

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Chapter 22

Ephesians 4:23–24

Ephesians 4:23–24 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

²⁴ And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

THE *new man*. To put on the *new man* is to put on that divinely created spiritual man directly connected to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.¹ It is to begin being

led by a divine nature, which after God has been *created in righteousness and true holiness*. When a believer joins himself to the Son of God and identifies himself with Him, then God both creates and imparts a completely new holy and righteous nature, fashioned after His own holy image. To believe in Jesus Christ, make Him Lord of your life,² and be baptized with the Holy Spirit³ is to be made to share in

¹ 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.*

John 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

John 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

Luke 3:16 *John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:*

Acts 11:16 *Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.*

² Rom. 10:9 *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.*

Phil. 2:11 *And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Rom. 14:11 *For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.*

Acts 2:21 *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

1 Cor. 12:3 *Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*

³ Acts 2:1–4 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Acts 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Luke 3:16 *John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:*

John 3:5–6 *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. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

Acts 19:5–6 *When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

the same righteousness and holiness as Christ. This is produced whereby God in Christ⁴ imparts a new heart⁵ through imparting a divine spirit to replace the sinner's previous heart of sin. This *new creation* in the Christian is spiritual proof that his old man has passed away and all things have become new. Whereas sin once controlled the sinner's heart, now as he is found *in Christ*, he finds that the Lord's divine Spirit becomes the great power that both influences and guides the newly formed person as a son of God.⁶

II 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.*

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, II Cor. 5:17) *he is a new creature; (the Greek is, a new creation); a phrase which argueth the greatest change imaginable, and such a one as can be wrought in the soul by no other power than the power of God.*

Both the Greek word for *new* #2537 *kainos* and the Greek word for *creation* #2937 *ktisis* carry the idea of not exist-

ing before. This new creation is something that the sinner did not possess before coming into contact with Jesus Christ and was in fact not even available before the Son of God's coming.

HELPS Word-studies defines #2937 *ktisis* as "properly, creation (creature) which is founded from nothing (this is also the sense of this term from Homer on); creation out of nothing (Lat *ex nihilo*. See 2936 (*ktizō*) and 2939 (*ktístēs* ('the Creator') for lengthy discussion on 'creation-facts'."

From the *Topical Lexicon* we learn, "The term embraces both the act of divine bringing-into-being and the entirety of what has been brought into being. In the New Testament it may describe 1) the universe as a whole, 2) the living creation or any individual creature, 3) the present world order as distinct from the age to come, 4) human social structures ordained within providence, and 5) the new order inaugurated in Christ."⁷

To be in Christ is to have our origin in the Son of God⁸ and to possess Christ in

⁶And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Acts 8:15 *Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:*

4 II Cor. 5:19 *To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

John 14:23 *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

5 Ezek. 36:26 *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.*

Ezek. 11:19 *And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:*

Jer. 31:33 *But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

Heb. 8:10 *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:*

6 John 16:13 *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

7 "Topical Lexicon – Scope of Meaning: 2937. *ktisis*." *Bible Hub*, <https://biblehub.com/greek/2937.htm>. Accessed 26 June 2025.

8 Eph. 1:4 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

us.⁹ This spiritual union initiated through faith¹⁰ is the foundation of the Christian's righteous standing before God.¹¹ Through the Holy Spirit coming to abide and make His abode in the believer,¹² the believer is made to share in the same holy attributes as those of his Creator. To be made a *new creature* in Christ also implies that what existed before either does not exist or has been done away with. Romans speaks of this process when it reveals the death of the believer's *old man*, his sinful nature, when it was by divine plan and execution *crucified with the Lord Jesus on the cross. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin* (Rom. 6:6).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 6:6) *Our old man*—This expression occurs also in Ephesians 4:22, "That ye put off ...the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." Colossians 3:9, "lie not to one

another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." From these passages it is evident that Paul uses the expression to denote our sinful and corrupt nature; the passions and evil propensities that exist before the heart is renewed. It refers to the love of sin, the indulgence of sinful propensities, in opposition to the new disposition which exists after the soul is converted, and which is called "the new man."

