corinthians 5:17. *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation."* Upon that confession and faith from the one seeking to be saved, God performs a miracle, and a supernatural work in us. Observe Ephesians 2:10: *"For we are his workmanship, **CREATED** IN Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them."* (My emphasis).

Again, Apostle Paul takes up this theme in Titus 3:4-5: *"But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;..."*. Thus, over, and over again, the Scripture shows that being born again, being IN Christ, being saved, being redeemed, is all by the volition of God's love and grace, through Jesus Christ, who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

CHAPTER TWO

With the foregoing facts noted in chapter one before us, we are now ready to deal with common difficulties that believers who are genuinely born again, and IN Christ deal with, as we follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have observed by experience and by counseling with believers during the years of service which the Lord has granted me, that believers often struggle with apparent contradictions to 2 Corinthians 5:17. *"Therefore, if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature. The old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new."*

Indeed, some have expressed to me, If they are passed away as that Scripture states, why do I have so much trouble with the 'old things'? Reader, have you ever wondered that? I also have struggled to live a true Christian life according to the Scripture.

We need to realize that truly, as born again believers in Christ Jesus, we ARE new creatures in Christ, and the old things are indeed passed away. The Lord Jesus truly has saved us from our sins, and He has taken away our sins, but He has not yet delivered us from the possibility of sins, or of the presence of sin in the world. Thus, James states that every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Sin, which is in the world around us, is an active agent that seeks to work in us by tempting us through our lusts.

It is important for us to realize that God has given us legitimate desire for things. That does NOT say that God has given us ungodly lusts, or sin to work in our members. Ungodly lusts, and sins came into the world through the transgression and fall of Adam when he ate of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 3:12.

God, in His love and kindness, gave unto mankind legitimate desires (appetites, and yearnings) when He created man in His Own Image, and after His Likeness. Again, that does NOT say that God gave man sinful lust or sin in any form or condition.

According to the Scripture, God created man to possess, and to have dominion over all the earth and over every creature upon it. It is legitimate, therefore, for man to desire to fulfill that Divine purpose. God also commanded the man to multiply and to replenish the earth. That is the basis for what we commonly recognize as the sex drive.

God further affirmed His purpose to Eve after she had eaten of the forbidden fruit. Notice Genesis 3:16: *"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."*

Therefore, we are to understand that God gave sex appetite to both man and woman. What He gave was NOT sinful, and there is nothing sinful about the sex act between a married man and his wife, Hebrews 13:4. *"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."*

Therefore, desire for food is a normal, God given appetite, and it is the normal desire of every living creature that God created upon the earth. But when God created and gave them such appetites and desires, they were not subject to sin, UNTIL Adam ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. At that time, he fell into sin, and the whole creation fell into ruin with him.

Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden; literally paradise. There was no sin, no sinful lust, no greed, covetousness, no provocation or sinful agitation upon the earth. They did not have the passions of sin working in their mortal members. Their innocence was so complete that not even their naked bodies evoked any sense of shame, or untoward passions. We note a similarity to their attitude in very small children and babies, who have no conscience of shame or of embarrassment about their naked bodies. Such innocence doesn't last long!

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 7:7-9: *"What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."*

Verses 10-13: *"And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."* Then skipping down to verse 17: *"Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."*

Verses 20-25: *"Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my MEMBERS, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my MEMBERS. O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."*

In Romans chapter seven Paul goes into details about the struggles that those who try to be 'good' and pleasing to God by their own ability fall into. I am sure he is not addressing a struggling Christian believer in that passage. He does include himself, because he also struggled with the law before he came to Christ. But Romans 10:4 states: *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."*

He had written in Romans 8:1-3 of what that release from the law means to those who believe on Jesus Christ; those who live after the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are IN Christ Jesus, who walk (conduct all their activities) not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life IN Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could NOT do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."*

(My emphasis).

That is the power and privilege of born again believers, who are IN Christ. Galatians 3:14 mentions the promise of the Spirit through faith, to those who believe on Jesus Christ. In our new relationship with Christ, He imparts to us the Spirit of regeneration, (literally the Spirit of Christ, Romans 8:9) thereby empowering us to live after the Spirit through faith.

No religion conceived by man or demon can match that provision! All their efforts are dead works, based upon what man supposedly can do for himself. It won't meet God's requirements for righteousness, because of the dominion of sin that works in the MEMBERS of unsaved people, according to Romans chapter 7, quoted above.

Per 2 Corinthians 5:17, some of the 'old things that are passed away' is that former dominion of sin, which worked in our MEMBERS through enslaved desire, lusts, appetites and passions. Notice what Jesus said in John 8:36: *"If the Son therefore make you free, ye shall be free indeed."* Therefore, there is no such thing as a born again believer retaining his old sinful nature when he is born again.

Never has there been a human baby that lived on the earth, being only halfway born! Neither is there any born again believer who is only partially born again! NO! We either ARE born again, and IN Christ, or we are yet in our sins. There is no half way condition between the two.

