



**Truth Seekers
Fellowship**

Equipping The Faithful To Be Fruitful

PHASE 2

MilktoMeat Book 4

**Walking In THE TRUTH Part 02
Rooted and Growing in Christ**

AWARE > ALIVE > AWAKE > FREE > FAITHFUL > FRUITFUL



Truth Seekers Fellowship

Equipping The Faithful To Be Fruitful

WALKING IN THE TRUTH

Part 2: Rooted and Growing In Christ

“I am The Way, **The Truth** and The Life;

No one comes to the Father

except through me.”

Jesus the Messiah

[John 14:6]

| AWARE | ALIVE | AWAKE | **FREE** | FAITHFUL | FRUITFUL |

Walking in The Truth | Part 2: Rooted and Growing in Christ

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For
Tom Murray
*who taught us the importance of
teaching the truth, in the right order, at the right time.*

And many thanks to
all our students over the years
*who have served as our
editors, encouragers and supporters.*

CHRIST we proclaim
 by warning and teaching all people with all wisdom
 so that we may present every person mature in Christ.

Toward this goal we also labor,
 struggling according to His power
 that powerfully works in us.

| Colossians 1:28-29 |

The MilktoMeat Map		
Phase 1 Discovering The Way	<i>1. Recovering The Master Story</i>	Aware
	<i>2. Enlightened By The Gospel</i>	Alive
Phase 2 Walking In The Truth	<i>3. Realizing Your New Identity in Christ</i>	Awake
	<i>4. Rooted and Growing in Christ</i>	Free
Phase 3 Living The Life	<i>5. Empowered In the Spirit</i>	Faithful
	<i>6. Serving as The Body of Christ</i>	Fruitful

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Introduction to MilktoMeat

“Christ we proclaim,
warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom,
so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.”

~ COLOSSIANS 1:28 ~

Who is This Study For?

We have designed this study around a simple idea: *these are the truths that we wished someone had taught us as new believers, new followers of Jesus.*

- » *If you are a new follower of Jesus, or*
- » *If you have never been trained how to follow Jesus, or*
- » *If you want to learn how to train others to follow Jesus...*

then you are PERFECT for this study.

***This study follows our first Phase of workbooks, DISCOVERING THE WAY. Since the sequence is central to this study, we would highly recommend doing PHASE 1 first if you have not already. You can order that set and find out more at www.tsfmemphis.org/milktomeat.**

What is The Story Behind MilktoMeat?

Do you want to grow spiritually but aren't sure where to start or what will work? For over twenty years we have been developing and refining MilktoMeat based upon what makes a difference in people's lives. Many men and women, from various walks of life, ages, and backgrounds have been transformed while going through this study. This study is an invitation to experience how Father God working in Jesus Christ through the power and presence of His Holy Spirit will transform You.

We believe that this is a powerful tool and resource for anyone who wants to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). We pray that this study will become a means for you to connect more deeply with Father God's love and purposes for you in Christ so that *you make your life's journey worthy of your destination!*

Tom Murray, the founder of Truth Seekers Fellowship, began to follow Jesus in his late twenties. At that point, he was what all new followers of Jesus are: *a blank sheet of paper*. Although Tom was hungry and willing to pursue spiritual growth, he found that his early years as a student of Jesus were not as fulfilling and productive as they could have been. Tom got bits and pieces of important truth and practices, but he had no one to lead him and train him in a logical and sequential way with the goal of spiritual maturity in sight.

After many years of searching, learning, and growing through trial and error, Tom decided to put together a study that would, “*teach others what I wish older, more mature Christians had taught me as a new believer.*” This study and curriculum became MilktoMeat. The guiding principle behind all of MilktoMeat is simple: *teaching the truth in the right order at the right time.*

What are Our Core Commitments?

» **Bible Based** | The Bible has been given to us by God to instruct us in His Ways and give us hope. This study is **Bible Based** because we are confident that the Message of the Bible (the Written Word) gives us hope by guiding us to Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:4 For everything that was written in former times was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and through encouragement of the Scriptures *we may have hope.*

2 Timothy 3:14–15 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, and you know that from childhood you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

» **Christ Focused** | Jesus Christ is the Creator, Savior, and King of all creation and therefore the ONLY Way that leads us to the One True God. Therefore, this study is **Christ Focused** because we are confident that He is Creator, Savior, and King of all Creation and therefore central to all things:

Hebrews 12:1–2 ...Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shame and has sat down at the right hand of God’s throne.

» **Life Transforming** | Father God Works in Christ His Son through the Holy Spirit to transform our lives. When anyone is presented with the truth and goodness of God in the glory of Jesus Christ, that person will be affected. The Lord-God has revealed Himself to us in His Written Word—*The Bible*—and this Word points us to the Living Word—*Our Savior and Lord Jesus*—so that we can see Him. We are confident that Father God has given us His Word and is working in Christ through His Spirit to set free, heal, and transform anyone who is willing to turn from their old way of life and to trust and follow Jesus Christ who leads us in *the way of true life*.

2 Corinthians 3:17–18 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 3:18 We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit.

What is the Larger Structure of MilktoMeat?

MilktoMeat is divided into three Phases: 1) Discovering the Way, 2) Walking in the Truth and 3) Living the Life. Each of these Phases consist of two 7 Session study units. These units are designed to lead you in the process of Spiritual Transformation that takes place as you grow in your relationship with Father God in Christ.

» **Phase 1 | DISCOVERING THE WAY**

In this first phase, our goal is *to build a frame of reference* for life by recovering The Master Story of the Bible. This Master Story sets the context for understanding The Gospel—the Good News about Jesus and The Kingdom which enlightens our lives. We focus on the three core life questions: 1) *Where have we come from?* 2) *Why are we here?* And 3) *How will our lives turn out?* We then turn to explore the major Gospel Questions: 1) Why Did God Create Us? 2) What Went Wrong? 3) What Did God Do? 4) What is God Doing? 5) What will God Do? and 6) How Should We Respond? Our Father God working in Christ through The Spirit has provided answers to these questions that give us the one thing that we need more than anything else: **HOPE**. This phase is divided into two seven-session workbooks: *Recovering the Master Story* and *Enlightened by the Gospel*

» Phase 2 | WALKING IN THE TRUTH

In our second phase, we explore what it means to trust and follow Jesus ALONE as our only Savior. We focus on our **new identity** and **position** in Christ and how this new reality fulfills our need for 1) *Security*, 2) *Significance* and 3) *Fulfillment* as people created in the image and likeness of God. We also explore issues related to The Great Spiritual War in which we find ourselves, broken and wounded by sin, but now being transformed to be like Jesus. Our lives are journeys of FAITH; we are all **trusting** someone to show us The Way. This phase is divided into two seven-session workbooks: *Realizing Your New Identity in Christ* and *Rooted and Growing in Christ*

» Phase 3 | LIVING THE LIFE

In our final phase, we consider what it means to be a life-long disciple/student/apprentice of Jesus. We focus on the significant role everyone “in Christ” has. “In Christ” we are each gifted and empowered to serve *as* the Body of Christ (The Church) *in* the World where Jesus is leading His mission to seek and save those who are spiritually lost, dead, and enslaved in the Dominion of Darkness. God is love. As we come to know Jesus Christ truly, following Him wherever He may lead, we too become people characterized by His self-sacrificial **LOVE**. This phase is divided into two seven-session studies: *Empowered by The Presence of the Spirit* and *Serving as The Body of Christ*.