Is crucified—Is put to death, as if on a cross. In this expression there is a personification of the corrupt propensities of our nature represented as "our old man," our native disposition, etc. The figure is here carried out, and this old man, this corrupt nature, is represented as having been put to death in an agonizing and torturing manner. ... Sin dies within him, and he becomes dead to the world, and to sin; "for as by the cross death is most lingering and severe, so that corrupt nature is not subdued but by anguish." (Grotius.) All who have been born again can enter into this description.

John 15:16 *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

9 Rom. 8:10 *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. Gal. 1:15–16 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,¹⁶ To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:*

Gal. 2:20 *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Col. 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

10 Gal. 2:16 *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*

Acts 16:31 *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

Rom. 1:17 *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

John 6:29 *Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*

11 Phil. 3:9 *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:*

Rom. 3:22 *Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:*

12 John 14:16–17 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;¹⁷ Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

Gal. 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. I John 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

I John 4:13 *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

There is such power given to the believer when he is born again¹³ and made a new creature in Christ that the carnal nature,¹⁴ which once ruled his heart,¹⁵ loses its stronghold, and a release from sin is experienced. This is practically realized when the previous lusts, which once ruled the sinner, ultimately lose their power to do so anymore in the now-holy one. And although a saved person may still stumble into sin, it is not because he has not been given the spiritual power and ability to refrain from doing so.

To be in Christ and have Christ in us includes not simply receiving a new holy, divine, and heavenly nature from God but also experiencing the death of our old previous carnal nature, now crucified. This spiritual emancipation will be confirmed when the lusts and desires that once ruled the sinner's heart no longer possess the same powerful control over it. The death of one nature (the old man) and the receiving of a new divine, pure, and holy nature (the new man) is a supernatural act, accomplished solely through divine power. This heavenly work is the work of God. Just as every honest spiritual man knows, his internal cleansing could never be accomplished through personal power and/or fleshly ability.¹⁶

The Mosaic law given by Moses to Israel ultimately proved this spiritual reality to be true of Israel, and it is likewise true of all who by natural birth are similarly born of the flesh.¹⁷ *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin* (Rom. 3:20).

(Thomas Watson, *Man's Inability to Keep the Moral Law*) The case of an unregenerate man is such, that he cannot perfectly obey all God's commands. He may as well touch the stars, or span the ocean, as yield exact obedience to the law. . . . A natural man cannot perfectly keep all God's commandments, because he is born in sin, and lives in sin. Psa 51:5.¹⁸ He drinketh iniquity like water.' Job 15:16.¹⁹ All the imaginations of his thoughts are evil, and only evil. Gen 6:5.²⁰ The least evil thought is a breach of the royal law; and if there be defection, there cannot be perfection.²¹

The transformation of the heart from being bound in sin to then be cleansed and made free from it is what Old Testament saints like David prayed for. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me* (Ps. 51:5).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Ps. 51:5) *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity*—The object of this important verse is to express the deep sense

13 Acts 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

14 Rom. 8:7 *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

15 Rom. 7:14 *For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

16 Rom. 7:18 *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*

17 Rom. 3:10–12 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

Rom. 3:19 *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.*

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

19 Job 15: 16 *How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?*

20 Gen 6:5 *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

21 Watson, Thomas. *The Ten Commandments: 3.1 Man's Inability to Keep the Moral Law*. Bible Hub, https://biblehub.com/library/watson/the_ten_commandments/3_1_mans_inability_to_keep.htm.

Accessed 5 July 2025.

which David had of his depravity. That sense was derived from the fact that this was not a sudden thought, or a mere outward act, or an offence committed under the influence of strong temptation, but that it was the result of an entire corruption of his nature—of a deep depravity of heart, running back to the very commencement of his being. The idea is, that he could not have committed this offence unless he had been thoroughly corrupt, and always corrupt. The sin was as heinous and aggravated “as if” in his very conception and birth there had been nothing but depravity. He looked at his sin, and he looked back to his own origin, and he inferred that the one demonstrated that in the other there was no good thing, no tendency to goodness, no germ of goodness, but that there was evil, and only evil; as when one looks at a tree, and sees that it bears sour or poisonous fruit, he infers that it is in the very nature of the tree, and that there is nothing else in the tree, from its origin, but a tendency to produce just such fruit.

Once David came to truly understand his sinful condition and how sin influenced him from birth, he sought God’s divine help in his heartfelt prayer of Psalm 51. Wisely, David knew that even in his time, to be delivered from the power of sin would be impossible through his own strength. For this reason he sought the Lord to create within him a clean heart and renew a right Spirit within him. *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me* (Ps. 51:10).