That brings us to our question again: since the 'old things' are passed away IN Christ, why do we have such struggles to live free from them in daily life? Again, we need to understand and believe what the Scripture says. The Lord Jesus stated in John 8:32: *"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples in deed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

Therefore, the answer to our perturbing question is to be found in the Truth, God's Word, per John 17:17. *"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."*

It has been my purpose to define the facts and conditions that all who come to the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior must know and deal with. There is much more for believers to learn than simply to say our prayers, to pay our tithes, to go to Church, and to witness for the Lord Jesus. We are to learn to live in victory over the world, the flesh and the devil.

We shall be compelled to learn the vital facts that enable us to succeed. Jesus is not going to do it all for us, though He will help us do it. We are His followers, His disciples, and as we follow Him daily, He will guide us into all Truth. He will show us how the things of the kingdom of God work, so that by faith we can overcome. Notice 1 John 5:4-5: *"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that BELIEVETH that Jesus is the Son of God?"*

As you have noticed in the above paragraphs, I have added emphasis to the words "IN Christ" and "MEMBERS". The emphasis on "IN Christ" is intended to note position, place and privilege. The emphasis on the word "MEMBERS" is to call attention to what follows, as we expound on the spiritual, moral, and mortal conflicts that we all have to deal with.

Consider 1 Peter 5:8-11 for instance. *"Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."*

Observe also Paul's admonition in Ephesians 6:10-13: *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."*

Clearly, believers have a determined enemy that seeks to devour us, to entice us, to lead us back into captivity to the law of sin and death. He works to deceive us regarding the life that Jesus Christ has graciously provided for us. Take heart, dear fellow believer, you are not the only one that struggles with overcoming the world, the flesh and the devil. It was that way with believers of note in the New Testament. But faith is the victory that overcomes the world.

Because that is true, and also because that without faith it is impossible to please God, we must learn the place and function of Biblical faith. Not only how to get saved through believing on Jesus Christ, but also in overcoming the things that arise in life, as we follow our Lord Jesus Christ. We are to learn to look to Jesus, the Author and finisher of our faith, Hebrews 12:2. *"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith;..."*

As we have previously noted, the Lord Jesus has delivered us from our sins, yet we live in a world in which sin is present and possible. Even so, by faith we can choose not to sin or to be overcome by its enticements. In that form we are free from the dominion of sin that unsaved people are enslaved by.

For instance, the Lord Jesus said that he that commits sin is the servant of sin. But Jesus has set believers free from our sins, and so, though we are beset with the presence and possibility of sin, we need not be victims of it. We will deal more fully with this fact later in this book. In order to grasp the benefits of Biblical faith, we will study, in brief, the subject of Biblical faith.

CHAPTER THREE

The Bible defines faith as the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, Hebrews 11:1. Note that it is a substance, albeit a spiritual substance. It is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. May I say that it is the *first* evidence to a believer of what does not appear to his natural senses. Romans 10:17 says that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. God's Word is where Biblical faith comes from, and hearing it is how Biblical faith comes to us.

We are to realize that Biblical faith is not something that we produce and present to God for acceptance. Faith is what comes to us by hearing God's Word. We are privileged to 'hear' God's Word by hearing someone preach or teach it. We are privileged to hear God's Word by saying it to ourselves, and by reading it and understanding what we read. Another way that we are privileged to hear it is by the action of the Holy Spirit within us, calling our attention to it. When faith comes to us by hearing the Word of God, it becomes our possession, and is correctly called 'our faith', 'my faith', 'your faith' etc. But we get it by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, in any case.

Apostle Peter wrote of them that have obtained 'like precious faith', 2 Peter 1:1. They also got it by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Now consider what the Lord Jesus said to His disciples in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 11:22-24.

"And Jesus saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily, I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore, I say unto you, whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Then in verses 25-26, the Lord Jesus explained the necessity of our forgiving those who trespass against us. If we do forgive them, then God will also forgive us our trespasses. If we don't forgive them, then God will NOT forgive us our trespasses. In that case our unforgiveness will hinder the proper working of our faith.

There is a matter of very great importance, and one that we MUST appropriate. That matter is this: to a believer faith becomes a fact, because faith is the substance of what we hope for in Christ. It is the substance of what God has promised to us, even though those promises do not yet appear to our natural perception. The facts of salvation, including the forgiveness of our sins, provision for our welfare, and healing for our physical bodies, EXIST apart from our faith. They stand by themselves, because Jesus Christ has obtained eternal redemption for us, Hebrews 9:12. Let us remember that on the Cross, the Lord Jesus said shortly before He died for us, "It is FINISHED." Through faith, those facts become substance to believers, and their reality becomes evident to us through faith.

Even so, we must receive them by faith which comes by hearing God's Word: otherwise, we cannot receive them. That is because without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6), and because salvation is by God's grace THROUGH faith, Ephesians 2:8-9. Therefore, we must have and exercise faith in order to obtain what God has provided for us in Christ.

