

## I Thessalonians 2:10–12

*I Thessalonians 2:10 Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:*

PAUL lists three ways he and his companions behaved among the Thessalonians: (1) *holily*, (2) *justly*, and (3) *unblameably*. All three of these divine attributes reveal different aspects of proper Christian character.

1. *Holily*. The Greek word is *hosiós*, defined as “what is sanctioned by the Lord”—properly, divinely-sanctioned and therefore worthy of reverence.<sup>1</sup> We also see *hosiós* translated in other versions as “devoutly.”<sup>2</sup> By this word Paul indicates that the apostles manifested lives of holy devotion. How a man lives reveals the true character of his being. If a man is devout in his personal and everyday life, we can know his religion is pure. The opposite of a devout and holy man is a common man. Such a man as this lives his life without any respect for the sacred Scriptures, fellowship with the Lord, internal spiritual devotion, or the pursuit of holiness in his heart. Natural men are common and defiled by nature.<sup>3</sup>

Those also who wish to remain so will have no true love or affection for holiness. Yet without holiness no man shall see the Lord. *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord* (Heb. 12:14). It is impossible for any man to see the Lord, or have any true relationship with Him, if there is not first the pursuit of holiness. To actually see God, let alone be saved by Him, men must pursue not only peace with other men but also the divine holiness that is the Lord’s own spiritual nature. In Christian ministry the pursuit of holiness is as critical in seeing the Lord as the pursuit of faith. If either of these spiritual attributes is lacking in those searching for the Lord, then God cannot and will not be seen by the searcher.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Heb. 12:14) *no man shall see the Lord*—no man as a son; in heavenly glory (Re 22:3, 4).<sup>4</sup> In the East, none but the greatest favorites are admitted to the honor of seeing the king (compare 2Sa 14:24).<sup>5</sup> The Lord being pure and holy, none but the pure and holy shall see Him (Mt 5:8).<sup>6</sup> Without holiness in them, they could not enjoy Him who is holiness itself (Zec 14:20).<sup>7</sup> The connection of purity with seeing the Lord, appears in 1Jo 3:2,

1 HELPS Word-studies, #3743

2 CSB, NASB, NKJV, Holman Christian Standard Bible, etc.

3 I Cor. 2:14 *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

4 Rev. 22:3–4 *And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: <sup>4</sup>And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.*

5 II Sam. 14:24 *And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king’s face.*

6 Matt. 5:8 *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

7 Zech. 14:20 *In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar.*

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3; Eph 5:5.<sup>8</sup> Contrast Heb 12:16<sup>9</sup> (compare 1 Th 4:3).<sup>10</sup> In Mt 24:30; Re 1:7,<sup>11</sup> it is said that all shall see the Lord; but, that shall be as a Judge, not as their lasting portion and God, which is meant here. The Greek verb does not denote the mere action of seeing, but the seer's state of mind to which the object is presented: so in Mt 5:8<sup>12</sup> they shall truly comprehend God [Tittmann]. None but the holy could appreciate the holy God, none else therefore shall abide in His presence.

A man's religion and the God he serves are easily visible in the life he lives. Therefore, if faith is impure, it will be very apparent in the common way in which its adherents live. All religions can be seen as either clean or unclean by the people who practice them. The apostle's life proved that his God was holy, and because of this he could live in no other way than by pursuing holiness. No religion should be deemed good if the people who practice it are not in pursuit of greater holiness. It is this that the Lord calls His people toward, and those who sincerely love Him will pursue it in their own lives. *Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy* (I Pet. 1:16).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Pet. 1:16) *Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy* . . . It is a great truth, that people everywhere will imitate the God whom they worship.

They will form their character in accordance with his. They will regard what he does as right. They will attempt to rise no higher in virtue than the God whom they adore, and they will practice freely what he is supposed to do or approve. Hence, by knowing what are the characteristics of the gods which are worshipped by any people, we may form a correct estimate of the character of the people themselves; and, hence, as the God who is the object of the Christian's worship is perfectly holy, the character of His worshipers should also be holy. And hence, also, we may see that the tendency of true religion is to make people pure. As the worship of the impure gods of the pagan moulds the character of the worshippers into their image, so the worship of Yahweh moulds the character of His professed friends into His image, and they become like him.