(*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, Ps. 51:10) *Create in me a clean heart, O God*—The word ren-

dered “create,” ברא *bera’*—is a word which is properly employed to denote an act of “creation;” that is, of causing something to exist where there was nothing before. It is the word which is used in Genesis 1:1²²: “In the beginning God ‘created’ the heaven and the earth,” and which is commonly used to express the act of creation. It is used here evidently in the sense of causing that to exist which did not exist before; and there is clearly a recognition of the divine “power,” or a feeling on the part of David that this could be done by God alone. ...

And renew a right spirit within me—Margin, “a constant spirit.” The Hebrew word—נָקִיב *nakuiv*—means properly, that which is “erect,” or that which is made to stand up, or which is firm or established. It is used to denote

(a) that which is upright, right, proper: Exodus 8:26; Job 42:8; Psalm 5:9;²³

(b) that which is right, true, sincere, Psalm 78:37²⁴;

(c) that which is firm, constant, fixed.

This would seem to be the meaning here. He prays for a heart that would be firm in the purposes of virtue; that would not yield to temptation; that would carry out holy resolutions; that would be steadfast in the service of God. The word “renew” here means to be or to make new; to produce something new. It is also used in the sense of making anew, as applied to buildings or cities in the sense of “rebuilding” or “repairing” them: Isaiah 61:4; 2 Chronicles 15:8; 2 Chronicles 24:4.²⁵ The word here would naturally convey the

22 Gen. 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

23 Exod. 8:26 And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?

Job 42:8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.

Ps. 5:9 For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.

24 Ps. 78:37 For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.

25 Isa. 61:4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

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idea that there had been formerly a right and proper spirit in him, which he prayed might now be restored. The language is that of one who had done right formerly, but who had fallen into sin, and who desired that he might be brought back into his former condition.

Once a sinner has undergone regeneration²⁶ through receiving God's divine nature, then his new heart, created by God, will be *renewed day by day*. That is, even as the body continues toward a state of ultimate decay,²⁷ God's new creation within the saint is progressively gaining strength and vitality *day by day*. Accordingly, though the body of a person saved by God must still perish because of its relation to sin,²⁸ the Spirit is continually being energized and renewed daily by God. Because God's eternal nature now lives within the believer, the believer will experience, when walking in fellowship with the Lord, a continued process of purification, sanctification, and renewal—so that the more a Christian grows and matures in Christ, the more he will practically experience in his heart Jesus' redemptive work.

II Corinthians 4:16 *For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*

(Benson Commentary, II Cor. 4:16) The soul; is renewed day by day—After the divine nature and likeness, receiving fresh degrees of

spiritual strength, purity, and consolation, in proportion as the body grows weaker, and we feel our dissolution approaching. . . . *But though our outward man perish*—By *outward man*, Paul evidently means the body. By using the phrases, “the outward man,” and the “inward man,” he shows that he believed that man was made up of two parts, body and soul. He was no materialist. He has described two parts as constituting man, so distinct: that while the one perishes, the other is renewed; while the one is enfeebled, the other is strengthened; while the one grows old and decays, the other renews its youth and is invigorated. Of course, the soul is not dependent on the body for its vigor and strength, since it expands while the body decays; and of course the soul may exist independently of the body, and in a separate state. . . .

Yet the inward man—The soul; the undecaying, the immortal part.

Is renewed—Is renovated, strengthened, invigorated. His powers of mind expanded; his courage became bolder; he had clearer views of truth; he had more faith in God. As he drew nearer to the grave and to heaven, his soul was more raised above the world, and he was more filled with the joys and triumphs of the gospel.