Session 1

How Do We “Root” Our Lives, Firm and Growing In Christ?

- Core Truth:** Living “in Christ” is a simple process of following Him in hope, trust and love. Following Him is not always easy, but *The Way* is not complicated.
- To Remember:** “...just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him...” [Colossians 2:6]
- Objective:** In this study unit, we are going to be focusing on growing spiritual mature In Christ. As we begin to follow Him more closely, we will become more AWARE and AWAKE to the reality of the Spiritual War going on *around* us and *in* us. Father God desires for us to be truly FREE in Christ. In order to engage these battles effectively, we need to know all that has been given *to us* and done *for us* in Christ that guarantees our *victory*.
- Prayer:** *Father, help me to understand all that You have provided for me in Christ better and more deeply. Help me to understand the nature of the Spiritual War we are engaged in and enable me to stand firm in all that Christ has done for me and to me. Amen.*

WORDwork | Day 1**1.1 How Do We “Walk” With Our Lives “Rooted” In Christ?**

Colossians 2:6–10 Therefore, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, 2:7 rooted and built up in Him and firm in your faith just as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

2:8 Be careful not to allow anyone to captivate you through an empty, deceitful philosophy that is according to human traditions and the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. 2:9 For in Him all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form, 2:10 and you have been filled in Him, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

- ? 01 How, or in what way, did we “receive” Christ Jesus?
- ? 02 “In whom” does Paul tell us to live our lives in verse 6?
- ? 03 How do we do this according to verse 7?
- ? 04 What are we warned against in verse 8?
What are the characteristics of this “philosophy”?
- ? 05 In verses 9 and 10 how are we related to Christ and what has He done for us or to us?

1.1.1 How Do We Continue To “Walk” In Christ?

The passage above should sound familiar to you. It is one that we introduced in Phase 1 *Enlightened by The Gospel*. We return to it now to dig a little deeper and focus on the truths that will be the core ideas that run through this workbook. These core truths are:

1. Our whole way of life is sustained by our trust/faith in Christ, and
2. We are living in a World that is engaged in a great Spiritual War.

In the passage above, Paul tells us to keep on *living our lives* in Christ in the same way that we received Him. Paul uses the language of “receiving” in the context of Christ and the Gospel to describe both believing The Truth that is proclaimed about Christ and also trusting in Him. Faith is one of our three core qualities as believers. Think back to our key definition:

Key Definition: **Faith** is placing our ultimate confidence (trust) in God The Father, Son, and Spirit as they oversee and direct our lives. Faith brings assurance to our hope. Faith is the evidence that Father God is working in Christ through the Holy Spirit in and through us. Faith makes room in our thoughts, desires, and emotions for *the ultimate virtue of love*.

Also, don’t miss the emphasis: *as we received Jesus as Lord*. We are placing our trust in Christ and so giving our allegiance to Him as The One to whom “all power/authority in Heaven and on Earth” has been given (see Matthew 28:18)—The One to whom “every knee will bow and every tongue confess, ‘Jesus is LORD!’ to the glory of God the Father” (see Philippians 2:10-11). Jesus is Lord and Master; we belong to Him.

So, we continue to live our lives *in Christ* by faith/trust. The term that is translated “live our lives” in this version is literally “walk”—continue to *walk in Christ*... It is a figure of speech used throughout the Bible to describe *the way* we live our lives This is one of Paul’s main figures of speech to describe living life in a certain way:

Romans 6:4 “We were buried with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, **we too might walk in newness of life.**” (ESV)

Ephesians 5:2 “And **walk in love, as Christ loved us** and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (ESV)

Colossians 1:10 “... walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God...” (ESV)

1.1.2 What Does it Look Like to Walk Faith-Full in Christ?

Paul now uses three different word pictures—metaphors—to characterize this life of faith and trust in Christ. These three figures seem to be at odds with “walking” in Christ since they all point to something firmly fixed in place. Each of these figures, however, are referring to spiritual truths and so each has something to teach us about our relationship with Christ. They all work together to give us a larger picture.

“**Rooted**” is a term that makes us think of plants and horticulture. Jesus often used similar images in His parables. A plant that is firmly “rooted” is one that is in good soil, nourished, watered, and able to produce growth in the whole plant. It is interesting to note that the tense of this verb indicates that this has already happened in the past; it is not ongoing.

“Now **being built up**” draws our minds to building and architecture. Paul also uses figures of building as metaphors of spiritual growth and of the Lord God working *in* and *among* us to mature us (see 1 Corinthians 14:4; Ephesians 2:20-22) The tense of this verb indicates this *is an ongoing process*.

Finally, being “**firm** in your faith,” or “**established** in your faith,” is a term taken from the marketplace and the “confirmation” or “guarantee” of some contract or exchange of goods. Our relationship with Father God *has been made sure* by the work of Christ for us received *through* faith. Our faith in Christ is an anchor, a fixed point in our lives that keeps us focused in the right direction.

All of these figures are *passive*—*they point to things that have been done to us*. Paul wants us to understand that all this comes to us through what Father God has provided for us in Christ through the Holy Spirit. When we truly realize this, we will be “**overflowing with gratitude.**” Here, the image is of a cup overflowing. Gratitude—*thankfulness*—is a key character quality for followers of Christ. *All that we are and all that we have comes from Him*. He blesses us out of His grace and love for us and all we do is receive it with thanks!!!



Take a few moments to think about all you have learned in this study so far and give thanks for all the ways Father God has provided for you in Christ. Think about all the things you are thankful for and give thanks to Father God for those things.

WORDwork | Day 2

1.2 **How Do We Recognize Enslaving Philosophies?**

There are *many* false teachers and false teachings in our time. There have been *untrustworthy* leaders and teachers in every era of history since the beginning. We must be very careful not to get ensnared by these types of teachings that move us away from the foundation of the Scriptures and our focus on Christ.

Paul writes the letter to the Colossians in part to deal with some false teaching that had made its way into that group of Christians. Paul desire for this community to keep its focus on Christ and to continue in His Way, not the way of the false teachers:

Colossians 2:1–5 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for those who have not met me face to face. 2:2 My goal is that their hearts, having been knit together in love, may be encouraged, and **that they may have all the riches that assurance brings in their understanding of the knowledge of the mystery of God, namely, Christ, 2:3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.** 2:4 I say this so that no one will deceive you through **arguments that sound reasonable.**

This whole line of thinking can be summed up in one, amazing idea: *All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden IN Christ.* If we wish to be wise and knowledgeable about life, about reality, all we need is to know Christ better and more deeply. This is a theme that runs throughout the New Testament.

There are, however, false teachers who seek to complicate the simplicity of this truth and present “*arguments that sound reasonable.*” Paul calls these “reasonable arguments” philosophies in Colossians 2:8. Philosophy is not a bad thing in and of itself. The word means “love of wisdom.” Humanity has been endlessly searching for wisdom that will make sense of all of life. The problem is that this wisdom is found *only* in Christ and people reject Him in their rebellion against the One True God.