2. *Justly*. The Greek word for *justly* is "*dikaíos* (an adverb)—judicially approved (approved by God); justly, uprightly,"<sup>13</sup> For men to walk in union with the Lord, they must walk not just holy before God but also uprightly and with much integrity toward other men. A just man will have a strict code of conduct concerning others. Only when we love our neighbors as ourselves are our dealings with them fair, equitable, and generous.<sup>14</sup> We should not underestimate how righteous our deal-

8 I John 3:2-3 *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.*<sup>3</sup> And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Eph. 5:5 *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

9 Heb. 12:16 *Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*

10 I Thess. 4:3 *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:*

11 Matt. 24:30 *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

Rev. 1:7 *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*

12 Matt. 5:8 *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

13 HELPS Word-studies, #1346

14 Matt. 22:39 *And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

Mark 12:31 *And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*

Mark 12:33 *And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.*

Luke 10:27 *And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.*

ings with other men must be if we are to properly fellowship with the Lord and live lives pleasing to Him. A righteous and godly man must necessarily deal thoughtfully and charitably not only with the people of God but also with any who are not.<sup>15</sup> Of Moses' Ten Commandments,<sup>16</sup> six deal with how believers are to conduct themselves with other men. Therefore, to walk and remain in God's will requires a righteous walk among others, simply because he who sins against his neighbor, ultimately sins against God.<sup>17</sup> David proved this when he realized that his sin

against Uriah, through taking Bathsheba to be his own<sup>18</sup> and having Uriah killed,<sup>19</sup> was a sin against heaven itself. *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest* (Ps. 51:4). Though David's sin might be viewed as merely against man, it was really against God. This is why if men do not conduct themselves righteously, justly, lovingly, and generously before other men, they should not think that they are in any way walking worthy of

Rom. 13:9 *For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

Gal. 5:14 *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

Jas. 2:8 *If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: 15 Gal. 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

16 Exod. 20:1–17 *And God spake all these words, saying, <sup>2</sup>I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. <sup>3</sup>Thou shalt have no other gods before me. <sup>4</sup>Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup>Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; <sup>6</sup>And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. <sup>7</sup>Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. <sup>8</sup>Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: <sup>10</sup>But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: <sup>11</sup>For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. <sup>12</sup>Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. <sup>13</sup>Thou shalt not kill. <sup>14</sup>Thou shalt not commit adultery. <sup>15</sup>Thou shalt not steal. <sup>16</sup>Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. <sup>17</sup>Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*

17 Lev. 6:2 *If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the LORD, and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour; II Sam. 12:9, 13 *Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. . . . <sup>13</sup>And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.**

Matt. 5:22 *But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

18 II Sam. 11:2–4 *And it came to pass in an evening tide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. <sup>3</sup>And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? <sup>4</sup>And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.*

19 II Sam. 11:15–17 *And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. <sup>16</sup>And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were. <sup>17</sup>And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.*

the Lord. Sinning against our fellow man is equal to sinning against God Himself.

3. *Unblameably*. The Greek word for *unblameable* is *amemptós*. Strong's defines it as "faultlessly—blameless, unblameably,"<sup>20</sup> meaning "blameless, free from fault or defect."<sup>21</sup> The apostle was fully aware that to bring others out of their sinful lives, his own spiritual life needed to be blameless. It is this irreproachable character that is essential for ministerial office,<sup>22</sup> and all who seek it must understand the gravity of its importance.

*I Thessalonians 2:11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,*

First, Paul listed how he behaved while among the Thessalonians; now he lists how he behaved *toward* them. He *exhorted, comforted, and charged every one of them, as a father doth his children*. The special role that the apostle maintained among the Thessalonians was that of a *father*, one through whom the Thessalonians had been begotten unto Christ. We should always hold in special affection those who have played a key role in our regeneration and baptism of the Holy Spirit. For though there are many instructors in Christ, there are few who both father and assist in helping people become begotten of God. These rare ministers should be highly valued in Christ's church and esteemed greater than mere instructors of the gospel, simply because their genuine care for the people of God is also greater. How a father loves and cares for his own cannot be compared to those who only instruct in the faith. There is

a great difference between fathers and instructors, just as there is a difference between one who brings forth a child and one who academically instructs him. Moreover, since the new birth is the ultimate purpose in Christian ministry,<sup>23</sup> leading men to receive the Holy Spirit should be valued as the most important service for God. Because of this, those whom God has purposed should be spiritual fathers have a higher authority in Christ's church. Their work is the most important work, and as such, Paul is not ashamed to exert his fatherly authority toward the Thessalonians whom he has begotten, through his own divinely appointed ministry, given by Christ. *For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel* (I Cor. 4:15).