This consistent transformation of the Christian's heart is a great encouragement to his soul. By the Lord's presence living within him, he is spiritually assured that God not only exists but also that He will come to his aid in time of need.²⁹ By

II Chrn. 15:8 *And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the Lord, that was before the porch of the LORD.*
II Chrn. 24:4 *And it came to pass after this, that Joash was minded to repair the house of the LORD.*

26 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;*

27 Gen. 3:19 *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

Job 34:14–15 *If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath;*¹⁵ *All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.*

28 Rom. 8:10 *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

29 Rom. 8:26–27 *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*²⁷ *And he*

the believer's actually possessing God's Holy Spirit within him, spiritual power will replace the fleshly weakness that once resided there. Because it is God Who has created the new saint, it will also be He Who daily invigorates, spiritually stimulates, and encourages him to keep the divine will and pursue saintly holiness.³⁰

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Eph. 2:10) *We are his workmanship.*— ... The word rendered “workmanship” is only used elsewhere in Romans 1:20,³¹ where it is applied to the “works” of God in creation. Probably here also it does not exclude our first creation. We are His wholly and absolutely. But the next clause shows that St. Paul refers especially to the “new creation” in Christ Jesus.

Created in Christ Jesus.—This creation, when spoken of distinctively, is the “new creation” (2Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15³²); as, indeed, is the case below (Ephesians 2:15³³), “to create in Himself ... one new man.” In this passage, however, St. Paul dwells, not on distinction from the old creation, but rather on analogy to it; in both we are simply God's creatures.

All true Christians are the workmanship of God and have been by God's plan of redemption made new through faith in the Son of God.

(*Benson Commentary*, Eph. 2:10) *For we are his workmanship*—As if he had said, And it appears that it is not by any works or ability of our own that we are saved, or possess the faith whereby salvation is received, because all the ability we have in spiritual things is from God, and is the consequence of his creating us anew; for as all acts of acceptable obedience must proceed from faith, and this faith is wrought in our hearts by the gracious influence of the Divine Spirit, it is most certain that we must acknowledge ourselves to be his workmanship, so far as there is any thing in us agreeable to the nature and will of God; being *created* in and through *Christ Jesus unto good works*...—Should live in the constant performance of them, though not be justified by them. In other words, He hath purified the fountain, that the streams may be pure; hath made the tree good, that the fruit may be good; hath made us new creatures, that we may live new lives; one grand and important end certainly of our regeneration. So that we must still ascribe the whole glory of all the good that is in us, or is done by us, to God.

What King David prayed to the Lord, *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me* (Ps. 51:10), has today been fully and completely accomplished through Christ Jesus—so that through Je-

that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

30 Eph. 3:16 *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;*

31 1 Pet. 1:16 *Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

32 Rom. 1:20 *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

33 II Cor. 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.*

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

33 Eph. 2:15 *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;*

sus being made flesh³⁴ and dying for sin,³⁵ ultimately those who were born in sin are made new, holy creatures through Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Ultimately it was Jesus' resurrection and His ascension to God that allowed the Lord to send the Holy Spirit to all who believe upon Him.³⁶

Once a believer comes to understand that he is the *workmanship* of God, *created in Christ Jesus*, then spiritual humility should replace the human pride that once resided in him. Because Christians are the complete and total work of God and their spiritual standing is derived from the fullness of His Son, any grounds for boasting or glorying in themselves are negated.³⁷ This is because all that the Lord Jesus Christ is by nature, Christians are made to share in by grace. This is the apex of the beauty of the gospel of Christ, that through the Son of God's humility and poverty, His people have been made rich.

II Corinthians 8:9 *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became*

poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

(*Benson Commentary*, II Cor. 8:9) *For your sakes he became poor*—Namely, in his incarnation: not, observe, in ceasing to be what he was, the *Wisdom, Word, and Song of Solomon* of God, and God, in union with his Father and the Holy Spirit; but in becoming what before he was not, namely, man; in assuming the human nature into an indissoluble and eternal union with the divine, John 1:14; Hebrews 2:14; Hebrews 2:16.³⁸ In doing this *he became poor*, 1st, In putting off the form of God, and taking the form of a servant, appearing no longer as the Creator, but as a creature, veiling his perfections with our flesh, and concealing his glories from human eyes.

Colossians 2:10 *And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:*

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Col. 2:10) *Ye are complete.*—Literally, ye have been filled up in His fulness, as in John 1:16 [*And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.*]. . . . To partake of the divine *pleroma* is not the special privilege of

34 John 1:14 *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

Heb. 2:14 *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; Rom. 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:*

35 Rom. 5:8 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. I Pet. 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

I Cor. 15:3 *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;*

36 John 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

37 I Cor. 1:29–31 *That no flesh should glory in his presence.* ³⁰*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:* ³¹*That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

Eph. 2:8–10 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

38 John 1:14 *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

Heb. 2:14 *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; Heb. 2:16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.*

the initiated; it belongs to all who are united to the Lord Jesus Christ.