To illustrate further, consider Acts 26:18. The Lord Jesus had appeared to Saul of Tarsus who was on his way to persecute the disciples of Christ at Damascus. Jesus said to Saul that He had appeared to him to make him a minister, and that He was sending Saul to the Gentiles: *"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, that they may RECEIVE forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."*

That was several years after Christ had died on Calvary, where He had accomplished redemption for us. Yet, the Gentiles to whom Jesus sent Saul, did not KNOW that. They did not have faith in Christ, and therefore had not received forgiveness for their sins, even though it EXISTED before they learned about it. Therefore, the Lord Jesus sent Saul to preach the Gospel (the good news concerning Jesus Christ) so that they COULD receive forgiveness for their sins.

Thus, even though Jesus Christ has died for all mankind on Calvary, YET if people do not know that, and receive faith through hearing the Gospel of Christ, they cannot be saved, and they WILL go to hell when they die! Notice Hebrews 11:6: *"But without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* Since Hebrews 11:1 says that faith is the substance of things hoped for, it is the basis for our pleasing God. There is yet another aspect that we must clearly see. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, but **believing** is the ACTION part of faith!

Notice if you will, John 3:16: *"...that whosoever **BELIEVETH** on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* He did not say that whosoever has FAITH in him should not perish, but whosoever BELIEVETH in him. I repeat that faith is the substance of things hoped for, but belief is the ACTION part of such faith. We must learn to ACT on faith, and according to faith. One of the ways to do that is simply by SAYING with our mouth and not doubting in heart what we say, Mark 11:23.

May I suggest another example? Romans 10:8-9: *"But what saith it? The word of faith is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach: That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."*

Think of it! Any person who hears the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and accepts the faith that comes by hearing it, and simply takes that WORD OF FAITH in their mouth, and SAYS: "I confess that Jesus Christ IS my Lord: I do believe in my heart that God has raised him from the dead", shall be saved, immediately!

Notice that confessing with their mouth is the ACTION part of faith, (which they have in their heart) called "believing". Now notice verse 10: *"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* That means that he **ACTS OUT** the faith that he has in his heart, *by* confessing with his mouth the Lord Jesus, believing that God has raised him from the dead.

That factor is critical to being saved from our sins, of being born again, of being redeemed, of being set free from sins, and made a new creature in Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:17. That factor is the foundation of Mark 11:23-24. It is one of the First Principles Of the Oracles of God (Hebrews 5:12), because Jesus called such faith the faith of God in Mark 11:22.

Observe that the Patriarch, Abraham used the same factor according to Romans 4:16-20: *"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all. (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God."*

Consider also, Hebrews 11:3: *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."* That was the faith of God, which Jesus Christ bade His disciples to have in Mark 11:22. God 'operates' that way, and according to Ephesians 5:1 and Mark 11:22-23, it is appropriate for us to 'operate' in the same way.

When we express the Word of God so in our mouth, believing in our heart that what we say shall come to pass, the Lord Jesus Christ said that we shall have **WHATSOEVER** we **SAY!**

At this point, we ought to be able to grasp how that 2 Corinthians 5:17 is a fact. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new. Since God **CANNOT** lie, what He has said is a **FACT!** Even if we fail to appropriate it, or adequately demonstrate it. Per Romans 10:17, faith comes by hearing God's Word. Now we simply are to **ACT** according to that faith, in what the Bible shows to be belief. There is a point of determining to **ACT** upon the faith which we receive by hearing God's Word. We choose through faith to be persuaded of the Truth. "I choose by faith to believe what God said: I am persuaded of the fact."

All that being said, we still have to contend with what, at times, seems to contradict what God has said. That contention is identified as the fight of faith, and it is the reason that we should put on the whole armor of God, so that we might withstand such apparent contradictions in the evil day. Satan, the liar and deceiver, seeks to devour us by making us uncertain and to doubt the plain statement of God Almighty.

The faith of God, and the use of it, according to Mark 11:22-24, is the means of dealing with every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, 2 Corinthians 10:4. God knows that we are new creatures in Christ, but the enemy seeks to exploit our tendency to doubt because of persistent contradictions to the fact.

Emphatically, in the face of all contradictions, *"If any man be in Christ, he IS a new creature (literally a new species) and old things ARE passed away, behold all things ARE become new."* Listen to what the last sentence said: *"Behold, (look at this) all things ARE become new."* Look at that fact instead of what your symptoms, sensations, emotions, doubts, fears, failures etc., suggest to you.

With such facts before us, we can learn to rule over our body, our mind, our emotions, fears, passions and lusts, and illicit desires of any kind. Jesus Christ has made us free, and we can learn to live in the liberty with which He has made us free.

If we develop our faith in that form, we can literally say to temptation, "I refuse to be tempted with 'that' (whatever temptation presents itself to us), I reckon myself dead to sin, but alive to God." When we do that in accordance with Mark 11:23, we shall have what we say. Thus, we can disarm the enticement. We do it with the word of faith in our heart, and spoken with our mouth. Romans 10:10.