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor 4:15) For though ye have ten thousand instructors. Though you may have or though you should have. It matters not how many you have, yet it is still true that I only sustain the relation to you of spiritual father, and whatever respect it is proper for you to have toward them, yet there is a special right which I have to admonish you, and a special deference which is due to me, from my early labors among you, and from the fact that you are my spiritual children.*

*Instructors*—Greek: *pedagogues*; or those who conducted children to school, and who superintended their conduct out of school hours. Hence, those who had the care of children, or teachers (in general). It is then applied to instructors of any kind.

*In Christ*—In the Christian system or doctrine. The authority which Paul claims here,

20 Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, #274

21 Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, #273

22 I Tim. 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

23 John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

is that which a father has in preference to such an instructor.

*Not many fathers*—Spiritual fathers. That is, you have but one. You are to remember that however many teachers you have, yet that I alone am your spiritual father.

*In Christ Jesus*—By the aid and authority of Christ. I have begotten you by preaching his gospel and by his assistance.

*I have begotten you*—I was the instrument of your conversion.

In Christ's church, the greater a man's position, the greater he should exert himself in humbling himself and caring for those over whom Christ has given him responsibility. Thus, the greater a man's spiritual rank in the body of Christ, the more he should condescend to a position of service toward those chosen by Christ. It is this standard that Jesus set for those given spiritual gifts and abilities, that the greater a person's possession of talents, gifts, and position in spiritual ministry, the more he should live as a servant to those whom Christ has saved. *But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant* (Matt. 23:11).

(*Benson Commentary*, Matt. 23:11) *But he that is greatest among you, &c.*—If any one among you would in reality be greater than another, let him be the more condescending, kind, and ready cheerfully to serve others in love. . . . Thus Paul, who knew his privilege as well as duty, though *free from all*, yet made himself *servant of all*, 1 Corinthians 9:19.<sup>24</sup> And our Lord frequently pressed it upon his disciples to be humble and self-denying, mild and condescending, and to abound in all the offices of Christian love, though mean, and to the meanest; and of this he set a continual example. *Whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be humbled, &c.*—It is observable that no one sentence of our Lord's is so often repeated as this: it occurs with scarcely any variation at least ten times in the evangelists.

God provides His gifts for the spiritual edification of His people.<sup>25</sup> Whatever spiritual gifts and endowments of spiritual powers He gives,<sup>26</sup> recipients should use such graces to both serve and edify others. The only true authority that God has given his ministers in the church is that which is purposed for edification,<sup>27</sup> the same spiritual edification that all Christians are divinely directed to pursue in their interactions and fellowship with others.<sup>28</sup>

24 I Cor. 9:19 *For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.*

25 Eph. 4:10–12 *He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.*<sup>11</sup> *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*<sup>12</sup> *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

26 I Cor. 12:7–10 *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*<sup>8</sup> *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;*<sup>9</sup> *To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;*<sup>10</sup> *To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:*

I Cor. 12:28–29 *And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*<sup>29</sup> *Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?*

27 II Cor. 13:10 *Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.*

Eph. 4:12 *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*  
28 Rom. 14:19 *Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*

I Cor. 14:12 *Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.*

Eph. 4:16 *From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

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*Every one of you.* The apostle possessed a specific and personal love for each and every one of the Thessalonians. Not one of them was forgotten; not one of them was beyond his loving recognition. True ministers, therefore, will conduct personalized ministry, wherein the congregation never becomes more important than the individuals who make it up.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I Thess. 2:11) *every one of you*—in private (Ac 20:20),<sup>29</sup> as well as publicly. The minister, if he would be useful, must not deal merely in generalities, but must individualize and particularize.