At the root of these “*reasonable philosophies*” are teachings that Paul describes as “man-made” or “self-made” religion (Colossians 2:23). These alternative “ways” are based in **human traditions** and **demonic inspiration** rather than the Truth that has been revealed to us in Jesus. We must be careful not to become *captivated* and *enslaved* to such teachings. Here Paul tells us several things about these enslaving philosophies:

1. Enslaving philosophies are **empty**, or *hollow*, which means that although they promise “wisdom” they have no basis in reality. They cannot deliver what they offer.
2. Enslaving philosophies are **deceptive/deceitful** in that they lead us away from The Truth—The treasures of all knowledge and wisdom—that is in Christ.
3. Enslaving philosophies are based in **human traditions** which means that they are “man-made religions” (see Colossians 2:20-23).
4. Enslaving philosophies are based in the **elemental forces of the world** which means that they are demonic.

One of the major topics that we will be exploring in this unit is the reality of the Spiritual World—the realm of the Lord God and angels and demons. As spiritual beings, there is a part of us that interacts with this realm. There are spiritual forces that are opposed to the One True God and all that He loves. As humanity rebels against the True God, in worshipping other “gods” they are actually being deceived by Satanic, demonic powers. Paul gives us some insight on this:

1 Corinthians 8:4–6 ... we know that “an idol in this world is nothing,” and that “there is no God but one.” 8:5 If after all there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), 8:6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we live, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we live.
 10:20 ... **what the pagans sacrifice is to demons and not to God.** I do not want you to be partners with demons.

This is a topic that will be at the center of our discussions in this unit and we will deal with it in depth in coming sessions.

5. Enslaving philosophies are **not according to Christ**. This is the summary of all of these false ways—they are not in line with reality that is defined by Christ Jesus.

Paul reminds us at the end of this passage that we who are *In Christ* have also been *filled* in Him. In Him, we have access to everything we need to live a life *free* from all the enslaving forces of this world.



Take a minute to read all of Colossians chapter 2 in your Bible and think about all that Paul says there. Have you encountered teaching that would be similar to what Paul describes?

WORDwork | Day 3

1.3 **What Has Father God Done *To Us* and *For us* In Christ?**

Colossians 2:11-15 In Him [Christ] you also were circumcised—not, however, with a circumcision performed by human hands, but by the removal of the fleshly body, that is, through the circumcision done by Christ. 2:12 Having been buried with Him in baptism, you also have been raised with Him through your faith in the power of God who raised Him from the dead. 2:13 And even though you were dead in your transgressions and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He nevertheless made you alive with Him, having forgiven all your transgressions. 2:14 He has destroyed what was against us, a certificate of indebtedness expressed in decrees opposed to us. He has taken it away by nailing it to the cross. 2:15 Disarming the rulers and authorities, He has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

? 06 Do you have any idea what this “circumcision not performed by human hands” is in 2:11?

? 07 What does Paul say this circumcision done by Christ is the *removal* of in verse 11?

? 08 Who do you think the Ruler and Authorities are in 2:15?

Without a doubt, this is one of the more difficult and *strange* passages in all of Paul’s writings. But there are also parts that should sound familiar to you. All of what Paul describes in 2:12-13 are truths that we covered in previous sessions in the last unit. We looked briefly at one part of this passage when talking about forgiveness in the last unit.

Again, we see that what happened to Christ also happened to us because we are *IN* Him through faith. We have died with Christ and just as He was raised to new life—a new *kind* of life—so too have we.

The two key topics that we want to focus on come at the beginning and the end of this paragraph:

1. We have been “**spiritually circumcised**” in Christ, and
2. Father God has disarmed or **stripped and shamed the rulers and authorities**, triumphing over them by the work of Christ.

1.3.1 **What is “Spiritual Circumcision” done by Christ?**

As I said, this is one of the stranger concepts in Paul’s writings and scholars have been wrestling with it for centuries! As you know, circumcision was a *ritual* and a *sign* that the Lord God gave to Abraham to literally *mark* his family as the family through whom the promises of redemption for all the families of the Earth would be worked out. But that is not what Paul is talking about here. This is something else entirely.

Circumcision is basically *cutting away a piece of flesh...* (if you don’t know what *circumcision entails, look it up, I am not going to explain it here!!!*) This idea of “cutting away” connects to a term Paul uses in this text to link some ideas together. In verse 11, he talks about the “*removal of the fleshly body.*” Then in verse 15 he speaks of “*disarming the rulers and authorities.*” The term translated as “removal” and “disarming” is the same term and, in a literal sense, it was used to describe *taking off or stripping off clothing.*

In this passage, we hear that this circumcision was not performed by human hands, but by Christ, or perhaps in Christ. Secondly, this circumcision is not the removal a piece of skin, but the stripping away of the *fleshly body.* What in the world is Paul talking about?

Although a strange concept, this idea of “spiritual circumcision” introduces a key set of truths that we will be exploring for the rest of this unit. The basic idea Paul teaches us is this: In Christ, we are now spiritually alive, spiritually reborn into a new way of life. But, our physical bodies are still held enslaved to the power and corruption of sin. In Christ, we have been “cut free” from the effects of sin still present in our bodies so that we can live the new kind of life Christ models for us and invites us into.



Everything you just read is more than likely a new idea to you. Take a minute to re-read the Colossians passage. If these ideas are difficult to understand, pray, asking for insight. *We will be discussing these ideas in more depth and detail as we go, so hang on, we have more to explain...*

WORDwork | Day 4

1.3.2 Who Are The Rulers And Authorities That Have Been Stripped And Shamed?

Yesterday we heard about the “spiritual circumcision” that is done *by* or *in* Christ. There is some debate as to whether Paul wants us to understand that Christ performed the “stripping away” or whether Father God did it *In Christ*. In the final analysis, either option has strong points and does not change the basic meaning of what Paul is communicating.

But it does raise an issue that is worth exploring as we get into the second part of this paragraph in Colossians 2. There are a lot of “Hes” and “Hims” in this passage and it gets confusing. In 2:12, we hear that it was God—Father God—who raised Jesus from the dead. Then in verse 13 Father God made us alive with Christ (Him). And so He—Father God—has destroyed what was set against us, the decrees that He nailed to the Cross. It seems best to let that continue on to the “He” in verse 15 where He—Father God—also “disarmed [or *stripped*] the rulers and authorities and triumphed over them by *Christ* or the *Cross*.”

Again, there is some ambiguity in that last statement as the *pronoun* that ends the sentence could refer to Him (Christ) or The Cross (it). If you look at different translations, you will see that some have “Him” some have “the Cross.” The translation we are using here (NET) favors “the Cross.” Paul has just mentioned Father God nailing the decrees set against us to the Cross and so removing them. He goes on to say that these rulers and authorities were “*publicly shamed*”—a theme Paul uses in some cases when describing what Jesus accomplished on The Cross. It was not a hidden event, but one that took place in the open, in public, for those who were present to witness and for us to hear and receive their testimony. Remember our discussion of *propitiation*:

Romans 3:25 God **publicly displayed** Him [Christ] at his death as the mercy seat accessible through faith...