We are expected to develop our faith to the point where we can successfully and consistently function in it, whatever we face. Notice 2 Peter 3:18: *"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."* 2 Corinthians 10:15: *"...having hope that when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly."* 2 Thessalonians 1:3: *"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth."*

It is unfortunate that some believers never seem to develop their faith beyond the new birth experience, and thus to grow into stalwart victors through faith in Christ Jesus. We can develop our faith by exercising ourselves according to Godliness, and by boldly confessing with our mouth what God's Word says to us and about us.

It appears to me that there are three exercises that all believers (truly born again children of God) must learn and practice constantly. First, we must learn to talk. We must learn to say what God's Word says about any subject of our concern. For instance, Romans 8:37 says: *"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."*

We will do well to recall Romans 8:28 and state: *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."* Our responses to adversity should always affirm what God's Word says about them. We ought never to talk doubt, fear, unbelief, worry etc.

Secondly, we must learn to walk, spiritually speaking. For example, the Scripture in Ephesians 5:2 bids us to walk in love. Remember that the word 'walk' as it is used here and in similar places, means the way we conduct all of our activities. We are to conduct all of our activities in love, which includes the concept of benevolence to others.

Then thirdly, we must learn to count, i.e., in the form stated in Romans 6:11. *"Likewise, reckon ye yourselves to be dead in deed unto sin, but alive unto God."* One form of reckoning is to count, to estimate, to consider it a fact. James 1:2 bids to count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations. I know by experience that it does not always 'feel' like joy when temptation is pressuring me. But when we reckon, or count, or estimate the event as the Scripture says, we can escape the snare.

Now did you note that Romans 6:11 said to reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin? Well, there is a similar, affirming statement in Colossians 3:3. *"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."* Therefore, we have it on good authority that we are dead, therefore, it should be no obstacle to reckon ourselves dead to sin, because per God's Word we ARE. Need I remind you that God cannot lie? If you need a Scripture reference to that fact, read Titus 1:2. *"In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began."*

CHAPTER FOUR

Please recall now that in chapter two, we kept emphasizing the word MEMBERS. The Scripture teaches us to deal with our members. Observe that Colossians 3:5 states: *"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication (unmarried sex sin), uncleanness (unnatural acts of impurity carried out by oneself), inordinate affection (love for forbidden things), evil concupiscence (yearning for evil things), and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience."* (My amplification).

The reason that the Scripture calls those things our 'members' is because they stem from attributes (members) that God gave us when He created man. He did NOT give us sin, or sinfulness. He gave us right, good, acceptable appetites, desires and dispositions. But when Adam sinned, all those things fell into ruin, and sin moved in and captured them all. By them, sin enslaves us and manipulates our passions and affections in sinful ways. See Romans 7:21-23.

We never knew any other existence before we became born again. But after we have become born again through faith in Jesus Christ, we can recognize distinction, and the Word of God and the Holy Spirit moves us with conviction against the activity of sin in our members. We recognize the effort of sin in them. Sin seeks to force us back into captivity to itself, through attacking our God given appetites, passions, desires and dispositions. Note Romans chapter 7.

The word "mortify" in Colossians 3:5 means to deaden, to make of no effect. We are to deaden our members to the sins that seek to manipulate them. We can do that by refusing to 'feed' those sinful lusts, and by constantly replying to their enticements: "I reckon myself dead to sin, but alive unto God" (Romans 6:11). There is irresistible power in such a statement, when it is made in faith. It works!

Remember 2 Corinthians 5:17. Since we ARE New Creatures in Christ as believers, and there is NO sin in Him, consequently there is NONE in our new nature either. Then how does evil become such a threat to us, and a nearly constant battle sometimes? How does it 'feel' like sin still has dominion over us? Why do we seem so susceptible to it? How does it attack our mind in the least expected times, in such a way that we think it *has* to be *us* thinking it or feeling it? Why does our mind so readily 'track' to those forbidden areas of unrighteousness?

Simply because there is another of our 'members' that is not mentioned in Colossians 3:5, but which is named in Romans 8:6-8. *"For to be carnally minded is death: but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are NOT in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."* The Spirit of Christ, as it is used here, means the Spirit of promise (Galatians 3:14) by which we are regenerated in Christ, according to Titus 3:5, as previously noted.

The carnal mind then, which is enmity towards God, is a member of the natural, un-born again man, i.e., the 'old man'. Born again believers CAN resist and overcome it by renewing their minds according to Romans 12:2: "*...and be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*" We can renew our mind by training it to think and respond according to what God's Word says about any subject of our concern; by refusing to think carnal, evil things, to which the presence of sin in the world entices us.

Going a little deeper into the subject of the carnal mind, there is something called 'carnal knowledge', that readily operates in and through the carnal mind. Carnal knowledge includes, but is not limited to, what we know or imagine of human anatomy. The carnal mind learns early to imagine what a human body looks like when it is undressed. The carnal mind imagines what certain pleasant associations with such bodies would be like. Jesus called that activity adultery, saying: Whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery already with her in his heart. It would be the same act for a woman to look on a man to lust after him.