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Col. 2:10) *And ye are complete in him*] Lit. and better *And ye are* (emphatic) *in Him filled full*; or perhaps, with Lightfoot, *And ye are in Him, filled full*—two statements in one; you are *in Him*, and you are *filled full* in Him. You are in immediate union with Him, and in that union you possess, potentially and as you need it, all grace, as possessing Him in whom is all the Fulness.

Not only has the sinner's previous sinful nature been crucified with the Lord Jesus on the cross,³⁹ but a portion of Jesus' own spiritual fullness, in the form of the Holy Spirit, is now the possession of the saved one. Ultimately from Christ's own spiritual fullness and heavenly authority are His people replete with the fullness of God. *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily* (Col. 2:9).

(*Benson Commentary*, Col. 2:9) *For in him dwelleth—Inhabiteth, κατοικει*, continually abideth; *all the fulness of the Godhead*—Believers may be *filled with all the fulness of God*, Ephesians 3:19⁴⁰; but in Christ dwelleth *all the fulness of the Godhead*, the most full Godhead, Colossians 1:19⁴¹; *bodily*—Really, substantially. The very substance of God, if one might so speak, dwells in Christ in the most full sense. "It is plain," says Dr. Doddridge,

"that the *Godhead* is an anglicism equivalent to *Deity*. Compare Acts 17:29.⁴² And I cannot think that these wonderful words are intended *merely* to signify that God hath lodged in the hands of Christ a *fulness of gifts*, to be conferred upon men, as if the passage were merely parallel to John 1:16–17,⁴³ as Mr. Pierce explains it; while Socinus sinks it yet lower, as if it only referred to his complete knowledge of the divine will. I assuredly believe, that as it contains an evident allusion to the Shechinah, in which God dwelt, so it ultimately refers to the adorable mystery of the union of the divine and human natures in the person of the glorious Emmanuel, which makes him such an object of our hope and confidence, as the most exalted creature, with the most glorious endowments, could never of himself be."

John 1:16 *And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.*

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, John 1:16) *And of his* [Jesus Christ's] *fulness have all we received*; of that plenty of grace which Christ hath, (who hath not the Spirit given him by measure, John 3:34,⁴⁴ as other saints have, Acts 2:4,6,8⁴⁵), we who by nature are void of grace, whether taken for the favour of God, or gracious habits, have received, as the skirts of Aaron's garment received the oil which was plentifully poured out on Aaron's head.

The first and most appropriate spiritual response to all that God has generously gifted to us through the riches, fullness,

39 Rom. 6:6 *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

40 Eph. 3:19 *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

41 Col. 1:19 *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;*

42 Acts 17:29 *Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.*

43 John 1:16–17 *And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.* ¹⁷*For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

44 John 3:34 *For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.*

45 Acts 2:4 *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Acts 2:6 *Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.*

Acts 2:8 *And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?*

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and deity of His Son is to offer sincere praise and thanksgiving to Him.

Psalm 116:12–16 *What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?*

¹³ *I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.*

¹⁴ *I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.*

¹⁵ *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.*

¹⁶ *O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.*

What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? (v. 12) The answer to this lies in the following verses:

(1) Offer thanks to the Lord.⁴⁶

I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD (v. 13).

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Ps. 116:13) *I will take the cup of salvation ...* The phrase is

taken from the common practice of the Jews in their thank-offerings, in which a feast was made of the remainders of the sacrifices, and the offerers, together with the priests, did eat and drink before the Lord, and, amongst other rites, the master of the feast took a cup of wine into his hand, and solemnly blessed God for it, and for the mercy which was then acknowledged, and then gave it to all the guests, who drunk successively of it; see 1 Chronicles 16:2,3⁴⁷; to which custom it is supposed that our blessed Saviour alludes in the institution of the cup, which also is called *the cup of blessing*, 1 Corinthians 10:16,⁴⁸ which is in effect the same with the *cup of salvation*. This metaphor of a cup is used both of afflictions, as Psalm 11:6 75:8,⁴⁹ and of comforts, as Psalm 23:5 Jeremiah 16:7.⁵⁰

Call upon the name of the Lord; or, publish or preach in or of the name of the Lord, i.e. his gracious nature, and the great things which he hath done for me.