Also, when you think about it from a worldly perspective, The Cross *looked like* the defeat of Jesus. But in reality, The Cross is the turning point, the literal crux of history, when Father God triumphed over sin and death in Christ!

So here we learn that Father God has disarmed the rulers and authorities and has triumphed over them by The Cross. It could be that Paul is talking figuratively about the *human* rulers and authorities that have power in this World.

But it is hard to see how these Worldly rulers have been disarmed or shamed. More than likely, Paul has in mind the *Heavenly* rulers and authorities in the spiritual realm. In our third session, we are going to talk more in depth about these “rulers, authorities, cosmic powers over this present darkness, the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:10). The main thing to know and understand now is these satanic spiritual powers have been disarmed, disgraced, and defeated by Father God in Christ at the Cross!

As we said, this passage in Colossians 2 is a strange one. But, it introduces two key ideas that we are going to dig into in this unit. First, we are going to see how Father God has given us all we need in Christ to deal with our *external enemies*—the spiritual realm and the fallen World which is still under the power of Satan. Then we will move on to talk about how we deal with our *internal enemy*—the power of sin that still has a home in our fallen physical bodies.

Much of what we are going to discuss in this unit will be new to you, more than likely. Sadly, many of the Bible passages we are going to hearing have been neglected because they are difficult. We are moving into some real *meat* territory here.

Key Growth Stage: Becoming **FREE**. Jesus told His first disciples, “If you continue to follow my teaching, you are really my disciples and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. . . if the Son sets you free, you will be really free” (John 8:31-32, 36). Father God desire for us to follow Jesus Christ in hope, faith and love. As we learn to follow all that He taught us, we will be truly free. But we are in the middle of a great Spiritual War and we have enemies that seek to *enslave us*. In order to be truly free, we need to know how to fight our daily battle with the grace and power that has been given to us In Christ.



This week, we have given a big overview of all that we will be developing over the next several weeks of this study unit. Take a minute and review the big ideas you have learned.



Take a few minutes to pray, giving thanks that Father God has given you all you need In Christ and through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to follow Christ as He leads you to true freedom.

Session 2

Who is the Holy Spirit and What is He Doing?

Core Truth: The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity. He has been sent to us by Father God and the Lord Jesus to **indwell** us, **seal** us, and **empower** us as God's beloved children.

To Remember: "But I (Jesus) tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I am going away. For if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you, but if I go, I will send Him to you." John 16:7

Objective: Many followers of The Way, Christians, have never been taught a biblical view of the Holy Spirit. There is a lot of confusion regarding who He is and what he is doing. It is important to know and understand the reality of the Spirit's ministry to us because His presence in us connects us vitally to the life of the Father and Son. *He also empowers us to so that we can engage our daily battles with the same power that raised Jesus from the dead!*

Prayer: *Father God, thank You for all the blessings you have given me in Christ. Thank you for sending your Holy Spirit to live within me and empower me to live a whole new way of life. Amen.*

WORDwork | Day 1

2.1 **Who Is The Holy Spirit And What Is His Mission?**

This week we will begin to consider the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We have mentioned Him before, but now as we begin to discuss the issue of spiritual warfare, it is very important that you have a clear understanding of who the Spirit is and what He does in our lives. We will start with the basics.

2.1.1 **The Holy Spirit Is A Member Of The Trinity**

The Holy Spirit is the third member of the Trinity along with the Father and the Son. In some of Jesus final words of instruction to the disciples while He was on earth He said:

Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus came up and said to them, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go now and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to do all that I commanded you. And now remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Here Jesus is linking the Spirit with Himself and the Father as the fellowship, the union, the relationship that Jesus’ followers will be baptized - immersed- and welcomed into.

2.1.2 **The Holy Spirit Is A Person, *Not An Impersonal Force Or Power***

The Holy Spirit is a person. In the New Testament, He is referred to as a “He” not as an “it.” This is important to understand. The Spirit is not an impersonal force but a person who has come to lead us to Jesus and to unite us with the living reality of the Trinity as He takes up His home within us:

John 14:16-18 “[Now] I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever - 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it does not see him or know him. But you know him, because he resides with you and will be in you. 18 “I will not abandon you as orphans, I will come to you...”

In these verses, the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Advocate. This word is difficult to translate to English. The translations have Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Strengthened, Standby, Friend, etc. Advocate is a good word. It speaks about

a person who takes up a cause, gives witness to the cause, and tries to get other people on board with the cause. The Holy Spirit is Jesus' Advocate and ours. He comes to us to get us "on board" with Jesus' Way and then supports us as we follow The Way.

2.1.3 **The Holy Spirit Is The Spirit of Truth**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. Take note of John 14:17 again. He is the ultimate witness to The Truth - The Truth that is revealed in Christ Jesus. Because of this He is here to guide us to and in truth:

John 16:13-15 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but will speak whatever he hears, and will tell you what is to come. 14 He will glorify me, because he will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you. 15 Everything that the Father has is mine; that is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you.

2.1.4 **The Holy Spirit Is Here To Lead Us To Christ**

John 15:26-27 When the Advocate comes, whom I will send you from the Father the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father - he will testify about me, 27 and you also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.

The Holy Spirit is not here to draw attention to Himself; He is here to testify, speak about, give witness, and draw people to Jesus. Back in John 16:14 we heard Jesus say that the Spirit would *glorify* Him—praise Him, lift Him up for others to see, show that Jesus is worthy of praise. This Spirit also empowers us to speak about Christ Jesus, lifting Him up so that others may see His glory.

2.1.5 **The Holy Spirit Is The Power of The Lord's Transforming Work**

Romans 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in him, so that you may abound in hope *by the power of the Holy Spirit*.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 Now the **Lord (Jesus) is the Spirit**, and where the Spirit of the Lord is present, there is freedom. 3:18 And we all, with unveiled faces reflecting the glory of the Lord (as in a reflection), are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, *which is from the Lord, who is the Spirit*.

Ephesians 3:16 I pray that according to the wealth of his glory he may grant you to be *strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person...*

In all of these passages above, we see that the Holy Spirit is the power of God made available to us for all “life and godliness.” The Holy Spirit has been given to us to empower us to be people of hope, faith and love. We should be absolutely overwhelmed by the reality that the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead (see Romans 1:4) now dwells within us and we are in Christ!

As Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians above, the Spirit is here to bring us to freedom. The Spirit is here to bring about our transformation—to be more like the Lord Jesus degree by degree. All of this is given to us by the Lord Jesus who makes His presence real with and within us by The Spirit.



Is there anything new that you learned about the Spirit today? If so what and how does it change the way you think about your relationship with Father God in Christ?

WORDwork | Day 2

2.2 **How Did The Spirit Work In Jesus' Life?**

Today we are going to observe some of the ways that the Holy Spirit was at work in the life of our Lord Jesus. In these few passages, we can see clearly that the Holy Spirit played a significant role in the life of the Lord Jesus:

2.2.1 **Jesus Was Conceived Through The Power Of The Holy Spirit**

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ happened this way. While his mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

Luke 1:35 The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called the Son of God.