Thus, the God given appetite for sex can be enticed to illicit gratification, in thought or deed. Similarly, the God given desire to possess things can be tempted to covet, which is another form of sin. Both forms of enticement will become a strong, compelling drive to gratify, if we do not restrain their progress by self denial. That is what Paul wrote in Romans 6:13 "*...but yield yourselves unto God, ...and your MEMBERS as instruments of righteousness unto God.*"

Upon being enticed to sinful gratification, the sword of the Spirit becomes a powerful weapon against temptation. Hebrews 4:12: "*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*" The Lord Jesus used God's Word to defeat satan's temptations in Matthew 4:3-11.

The conflict is between our soul and our regenerated human spirit. Our body and soul were formerly enslaved to our sins. Our new nature was never enslaved by sin. The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is able to divide between soul and spirit, giving advantage to our new nature, so that by faith, we can obey God's Word. Such obedience is always a choice of faith.

Thus, the just live by faith. In times when we feel lust trying to agitate our soul, out of our new nature, through faith, we can reject, deny, disown, and make ineffective the agitations of lust. In that way we are justified by that faith.

If we take the Word of God in our heart and mouth, and speak it in faith against temptation to illicit gratification of any kind, we can defeat sin, and keep our members from being affected by it.

The Lord Jesus did that. By consistent practice of such responses to temptation, we can become bold enough to say to former sinful weaknesses, "I refuse to BE tempted with that. I will NOT be defiled by that. I am dead to sin, but I am alive to God through Christ." Romans 6:11.

We can be assured by the Scripture that the suggestions, temptations, imaginations, passions and lusts that war against our soul are NOT PART OF OUR NEW NATURE! When we say NO! to them, they are made useless and ineffective as far as our responses are concerned. We are to REFUSE to LET them defile our soul and mind. They are NOT ours! Thus, there is the constant overcoming and cleansing process whereby we live in freedom and victory over the 'old things that ARE passed away'. This process will keep them from returning.

Notice what Jesus said in Matthew 12:43-44: *"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then saith he, I will return to my house from whence I came out; ..."*. This simply illustrates that the old things that are passed away, seek to return to their former place in our life. Since unclean spirits do this, how much more does the old nature that was once ours, seek to re-enter into us?

In God's sight we are NOT condemned simply because a temptation was presented to us. Per James 1:14-16, sin does not occur in us, UNTIL we assent to, and give in to the temptation. *"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. **Then** when lust hath **conceived**, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren."* Therefore, when we say "NO!" to temptation, we render it useless. We are VICTORS over it by faith. Praise the Lord! (My emphasis.)

God has also graciously given us 1 Corinthians 7:2 to rightly gratify the appetites which He gave and intended for us to have, without sin. *"Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."* Again, Hebrews 13:4: *"Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."*

As to our God given disposition and desire to possess things, God has commanded, *"Thou shalt not covet."* Covetousness is an indication of a soul that is diseased and dominated by sin. Don't covet. But Jesus told us to ask for things. Mark 11:24: *"Therefore, I say unto you, Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive, them and ye shall have them."* Don't covet, just ask! Again, Matthew 6:33: *"But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."* God is NOT opposed to us having THINGS, but He IS opposed to covetousness, because it is idolatry, and it makes desolate; it is a sin against God and against our own well being.

The carnal mind is not limited only to sexual vices and covetousness. It is also an involuntary element in man's mental faculties which opposes God and His Words. It is independent of the devil, and thus, man is accountable to God for his rebellion and unrighteousness. But Satan easily dominates fallen man, by working through his sinful lusts. He can at will take him captive, and in some cases he does possess a human, and inhabit their physical body in order to carry out his own lusts.

The carnal mind came into man when Adam yielded to Satan through sin. See Genesis 3:1-6. The carnally minded man is dominated by the works of the flesh, which Paul listed in Galatians 5:19-21. Notice that those works are the works of the flesh of fallen humanity, not the direct works of the devil, though he is the original source of them all. In Hebrews 9:14 they are called 'dead works'. In Romans 13:12 they are called the works of darkness.

The carnal mind is disposed to the works of the flesh by its own inclination. We never have to train it to be that way, it is just inclined that way from our natural birth, by virtue of the fallen nature of man. It is one more reason WHY a man MUST BE born again, or he CANNOT enter into the Kingdom of God. Satan was cast out of heaven because of his sin, and his nature CANNOT re-enter heaven, neither can a human being who is dominated by that satanic nature. John 3:3-5. Man has to somehow be rid of that enmity towards God. The problem from the fall of humanity in Adam has not been the enmity of God towards man, but of man's enmity towards God. God's response was John 3:16.

Our text in 2 Corinthians 5:17 is yet true! Jesus did not save us and leave us under the dominion of our carnal mind. No, we have the mind of Christ, according to 1 Corinthians 2:16.

Therefore, Paul bids us to: "...let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Philippians 2:5. To be spiritually minded, according to Romans 8:6, is life and peace. The Scripture says that believers have the mind of Christ! The conflict then appears because the carnal mind is always ready to oppose God in us, and we must, by faith, refuse to let it do so.