How children are raised can directly affect what they become, and this is certainly true in raising God's people. To a true minister, every member of Christ's flock is precious. Therefore, each should be exhorted, comforted, and charged so that he progresses toward the high calling given him in Christ. Merely loving God's people is not enough for ministerial service if one does not exhort the saints to live a holier life, comfort them when they are in need, and challenge them to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 2:11) *How we exhorted*—That is, to a holy life.

*And comforted*—In the times of affliction.

*And charged*—Greek, "testified." The word testify is used here in the sense of protesting, or making an earnest and solemn appeal. They came as witnesses from God of the truth of religion, and of the importance of living in a holy manner. They did not originate the

gospel themselves, or teach its duties and doctrines as their own, but they came in the capacity of those who bore witness of what God had revealed and required, and they did this in the earnest and solemn manner which became such an office.

***I Thessalonians 2:12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.***

Here the apostle gives the reason he *exhorted, comforted, and charged* the Thessalonians as *a father doth his children*. It was so they might *walk worthy of God*. Thus, if a person has been called by Christ, then walking worthy of the Lord should be his greatest aim.<sup>30</sup> Grace does not dispel the need for proper Christian behavior but rather increases it.<sup>31</sup> The invitation to become a son of God is the highest of heavenly calls. Therefore, it is essential that all Christians are exhorted to walk in a way worthy of the holy God who has called them. The call to heaven is both serious and grave and should be responded to with the greatest effort. As Matthew Henry said, "Religion, if worth anything, is worth every thing."<sup>32</sup> Thus, if a man is called by the Son of God, he should seek to walk worthy of the glory and kingdom he has been called to. The apostle Paul understood this and exerted great effort not to abuse the divine grace given to him but rather to pursue the heavenly prize that lay before him. *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus* (Phil. 3:14).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Phil. 3:14) *Of the high calling of God*—Which is the end or result of that calling. God has called us to great

*I Thess. 5:11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.*

<sup>29</sup> *Acts 20:20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,*

<sup>30</sup> *Eph. 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*

*Col. 1:10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

<sup>31</sup> *I Cor. 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

<sup>32</sup> *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, II Thess. 1:5–10*

and noble efforts; to a career of true honor and glory; to the obtainment of a bright and imperishable crown. It is a calling which is “high,” or “upward”—(ὠνά *ano*)—that is, which tends to the skies. The calling of the Christian is from heaven, and to heaven; compare Proverbs 15:24.<sup>33</sup> He has been summoned by God through the gospel of the Lord Jesus to secure the crown. It is placed before and above him in heaven. It may be his, if he will not faint or tire or look backward. It demands his highest efforts, and it is worth all the exertions which a mortal can make even in the longest life.

*Called you unto his kingdom and glory.* The kingdom of God is that kingdom where God will rule His people through His Son. It is a kingdom of *glory* worthy of our greatest effort to walk worthy of it. The kingdom of heaven is also the possession of the Son of God.<sup>34</sup> It is He Whom God has purposed should rule the world to come, and He alone Who provides men access into it.<sup>35</sup>

The Greek word for *glory* is *dóksa*.

(*HELPS Word-studies* #1391) (from *dokeō*, ‘exercising personal opinion which determines value’)—*glory*. 1391 /*dóksa* (‘glory’) corresponds to the OT word, *kabo* (OT 3519, ‘to be heavy’). Both terms convey God’s infinite, intrinsic worth (substance, essence).

[1391 (*dóksa*) literally means “what evokes good opinion, i.e. that something has inherent, intrinsic worth” (J. Thayer).]

The definition of *glory* might not initially arouse the reader’s attention, but when

we realize that man in his fallen condition has no intrinsic value or worth, or any real glory, then the word takes on a unique and more special meaning. Sinners who have fallen short of the glory of God have, in fact, lost any reason that God should think well of them. The stain of sin makes those who are born of it<sup>36</sup> and have committed sin unworthy of possessing any true heavenly worth. For this reason, because of by being born in sin<sup>37</sup> and personally committing it in their own lives, sinners are through themselves unworthy of receiving any true praise from God. They are below that which is worthy of heavenly glory, so that without God’s divine intervention none could be found worthy of entering God’s presence. *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God* (Rom. 3:23).

(*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, Rom. 3:23) *For all have sinned*—This was the point which he had fully established in the discussion in these chapters.

*Have come short*—Greek, “Are deficient in regard to;” are lacking, etc. Here it means, that they had failed to obtain, or were destitute of.