In all the Matthew and Luke especially, we see that Jesus (the man) was conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit. He had no human father. This is one of the foundational affirmations of Christianity. The 2nd Person of the Trinity – the Eternal Son – was conceived by the working of the Spirit, through the power of the Most High God.

2.2.2 **Jesus Was Baptized By The Holy Spirit**

Luke 3:21-22 Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. And while he was praying, the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my one dear Son; in you I take great delight."

When Jesus submitted Himself to John's water baptism of repentance, identifying Himself with both John's message and the people whom He came to save, the Holy Spirit also descended from Heaven and fell upon Jesus. In a sense, this was a spiritual baptizing or anointing of Jesus with the Spirit. At this same time, God the Father expressed His complete acceptance of the Son and pleasure with the Son.

2.2.3 **Jesus Was Filled (And Indwelt) With The Holy Spirit**

Luke 4:1 Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ...

The descent of the Spirit upon Jesus at His baptism also seems to be the point at which He was “filled” with the Spirit. In other words, it was at this time that the Spirit expressed His complete fellowship with Jesus and it would be clear that it was by the power of the Spirit that Jesus would carry out His mission.

2.2.4 **Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit**

The filling of the Spirit expressed itself in Jesus now submitting to the leading of the Spirit. It is incredible to see that the Spirit first leads Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. The Spirit led Jesus into the places where He would be tested and found perfect to accomplish the purposes for which He had been sent.

2.2.5 **Jesus Was Empowered For His Work By The Holy Spirit**

Luke 4:14 Then Jesus, in the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and news about him spread throughout the surrounding countryside.

After completing His testing through temptation in the wilderness, Jesus began His ministry powerfully through the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 12:28 Jesus says specifically that He cast out demons by the Spirit of God. It is important to note that Jesus was not using His own power for His miraculous and powerful acts, but relying on the power of the Spirit working through Him.

2.2.6 **Jesus Was Anointed By The Holy Spirit**

Acts 10:38 ... with respect to Jesus from Nazareth, God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with him.

Although this was touched on in the other aspects, it is important to see that in Acts 10:38 Peter describes Jesus as being “anointed with the Holy and power.” Anointing speaking to something being “poured out” upon someone. In fact, the word from which we get the term Messiah is the Hebrew word for “anointed one.” The Spirit had uniquely anointed Jesus for His powerful ministry.

2.2.7 **Jesus Was Appointed Son-Of-God-In-Power According To The Spirit**

Romans 1:4 ... [Jesus Christ] was appointed the Son-of-God-in-power according to the Holy Spirit by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul makes the case that at His resurrection from the dead, Jesus was appointed the “Son-of-God-in-power” according to the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament we see that Jesus was raised from the dead through the exercise of God the Father’s power through the Holy Spirit. Jesus was not raised by an exercise of His own power.



Have you ever seen all these ways that The Spirit was at work in the life of the Lord Jesus? What new things did you learn here? What truths stuck out to you most?

WORDwork | Day 3

2.3 **How does the Spirit work in our lives?**

Today we turn to consider how the Spirit works in our lives. As we look at the reality of the work of the Spirit in our lives, we see many parallels to His work in the life of Christ. Although the Spirit works in a more magnified way in the life of Christ, many of the same things He did for or through Jesus, He also does for us.

2.3.1 **We Are Re-Born Through The Work Of The Holy Spirit**

Titus 3:5 ... (God) saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy, through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit...

Although we are not “conceived” the way that Jesus was, we are definitely reborn - granted new spiritual life - through the work of the Spirit. Because of this, we are entirely new creations, new people set on a new course with a new destiny.

2.3.2 **We Are Baptized With The Holy Spirit**

1 Corinthians 12:13 For in/by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. Whether Jews or Greeks or slaves or free, we were all made to drink of the one Spirit.

Baptism speaks mainly to the idea of identification and union. When we were baptized by/with the Spirit, we were identified and united with Christ and His people – His Body, as Paul says here. In this same way, with the descent of the Spirit at His water baptism, Jesus was completely identified and associated with the new work that God the Father was doing in Israel through Him.

2.3.3 **We Are Indwelled By The Holy Spirit**

1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?

The Father and the Son send their Spirit to live within us. This is called the indwelling of the Spirit. This makes us the Living Temple of God. Our bodies and spirits become the place where God shows his presence on the Earth. This is also the way God “pours His love out” in us:

Romans 5:5 ... the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

2.3.4 **We Are Led By The Holy Spirit**

Romans 8:14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.

Just as with Jesus, the Holy Spirit is also here to lead us. He continually leads us to realize that we belong to God as His sons, His beloved children. The Spirit also leads us by illuminating us (filling us with the light of truth) and teaching us, but we will discuss this in more detail a little later as well.

2.3.5 **We Are Empowered By The Holy Spirit**

Ephesians 3:16-17 I pray that according to the wealth of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner person, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith ...

One of the most awesome realities that is true of us as Christ's people is that *the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead is the same Spirit who lives within us, empowering us to live a new kind of life!!!* Now, think on that for a minute: you have access to the same power that raised Jesus from the dead empowering you to live a whole new kind of life - one shaped by Jesus own life!

2.3.6 **We Are All Anointed By The Holy Spirit**

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 But it is God who establishes us together with you in Christ and who *anointed* us, 22 who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a down payment.

Baptism and anointing are somewhat related. Baptism speaks to identifying people, but *anointing* focuses on marking someone for service. This anointing is a recognition of someone's right to take up some office or work, and is also seen as the recognition of the empowerment to carry it out. In the New Testament, we see that just as Jesus was "marked for His mission" by the anointing of the Spirit, so too we have been anointed by the Spirit, qualifying us to carry out our mission and purpose in Christ. (*There is a treatment of anointing in the appendices*)

2.3.7 **We Are Appointed Sons Of God Through The Holy Spirit**

Romans 8:16-17 The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit that we are God's children. 17 And if children, then heirs (namely, heirs of God and also fellow heirs with Christ) - if indeed we suffer with him so we may also be glorified with him.

Galatians 4:6 And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, who calls "Abba! Father!"

All of these things that we have considered comes to its conclusion and climax in this last idea: the Holy Spirit who is given to us makes our relationship with God as Sons and beloved Children real. There is no greater title that we can be given other than "Son of God." Jesus was God's One Unique Son; but we are all beloved "sons" (women included) in Christ by the work of His spirit.



Make sure to make a close comparison between what we have heard today and what we discussed yesterday. It is very important for you to see the parallels.

WORDwork | Day 42.4 **Why Was the Holy Spirit Given to Us?**

John 14:16-17 “...I (Jesus) will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever 17 **the Spirit of Truth**, whom the world cannot accept, because it does not see him or know him. But you know him, because he resides with you and will be in you...”

On the night of His betrayal, before His crucifixion, the Lord Jesus prepared His disciples for His departure back into Heaven. However, He made it very clear that His ascension would be of *great benefit* because He would send them another Advocate – The Holy Spirit.