(2) Keep your vows to the Lord.⁵¹

I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people (v. 14).

46 Ps. 107:1 *O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

Ps. 95:2 *Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.*

1 Thess. 5:18 *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

Eph. 5:20 *Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;*

Col. 3:17 *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

47 1 Chrn. 16:2–3 *And when David had made an end of offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. ³And he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine.*

48 1 Cor. 10:16 *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*

49 Ps. 11:6 *Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.*

Ps. 75:8 *For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.*

50 Ps. 23:5 *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*

Jer. 16:7 *Neither shall men tear themselves for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead; neither shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother.*

51 Ps. 66:13–16 *I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows, ¹⁴Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble. ¹⁵I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah. ¹⁶Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.*

Ps. 22:24–25 *For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard. ²⁵My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.*

By remaining true to the Lord and keeping Jesus as Lord of our lives, we will prove by the lives we live that we continually remain thankful for the new life given to us through Christ. This loyalty also should never be expressed merely in privacy. Rather, as the psalmist states, it should be *in the presence of all his people*. And although private thanksgiving is indeed heard by the Lord in heaven, the public praise and worship of God provide the opportunity for others to openly see the true Christian's loyal, faithful, and complete devotion to Him.

(3) Give your life in service to the Lord.⁵²

O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds (v. 16).

(*Benson Commentary*, Ps. 116:16) *O Lord, truly I am thy servant*—This is a thankful acknowledgment of his great obligations to God, whereby he was in duty bound to be his perpetual servant. *The son of thy handmaid*—The son of a mother who was devoted, and did devote me to thy service. *Thou hast loosed my bonds*—Thou hast rescued me from my enemies, whose captive and vassal I was, and therefore hast a just right to me and to my service.

The ultimate and most spiritually reasonable acts of expressing true thanksgiving to the Lord is to render unto Him a lifetime of Christian service. *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice,*

holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (Rom. 12:1).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Rom. 12:1) *That ye present*—The word used here commonly denotes the action of bringing and presenting an animal or other sacrifice before an altar. It implies that the action was a free and voluntary offering. Religion is free; and the act of devoting ourselves to God is one of the most free that we ever perform.

Your bodies—The bodies of animals were offered in sacrifice. The apostle specifies their bodies particularly in reference to that fact. Still the entire animal was devoted; and Paul evidently meant here the same as to say, present Yourself, your entire person, to the service of God; compare 1 Corinthians 6:16; James 3:6.⁵³ It was not customary or proper to speak of a sacrifice as an offering of a soul or spirit, in the common language of the Jews; and hence, the apostle applied their customary language of sacrifice to the offering which Christians were to make of themselves to God.

A living sacrifice—A sacrifice is an offering made to God as an atonement for sin; or any offering made to him and his service as an expression of thanksgiving or homage. It implies that he who offers it presents it entirely, releases all claim or right to it, and leaves it to be disposed of for the honor of God. In the case of an animal, it was slain, and the blood offered; in the case of any other offering, as the first-fruits, etc., it was set apart to the service of God; and he who offered it released all claim on it, and submitted it to God, to be disposed of at his will. This is the offering which the apostle entreats the Romans to make: to devote themselves to God, as if

⁵² *Josh. 24:15* And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Matt. 20:26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; *Gal. 5:13* For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Matt. 23:11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

⁵³ *1 Cor. 6:16* What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

Jer. 3:6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

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they had no longer any claim on themselves; to be disposed of by him; to suffer and bear all that he might appoint; and to promote his honor in any way which he might command. This is the nature of true religion.

Religious words can often be cheap, even praises of thanksgiving, if action and total devotion to the Lord are not rendered along with them. It is thus only as we offer ourselves as living sacrifices to God that it is proven that we possess true spiritual

devotion to Him. To be unwilling to do this, though, and not give our lives as living sacrifices to God and not be willing to deny ourselves for Christ⁵⁴ after claiming to be saved by Him reveals how selfish and how carnal we still remain—proving as well that we actually know not the great spiritual treasure, which is our new heavenly creation in Christ. *For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's* (I Cor. 6:20).

⁵⁴ *Matt. 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

Mark 8:34 And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Mark 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Matt. 10:38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.