Paul puts it like this in Romans 6:13: "*Neither yield ye your MEMBERS as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your MEMBERS as instruments of righteousness unto God.*" That includes not yielding our renewed mind in Christ to the dominion of the old carnal mind. The carnal mind, and the things that we trained it in, and gratified it with, before we came to Christ, is one of the strongholds mentioned in 2 Corinthians 10:4: "*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;*".

Most of our temptations work through the carnal mind. It is ever ready to re-assert dominion over us who have been delivered from our sins through faith in Christ Jesus. Isaiah 38:17: "*...but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.*" Only, in the New Testament, it is better than that: "*...unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His Own Blood.*" Revelation 1:5b.

Recall now that we said earlier that Jesus has saved us and delivered us from our sins, but He has not yet delivered us from the presence of sin in the world. Therefore, through the attributes which God gave mankind when He created Adam, we are susceptible to the depredations of sins that work in the world around us. But remember that 1 John 5:4 states that faith is the victory that overcomes the world.

CHAPTER FIVE

With the truth of God's Word before us, and in our heart and in our mouth as the word of faith, we can say to the working of the devil, and to our old nature that seeks to re-assert it self in us, "Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea." If we do so, without doubting in our heart, we shall have what we say. Therefore, learn to TALK faith talk to your conflicts, and compel them to yield to God's Word. We can absolutely live free from the old things which are passed away, and we can have joy and peace in believing. Romans 15:13: *"Now the God of peace fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."*

Understand that whatever you yield yourself to can become your master, and it can lead to other things that you may not choose to be subject to. If you ponder on salacious things, then evil, lustful cravings will attempt to master you. Therefore, practice what Philippians 4:4,6 and 8 says: *"Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, my brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."*

Note that the Apostle Paul was constrained to direct *believers*, *saints*, to think on certain things. By doing so he implied that they ought NOT to think on bad things. Such is the choices that we also must make in our commitment to Christ, as our Lord and Savior. Apostle Peter also enjoined soberness and vigilance, because our adversary the devil, goes about seeking whom he may devour. One of the ways that he attempts that is through our mind.

Don't yield your members to unrighteousness, and don't be weary in opposing the efforts of the old things that are passed away, when they try to return and enslave you. Do not doubt that what the Scripture in 2 Corinthians 5:17 says is true in your case, just because you get involved in a faith fight with 'old things that are passed away'.

The fact that you even concern yourself, as a believer, with resisting the devil, and denying yourself, and refusing the demands of the sins of the flesh, means that you have been delivered from them. That can be affirmed because before you came to Christ, you diligently gave yourself over to them, and sought every opportunity to indulge them. See Ephesians 2:1-3: *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."*

Then notice also 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*" What a dreadful list of sins! But notice that he states in verse 11: "*...such WERE some of you, but ye are washed, sanctified, justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*" Glory to God! We may correctly conclude that in one way, it does not matter what we once WERE, what matters at the present, is that through faith in Jesus Christ and our new birth in Him, we are NOT what we once were in the past, praise the Lord!

That being the case, and the Scripture plainly says that it is, we should see that we have been delivered from our sins, and that any suggestion, temptation, prompting of emotions, lusts or passions are coming from OUTSIDE our new nature in Christ. None of those things were ever in Christ, and we have His nature in us, and His Spirit living in us. We ARE indeed new creatures in Christ. We need not be intimidated with what the 'Old Man (nature)' suggests! We can boldly say, in truth and as a fact: "I AM redeemed!" Psalms 107:2 bids us to say so.

It is a great comfort and assurance to know that the temptations that we deal with, are NOT really part of our new nature in Christ, no matter how they persistently war against our mind. Each time they present themselves, we are to deny them any place in our thoughts, refuse to submit to their enticements, and to disown any connection with them. The Lord Jesus Himself had to deal with temptations, just like we do, according to the Scripture in Hebrews 4:15: "*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*"

We should take courage in the fact that it is not a sin to be tempted, else Jesus would have sinned, because He was tempted as we are; yet, the Scripture says, He was without sin. The action of temptation itself is not a sin: it is only the yielding to temptation that is the sin.

Again, we repeat, it is only when lust has been conceived that sin occurs. Therefore, to be enticed and tempted is not the sin. Conceiving and complying with the temptation, (as we may say in modern vernacular, when we 'go along' with the temptation) is when sin occurs. It is NOT A SIN TO BE TEMPTED! It is only a sin to consent to and carry out the temptation.

We must guard our heart diligently, because out of it are the issues of life. We must not let any thing tempt us to accept the impulse, lust or desire, whether in thought and/or in deed, to any sin. God has given us His whole armour, as noted in Ephesians 6:1-18, so that we can withstand the wiles of the devil, in the evil day. The 'evil day' is any time that we are striving in our mind and heart, against temptation, as well as other bad events that may occur.