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with His first disciples *forever* by indwelling them and empowering them for their mission. So also Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to us. *The Holy Spirit works to draw us up into the divine love of Father God and Jesus The Son so that their glory and joy becomes the satisfaction of our lives.*

Notice what Jesus goes on to say:

John 14:18-21 I will not abandon you as orphans, ***I will come to you.*** 19 In a little while the world will not see me any longer, but you will see me; because I live, you will live too. 20 *You will know at that time that I am in my Father and you are in me and I am in you.* 21 The person who has my commandments and obeys them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will reveal myself to him.”

Earlier, Jesus had emphasized that He and the Father were *one*. To see Jesus, is to see the Father (John 10:30; 14:9). By this, Jesus meant that He and the Father were completely united in love, purpose and desire. Where Jesus is present, the Father is present as well.

In this passage, Jesus also makes it clear that *wherever the Holy Spirit is, there He is as well*. This is why he says “I will not abandon you. **I will come to you.**” As Jesus would send the Holy Spirit to indwell and empower these first disciples, Jesus Himself would be present. Just as with these first disciples, Jesus through the Holy Spirit now dwells in your heart if you are *in Christ*. You have complete and total fellowship with the Lord Jesus through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit.

Notice also what Jesus says in 14:20 – He is in the Father, we are in Christ, and Christ is in us. We are completely and totally included in the glorious and loving relationship of the Father and Son. The Spirit draws us up into that relationship and makes it real in our experience.

To be united with Jesus through the Holy Spirit is also to be completely united in fellowship with the Father. In John 17, Jesus prayed that his first disciples would “one”—united in love, purpose and desire—just as He was “one” with the Father. Not only did Jesus pray this for the first disciples, He also prayed this for all of us who have believed their message. Take a look at the following verses:

John 17:20-23 “I am not praying only on their behalf, but also on behalf of those who believe in me through their testimony, 21 that they will all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. I pray that they will be in us, so that the world will believe that you sent me. 22 The glory you gave to me I have given to them, that they may be one just as we are one 23 I in them and you in me that they may be completely one, so that the world will know that you sent me, and *you have loved them just as you have loved me.*”

Take note: in 17:23 Jesus prayed that the Father would reveal to us that He loves us *just as as He has loved the Lord Jesus?* Pause for a moment and consider how much the Father loves Jesus as His “One Unique Son.” *You are loved that much too!*

Paul also developed this theology in many of his letters. Observe how he greets the church at Thessalonica:.

1 Thessalonians 1:1 From Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians **in** God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Grace and peace to you!

Paul considered that this church was “in the God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” They had been totally included in the Divine love and purpose of the Father and Son through the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit. So have we!!!



We have spent this week focusing on the Holy Spirit because knowing who He is and how He now lives in and empowers you will give you comfort and encouragement as we think about spiritual warfare. Take a few minutes and **give thanks** for all the things you have learned this week and especially for the presence of the Spirit in you, in Christ.

Session 3

How Are We At War?

Core Truth: We are living in a world that is engaged in a Great Spiritual War. There are only two sides in this Great War: those who are allied with the One True God as His beloved Children and those who are still enslaved by Satan—The Devil—in the Dominion of Darkness.

To Remember: “We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the Evil One.” [1 John 5:19]

Objective: We face two powerful spiritual enemies: 1) The Devil/The Evil One/Satan/The Adversary who is at work in the world and 2) The Sin that still lives in our Flesh. We need to be AWARE and AWAKE to the reality of these ever present enemies. Even more importantly, we need to know their attack strategies and how to deal with them. The Devil seeks to beat us down so that we never fully realize who we are in Christ. The Sin that dwells within us wants to stay focused on ourselves as the “center of the universe,” so that we can be our own saviors and our own lords. Knowing these strategies, we can look to The Word to see how to deal with them and be FREE.

Prayer: *Father, thank you that you have not left us alone in this present, dark, hostile world. Thank you that you have not only empowered us with Your Spirit, but you have also given us Wisdom in your Word to know how to fight our daily battles in Christ. Amen.*

WORDwork | Day 1

3.1 **What Are The First Steps in Preparing For Our Battles?**

Ephesians 6:10–12 “Finally, be strengthened in the Lord and in the strength of His power. Clothe yourselves with the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand against the schemes of the Devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens.”

? 09 What does Paul encourage us to do in verse 10?

? 10 What are we to “put on” according to verse 11?

? 11 What will be the result of this “putting on” according to the end of verse 11?

? 12 Who are we “wrestling” against according to verse 12?

? 13 Who are these rulers and authorities? Where do they now reside?

3.1.1 **How Do We See What is Really Real?**

We are living in the middle of a war. Most people are totally unaware of this war. Yet it rages all around us. In Phase 1, we only briefly touched on the chapter of The Master Story where Satan—The Adversary, The Devil—led a rebellion against The LORD God in the past, in the heavenly realm. This rebellion came to Earth in the Rebellion of Adam and Eve in the Garden in Eden. In this phase, we are

emphasizing the reality that we have an Enemy and he seeks to ruin us; *he seeks to ruin you*. We also hope to help you become AWAKE to the reality of the World in which we live and set you FREE through the means that your Heavenly Father has made available to you.

Notice in the passage above, Paul speaks of “rulers” and “authorities” and “world rulers” that we *struggle* against. Our present world lies under the power and influence of the “spiritual forces of evil in the *heavens*.” In the Scriptures, “Heaven” and “Heavens” is often used to refer to the general *spiritual* “place” or realm where the Lord God lives and where other spiritual beings reside: angels, heavenly creatures, Satan, demons, etc. Everything of spiritual significance has its origin in *Heaven* and the *Heavens*.

Notice also the mention of the Devil here. He is our key spiritual *Adversary*. He *schemes* to divide, destroy, and cause general chaos in Creation. We will say more about him in the next session.

There are also spiritual forces of good in this war—the Lord God and His holy or elect angels (Luke 9:29; 1 Timothy 5:21) and the Children of God who are *in Christ*, who stand firm, opposed to the Powers of Darkness. But there is Good News! In our time, ***the victory of this War is already won***. *Father God has already stripped and shamed these rulers and authorities in Christ, at the Cross!*

Now, we are just waiting for the fulfillment of God’s purposes, the day when He will subject all things fully to the authority of His One Unique Son, Our King, Our Savior—Jesus Christ. These spiritual enemies have been defeated, but they have not yet been *deposed* or *destroyed* and so there are battles still to fight.

Our World is caught in the battle between these two opposing spiritual forces. On the one hand, there is the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of the Beloved Son, that seeks to bring **peace** and eternal **rest** to the Earth. On the other hand, the Dominion of Darkness seeks only “to kill, to steal, and to destroy” through deceit and treachery (John 10:10). *Every human being born on this planet begins life in the Dominion of Darkness*. But as you have already learned, Father God, by His grace and mercy, saves us and transfers us to His Kingdom through faith in Christ.

3.1.2 **How Does the Reality of The Kingdom Keep Us Focused?**

Revelation 11:15 Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven saying: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.”

The Bible clearly reveals that Jesus will return to bring an end to the current age of human history and bring *a new age* and *a new creation*—a New Heaven and New Earth—into existence. In the passage from Revelation above, we hear this announcement: *the Kingdom of the Lord has come and He shall reign forever!!!! This is future reality.* The Kingdom IS coming; it cannot be stopped.