*The glory of God*—The praise or approbation of God. They had sought to be justified, or approved, by God; but all had failed. Their works of the Law had not secured his approbation; and they were therefore under condemnation.

Because sinners have fallen short of God’s glory, they retain no intrinsic value or worth before God. Just as Jesus said that

33 Prov. 15:24 *The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.*

34 II Pet. 1:11 *For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

35 John 1:12 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

36 Ps. 51:5 *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

37 Eph. 2:3 *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

Rom. 5:12 *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

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the *flesh profiteth nothing*,<sup>38</sup> those of the flesh are practically devoid of any true heavenly worth themselves.<sup>39</sup> For sinners therefore to have any righteous standing or value in heaven, they must first be cleansed of their sin<sup>40</sup> and then given a holy and new nature totally distinct from it.<sup>41</sup> In short, sinners must be changed by Christ's Spirit and Christ's power in order that they may be worthy of heaven and eternal union with God. If a man is not made righteous<sup>42</sup> and holy through Jesus

Christ,<sup>43</sup> then he has no realistic hope of sharing with God in eternity. Heaven is for holy and divine beings, not for any who possess as their only nature that which has been passed on from sinful Adam.<sup>44</sup> Consequently, for unholy and unrighteous men to be made fit for heaven and worthy of God, they must first be transformed and made new creatures through spiritual regeneration.<sup>45</sup> It is by being made new, through the blood and spiritual baptism of Christ,<sup>46</sup> that a

38 *John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

39 *Rom. 3:11–19 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. <sup>12</sup>They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. <sup>13</sup>Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: <sup>14</sup>Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: <sup>15</sup>Their feet are swift to shed blood. <sup>16</sup>Destruction and misery are in their ways: <sup>17</sup>And the way of peace have they not known: <sup>18</sup>There is no fear of God before their eyes. <sup>19</sup>Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

40 *John 13:8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.*

*Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

*I Cor. 6:11 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.*

*Eph. 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*

*I John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

*I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

*Tit. 3:5 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;*

*Heb. 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

41 *II Peter 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

42 *Rom. 5:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

*I Cor. 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:*

*II Cor. 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

43 *John 17:19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*

*Heb. 10:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

44 *John 3:5–7 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup>That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup>Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

*I Cor. 15:45–48 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. <sup>46</sup>Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. <sup>47</sup>The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. <sup>48</sup>As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.*

45 *Gal. 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*

46 *Matt. 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

*John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

man's past is overcome and a new heavenly future is given to him. *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new* (II Cor. 5:17). When a man is born again<sup>47</sup> and made a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ,<sup>48</sup> the door is opened for heavenly glorification. Ultimately, spiritual adoption, whereby sinners are made sons of God through Jesus Christ, is what gives the hope of future glorification. Because God's adopted children have been given God's own holy and spiritual nature,<sup>49</sup> it is fitting that His own spiritual inheritance should be theirs. Inheritance is a right because of relationship, and because Christians are given the same holy nature as Christ, God promises that they will share eternally in His heavenly inheritance. Hence those who are God's children, are God's heirs, which gives them right to partake in the glory of heaven. Because of their being adopted by God through the Son of God,<sup>50</sup> spiritual inheritance has now become the Christian's right. Thus, just as earthly sons

are recognized as their fathers' heirs, so heavenly sons are also reckoned as heirs of God's heavenly kingdom. All sons are heirs, and the children of God are no different. All also who have been made joint-heirs with Christ, shall be glorified, when Christ's own full glorification is revealed to the world. *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together* (Rom. 8:17).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Rom 8:17) One characteristic of the son is that he is his father's heir. So it is with the Christian. He, too, has an inheritance—an inheritance of glory which he will share with Christ. But he must not be surprised if, before sharing the glory, he also shares the sufferings.

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(*Benson Commentary*, Rom. 8:17–18) *heirs of God*—Heirs of the heavenly inheritance, and by the redemption of their bodies, being made immortal like God, they shall enjoy that inheritance.

*Acts 1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

<sup>47</sup> *John 3:3–7 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup>Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup>That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup>Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

*I Pet. 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

<sup>48</sup> *John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

<sup>49</sup> *Eph. 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

*II Pet. 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

<sup>50</sup> *Eph. 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*