Now consider what Paul wrote to the SAINTS at Ephesians 4:20-24: *"But ye have not so earned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts: and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."*

Since the Scripture is plain that there no sin IN Christ, Paul was teaching the saints IN Christ how to defend themselves against the efforts of the old nature to re-assert itself in them. He said in verse 22: *"That ye PUT OFF the old man..."* Well, according to Paul in Colossians 3:3 and 9: *"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God..."* Verse 9: *"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye HAVE PUT OFF the old man with his deeds."* (My emphasis).

In those two verses, Paul affirms the case of born again believers who are new creatures in Christ. They are dead to sin, their life is hid with Christ IN God, and they have put off the old man, their former manner of living and nature. To such saints he wrote telling them to mortify, deaden, make of no effect, their MEMBERS which are upon the earth, i.e., their body parts, and their appetites and lusts, and desires, which are susceptible to temptation. To use modern vernacular, 'give your members a "shot" of the Word of God' to deaden them to temptation. In verse 8 he wrote them to also put off anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of their mouth, to refuse to lie to each other, and to PUT ON the new man, verse 10.

Summing the case, born again believers are IN Christ, and are dead to sin, and have put off the Old Man (their former nature and manner of living in their sins), and they have PUT ON the New Man; the Nature of Christ, and the manner of living according to God's Word. **That is the common experience of Christian living.**

If we understand that fact, it relieves much of our frustration and anxiety about the activity of temptations and lusts that seek to regain dominion over us. We ARE delivered from our sins and sinful nature, but we live in a world where sins and sinful nature abound. They always, and constantly, seek to enslave us again. But the Scripture bids us to resist the devil, to put off the Old Man (whenever he accosts us) and to put on the New Man, instead of yielding to temptation as we did formerly in our ignorance. And it means not relying only on one past event of having once resisted the devil, and of once having put off the Old Man, and of having once put on the New Man, but an ongoing activity of ALWAYS doing so whenever they approach us. In that way we shall live in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. Praise the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:17 is **TRUE**, so don't permit yourself to be deceived as to think that you still have your old sins in you. Notice Hebrews 9:13-14: *"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"*

Notice that the Blood of Christ PURGES your conscience from dead works, i.e., your sins and your former manner of living in sin. Notice also how John wrote in 1 John 1:9: *"But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* Tell me, since Jesus' Blood cleanses us from ALL sin, how much is left in us? NONE!

I know that 1 John 1:8 says that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. I also know that verse 7 says that if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the Blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, cleanses us from ALL sin! We WOULD be lying to say 'on our own' that we have no sin, but we are honest and true to say what God's Word says about us and to us! Please re-read Hebrews 9:14, quoted above.

What Paul wrote in Romans, Ephesians and Colossians about reckoning ourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God, and to put off the Old Man, and to put on the New Man, is light from God. If we walk in the light, the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from ALL sin.

Can you see the liberty into which the Lord Jesus Christ has brought us? He loved us, and washed us from our sins in His Own Blood, according to Revelation 1:5. Colossians 1:14 states that in Whom (Jesus) we have redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

We are not considering in this study how to become saved; we are considering how to live victorious lives in Christ, after that we ARE born again, having become New Creatures In Christ. We are considering why and how the facts of 2 Corinthians 5:17 ARE true, despite the apparent contradictions that our experience with temptations and trials suggest. We ARE more than conquerors in Christ, but we have to constantly assert that fact by overcoming the world, the flesh and the devil.

We are to maintain, through faith, our position in Christ, as new born babes in Christ, as new creatures in Christ, as sons and daughters of God, as overcomers, as conquerors. We are redeemed by the Blood of Jesus Christ, by God's grace through faith. In our new birth, we were created by God IN Christ, and He did not create us new, while leaving some of the old sin in us. He did not leave us with a bad nature, along with a good nature. We are to recognize that we are delivered from our sins, but that the world, the flesh, and the devil seek to enslave us to our former sins again. We are to refuse that, and to put off The Old Man when he seeks to reassert his control over our life. Instead, we are to put on the new man by acting on God's Word.

The Scripture bids us to resist the devil, to put off the former manner of living, and to put on the new man. That should be a daily activity of Christian living. Such faithful living is akin to the Lord Jesus' statement that we are to DENY ourselves, and take up our cross daily and follow Him. Taking up our cross is one expression of putting off the old man and of putting on the new man.

We do not get born again every day, but we are daily to affirm our new nature and life in Christ, by refusing the temptations and impulses and lusts of sins. Some days, it seems to be nearly a constant warfare in our mind. But we remain God's child UNLESS we yield ourselves to the old man and become enslaved by him again.

Apostle Peter wrote in 2 Peter 2:19-22: *"... for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage."* That is precisely what the Old Man attempts to do to born again believers, through seducing our God given appetites and desires and dispositions. They are the approaches through which the Old Man comes to take us captive. 2 Peter 2:20: *"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled, and overcome, the latter end of them is worse than the first. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow to her wallowing in the mire."*

We are to put OFF the Old Man when he approaches, surely knowing that he is NOT in Christ as we are! But we cannot be merely passive; we must actively put on the new man, by doing what God's Word says to do. Notice 1 John 2:29: *"If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him."*

Thus, by searching and studying the Scriptures, we should see plainly that in Christ, we are delivered from our sins; we are washed from our sins; we are forgiven for our sins, and we are cleansed from all unrighteousness. Now look at 1 John 2:1-2: *"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."*

Since the Scripture teaches that God's Word is light, and that the entrance of His Word gives light, the Scriptures that we have quoted are light. Romans 13:12 bids us to: *"...cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."* We put on the armour of light by believing God's Word, and by doing it.