In this New Creation, sin, corruption and death will no longer be present. As we look toward the future reality, we are encouraged to deal with life as it comes to us in the present in hope and faith. *The Bible clearly reveals that this present life is not all there is.* There is a better life coming for all those who are in Christ. Although, we have been initiated into this eternal kind of life in the here and now, we will not receive all of its benefits until the hereafter.

In the following sessions, we will turn to see how we can prepare for the battles that we must engage until the time of Jesus' return. While we are alive, there is still much work to be done for the King and the Kingdom. Knowing how all things will turn out helps us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus our Redeemer and our soon Returning King. The truth and reality of the coming Kingdom gives us HOPE.

We began this unit by discussing all the blessings that come to us in Christ and how these *shape our identity* as Father God's beloved children. We are convinced that our Adversary, the Devil seeks to keep us from realizing how *loved* and *powerful* we are in Christ. Because of this, we need to know how to deal with his schemes.

But we also need to understand how to deal with the power of Sin that is still present with us, in our flesh. This is a topic that has been greatly neglected in popular teaching and one of the key reasons we see so many who are beat down and discouraged while trying to follow Christ.

In the Ephesians passage above, Paul tells us to be “strengthened in the Lord and in the strength of His *power*.” As we have already heard, this strength and power comes through the *presence* and *power* of the Holy Spirit. Father God has given us everything we need to *stand firm* against the assaults of our Enemy. *Standing firm* is a core thread of truth that will run through this unit. We are called to stand firm in Christ and not allow our enemies to distract us from all that Christ has given to us.



You may want to go back to Phase 1 and scan over our sessions on *The Larger, Master Story* to see larger picture of these ideas.

WORDwork | Day 2

3.2 **Who are Our Two Untamable Enemies and Where Do They Operate?**

3.2.1 **Our External Enemy: Who is The Devil, Satan?**

The Devil, Our Adversary, Is Real. In a recent survey, George Barna discovered that over half of the professing Christians surveyed did not believe that the Devil was a real being, but only a symbol for evil (*Growing True Disciples*, 66, 69). Maybe that is why he is so effective at his work in our world today! Even in his fallen state, the Evil One holds a position of power and respect in God's kingdom:

Jude 9 . . . even when Michael the archangel was arguing with the devil and debating with him concerning Moses' body, he did not dare to bring a slanderous judgment, but said, "May the Lord rebuke you!"

Even Michael the Archangel dared not engage the Adversary on his own terms. Michael simply entrusted his dispute to the power of God. This should give us real warning. Against our great foe, The Devil, we are ineffective in and of ourselves.

Our Enemy Is Restless and Relentless. Make no mistake about it, our Adversary the Devil is out to eat us alive:

1 Peter 5:8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

He seeks to destroy us as he seeks to destroy all that belongs to God and His righteousness. Our Adversary does not sleep. He does not relent. He will not grow weary. He will not give up. The Enemy is always near. We are living on his battlefield. His agents are all around. The Devil is also represented by the rebellious and fallen angels—demons—who joined in his initial rebellion. We will probably never deal with the Devil himself directly. Most of our attacks will come from his agents, the demons that are in line with his dark dominion.

The Devil has worked in the World to create a tempting *counterfeit kingdom*, contrary to the Kingdom of God. We must always remember that he is *the master of deception*: "... for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light." [2 Corinthians 11:14]

You cannot control the Adversary. He will not be tamed. You are living in his world where he is “god.” Without the Lord-God’s grace and power, we are helpless and hopeless against this foe. God has revealed in the Bible key ways that we can stand against and resist the evil of the Devil. We will consider some of these tactics in lessons to come.

3.2.2 **The Context of Devil’s Dominion: What is The World?**

The World Is Real but Passing Away. As believers, we are living in hostile, enemy territory. The “World” is the current interconnected system of *cultures* and *traditions* that dominates this planet and is totally opposed to God’s rule. It seeks to *keep us distracted* at every turn from all that is good and true and eternally beautiful. Hear the following passage:

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Everyday, you are immersed in the World. It comes at you from every angle: relationships at work, the persuasion of TV, advertising, and movies, the “spirit” of discontent that is everywhere. All of this has great power because all of the vices, all of the lusts of this world, are simply the twisting and corrupting of things that God had created to be good. So they do call to the deepest part of us that yearns for real satisfaction. Yet, these corrupt enticements can never give the payoff they promise.

The World Hates You. Left on our own, the World would consume us. The World never sleeps, it never relents, and it never shuts down. It is always there calling to us to come and enjoy what it has to offer: things that are “beautiful,” things that are “delicious,” and things that will “take us to the top.” If we don’t take the World up on its offer, it has billions of people to shame, ridicule and scorn us. And so the World stands opposed to all who would seek to be pleasing to Father God just as John forewarned us:

1 John 3:13 Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.

The World stands opposed to the good things of Father God because it is under the control of the “god of this age” (2 Corinthians 4:4), Satan our great Adversary:

1 John 5:19 We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the Evil One.

The Enemy has carefully manipulated the cultures of this World, apart from the wisdom of the Lord-God, to be deceived and blinded to the reality of what is eternally true, good and beautiful. We are called to be “in” the World, but not “of” the World. If we are going to survive in this hostile territory, we are going to need to know how to deal with its deception.

-  Have you given serious consideration to the fact that the Devil, Satan is a real and living being? Why or Why not?

-  How does this belief affect your view of the World in which you live?

WORDwork | Day 3

3.2.3 **Our Internal Enemy: What is The Sin that dwells within?**

Every human being is born spiritually dead, hostile to God and enslaved to the power of sin by nature. In the Fall of Adam, two terrible things happened to us: 1) We have each been **declared guilty** before God because of Adam’s sinful “vote” on our behalf, and 2) We have each **inherited the corruption of sin** that has marred our ability to think and act in a godly way.

Now is a good time to talk a little more deeply about sin and give a general definition for it. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the most commonly used root term for “sin” is *chata* which carries the idea of “missing the mark” or “straying from the goal.” In the Greek Scriptures, the term *hamartia* carries the same idea and is the most often used and translated as “sin.” There are many other terms in the Scriptures used to convey the ideas of *sin* and *evil*. At the root, though, there is the basic idea of *not “aiming for” or turning away from or twisting the good and beautiful desires and purposes of the Lord God*. Paul sums it up this way,

Romans 3:23 ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

As human beings, we were designed and created to reveal and reflect the *glory*—the profound beauty—of the Lord God. And yet, we have rebelled against Him and reject His Way.

Key Definition: **Sin.** The basic idea of sin is any *idea, thought, or action* that is not shaped by or in line with the Truth, Goodness, or Glory (Beauty) of the Lord God. This is rooted in the *power* of sin that has corrupted the whole world.

Christ summarily dealt with the issue of our guilt on The Cross—we have been forgiven, we are freed from the tyranny of guilt. The issue of *inherited, indwelling sin in our fallen physical bodies remains*, however, and this will not be fully dealt with until The Resurrection. In our present, unredeemed bodies, the power of sin still lives within us.