Thus, in many places the Scripture bids us to continue to put off the Old Man when he accosts us, and to put on the New Man instead. It tells us to put on Christ by acting in accord with the Gospel of Christ. It tells us to put on the whole armor of God so that we can withstand the wiles of the devil. We are to conduct ourselves honestly and not to make provision for the flesh (another synonym for the Old Man) to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Therefore, it IS honest for us to affirm the fact of our being a new creature IN Christ. As such we are to put off every manner of living in our former sins, along with the nature that was enslaved to them, i.e., the Old Man. It IS honest to affirm what God's Word says ABOUT us, and TO us.

According to what the Scripture teaches about faith, and the facts of our 'New Creature status' in Christ, Mark 11:23 can effectively be applied to our conflicts with the world, the flesh and the devil. What we say with our mouth, believing in our heart, becomes a powerful means of overcoming and living in victory in Christ. It is effective against the devil's efforts against us, and against the impulses that the Old Man suggests to us. It is part of the fight of faith that we are to constantly carry on. 1 Timothy 6:12: *"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."* 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 condenses the whole process into a concise statement: *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds: casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;... "*

We are in a warfare which confronts us in imaginations, and thoughts, and from strongholds. We can easily consider it as being a warfare in our mind. We can cast down strongholds by saying with our mouth, and believing in our heart that what we say shall come to pass. When we say "NO!" to temptation, we effectively defeat the temptation, and we remain free from contamination.

Imaginations appear sometimes in the form of thinking there is some incompleteness in our salvation because we have so much trouble with the Old Man. Cast such imaginations down. 2 Corinthians 5:17 IS true! Those old things ARE passed away, and we affirm and enforce that they are by *SAYING* so, Mark 11:23. Cast down 'high things' that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God. The truth is that God knows if you are a New Creature in Christ. Don't let

apparent contradictions exalt themselves against what God knows about you, or what you know about Him! Cast them down, they are NOT true! Say to them, on the basis of Mark 11:23: "I cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God." Say to temptations: "I reckon myself dead to sin, I put OFF the Old Man, and I put ON the New Man."

Insist on the fact of 2 Corinthians 5:17: "I AM a new creature in Christ, old things ARE passed away, behold that all things ARE become new." Say, on the basis of Mark 11:23: "I resist you devil, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and I plead the Blood of Jesus over my mind."

As you develop your faith in such ways, you will find yourself becoming bolder, and able more effectively to rule over things that used to trouble you. Jesus has set you free, now LIVE in that liberty!

We have studied some forms of Philippians 2:12-15: *"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye 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, for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure."*

Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

Apostle John wrote in 1 John 3:2: *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."* We ARE what God says we are. We are to demonstrate such, as lights in the world; while we work out our salvation, which we have received as a gift by God's grace through faith.

Nothing in this discussion is intended to take the place of fervent, continued prayer. Nothing that we can do, can take the place of the infusion of God's grace that we can obtain through prayer. Notice Hebrews 4:16: *"Let us therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."* We always need God's grace to help us, when we are beset with temptation, and we can get it through believing prayer. Also, the old things do not cease to accost us just because we don't want to think like they suggest. They must always be overcome by faith.

The purpose of this discussion is intended to encourage you in your conflicts. I have personally experienced what I have written about, and know that this method of dealing with temptation does work very well. Just don't become discouraged because you must repeat the combat. Living by faith means just that. We believe that what we say with our mouth makes what we say a reality in our experience. That is so because God's Word (Mark 11:23) plainly states: *"For verily, I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith."* Therefore, we can surely defeat every temptation if we deal with it exactly as Mark 11:23 says.

Believe God's Word, and begin to say in faith to the Old things That Are Passed Away, "Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea. I reckon myself to be dead indeed unto sin (unclean, wicked thoughts, feelings, passions, lusts, anger, wrath etc., what ever you are dealing with at the moment) but alive unto God through Jesus Christ. I refuse to BE tempted or defiled with that (whatever the temptation is) and I put ON Christ." Then go on your way, assured of total victory in it. God will 'back' your confession! He won't take sides with your temptation and condemn you just because something was suggested to your mind. Be at peace, my fellow believer, through believing and practicing what God has bidden us to do. Read Romans 15:13.

We must never become complacent in our warfare, and we must not neglect to feed our faith on God's Word. The Lord Jesus promised that the overcomer shall inherit all things, and shall be granted to eat of the Tree of Life, and of the hidden manna. Amen.

Old Things... 2 Corinthians 5:17 by Leon O. Poole - Public Domain [Copy Freely]