The Sin That Lives In You Is Real And It Will Never Be Tamed. Paul speaks about this inherited sin as “*the sin that lives in*” us:

Romans 7:16-20, 24 “Now if I do what I don’t want to do, I agree that the law is good. But now it is no longer me doing it, but **the sin**

that lives in me. For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For I want to do the good, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but I do the very evil I do not want! Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer me doing it **but the sin that lives in me.** . . . Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"

You are probably familiar with Paul's struggle with sin as he discusses in Romans 7:13-25. If not, review that passage. Can you sympathize with Paul's plight here? What has been similar in your own experience? Even though we are now "in Christ" the power of sin has not been completely eradicated from us. It can come to life and take control of us, if we give it the right things to feed on.

We can all sympathize with Paul's predicament in Romans 7. He knows the good that he should do, but he realizes that he is powerless to do it. He desires to do the good, but he finds that he actually winds up doing the evil that he does not want to do. He is seemingly out of control. Why does this happen!? Paul tells us this:

Galatians 5:17 For the **flesh** has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the **Spirit** has desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want.

The sin that lives in your flesh constantly wars against the Holy Spirit who lives in your heart. This Sin that lives in your flesh will never be tamed. It will not grow old. It will not get tired. It will not relent. It will never submit itself willingly to the goodness and instruction of God:

Romans 8:5-8 . . . the mindset that has its basis in the flesh is hostile to God, *for it does not submit to the law of God, nor is it able to do so.* Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

You, like Paul, will never be able to overcome this *Indwelling Sin* on your own terms. And make no mistake: the sin that dwells in you desires to kill you.

3.2.4 **The Context of Indwelling Sin's influence: What is our Flesh?**

But notice very carefully that Paul says this power of sin lives within him, in his "flesh." The concept of our "flesh" is a "big idea" in Paul's theology. It is beyond the scope of this study to get into this in detail. Let's just make a couple of key observations about it now and we will seek to understand this better as we go along:

1. Your "flesh" is **connected to** your fallen physical body that serves as the "headquarters" for the Sin that still lives in you.

2. Your “flesh” is *not just your physical body* because it is connected to a spiritual reality as well.

If you read Romans 7 very carefully, Paul uses other terms to refer to his “flesh.” Consider this:

Romans 7:22–23 For I delight in the law of God in my inner being. But I see a different law in **my members** waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that is in **my members**.

“Members” is a term referring to the different parts of the body. Notice, Paul sees this sin dwelling in his physical body: “Who will set me free from the *body* of this death!?” (7:24) So why is this important? Why are we making a big deal out of this?

We need to realize that this sin that still lives within us no longer controls **the core** of who we are; it no longer dominates our hearts. Remember, Christ through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit now lives there. When Paul says, “*I know that nothing good lives in me,*” he very quickly qualifies it with, “*that is in my flesh...*” Paul knows that Christ dwells within him. Christ dwells within us, in the core of our beings, in our hearts. The Sin that dwells in us only remains in our “outskirts”—our fallen physical bodies.

Even though we have been made “complete” in Christ spiritually, there are still parts of us that have not been redeemed to fully reflect the glory of Father God as He purposed. Father God will redeem us fully spiritually *and* physically, but not yet. In our present state, we are still “broken.” Part of our “brokenness” is the sin that still indwells our flesh. *This problem will not be dealt with until the Resurrection when our physical bodies are freed from its corruption.* There are ways to deal with it in our present lives, but first we must admit our own defeat before its power. We, like Paul, must first cry out, “*Wretched people that we are!!! Who can free us from this body of death?*”



Do you understand the difference between the “sin that dwells in you” and your “flesh”? If not, read over this section again.

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3.3 **How Do We Deal with our Wounds and Our Brokenness?**

If you think back to all that you should know by now, we know that Christ has defeated and shamed the Evil rulers and authorities that stand opposed to us (see Colossians 2:15). Christ has also brought about our forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration as we have heard in the first part of this study. As we live in both the death and resurrection of Jesus, the power of sin that yet dwells with us is also incapacitated:

Romans 6:6–8 We know that our old self was crucified with Him (Christ) in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 6:7 For one who has died has been set free from sin. 6:8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

In the following sessions, we are going to focus on 1) *putting on* the “full armor of God” so that we can stand firm against the Devil’s schemes, 2) *putting on* the “new person” (the “new you”) created in Christ Jesus to be alive and free. As we close out this weeks reading, we want to focus on the larger picture of how this Great Spiritual War has affected us and set the stage for how we effectively move forward.

3.3.1 **You Have Been Wounded in the World, but You Are Being Healed.**

Romans 12:14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

The strategy of our Enemy that is at Work in the world is simple: *steal, kill and destroy*. Because we live in a Fallen World with people who are all broken by sin, we have been terribly wounded from external attack. The old saying, “sticks and stones my break my bones, but words will never hurt me” is foolish and untrue. Some of our greatest wounds come by words.

The first step in understanding the Spiritual War and engaging it effectively is getting in touch with how it has affected you directly. Part of Satan’s strategy to keep you from turning fully to God is to keep you battered by the harsh reality of the World and then incite you to blame God. ***The Enemy does not want you to know how loved you are and how powerful you have become in Christ.***

Our fear, pride, and desire for control through managing and arranging have been taught to us by the World. The World teaches us that if we don't take control of our lives, no one will. If we don't grasp all the pleasure and enjoyment that we can in this life, we will be cheated. It teaches us to lust and to be proud.

As wounded people, we wound others in return. We need to understand this reality. As we accept the healing offered to us in Christ, we become effective in bringing that healing to others. We have been wounded, but in Christ we are healed in some areas and are being healed in others.

3.3.2 **You are Broken by the Effects of Sin, but You Are Being Redeemed.**

Psalms 69:5 O God, you are aware of my foolish sins;
my guilt is not hidden from you.

It is common to use the term “broken” to refer to a person who has become humble and teachable after pain and suffering. We will use it in different sense. When we speak about our *brokenness*, we will be referring to those aspects of our life that are produced by the sin that still dwells within us—in our flesh. In other words, there are parts of us that are still literally “broken” by sin.

As the writer of the Psalm above realizes, he still sins foolishly. We, although we are accepted and reconciled to God “in Christ,” also continue to be enticed to sin by the power of sin that dwells within us. Before we were cleansed and redeemed through Christ's work revealed in the Gospel, this “brokenness” is what Dallas Willard calls “radical evil in the ruined soul” (see *Renovation of the Heart*). Now, in Christ, our souls have been enlightened by the Gospel, cleansed by the blood of Christ and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. *Evil no longer characterizes your life.* We are alive in Christ.

However, we are not yet fully perfected, glorified. There are still aspects of our life that are being healed and transformed by God's grace. Although we have powerful “external” enemy, the Devil, who is at work in the World, our greatest and most constant enemy is the “sin that dwells within” us. Just as God gives us tactics to deal with the Devil and the World, so also He gives us tactics for dealing with the power of sin still in us.

3.3.3 **Warfare > [Counsel > Healing] > Warfare...**

This is the cycle that characterizes our lives. We are all born in the middle of this great Spiritual War. In the midst of the battle, God comes to us and offers healing

for our wounds and transformation out of our brokenness in our growing relationship with Him by means of the Gospel.

We continue to receive His counsel through the *Written Word*—the Bible—and the *Living Word*—Our Lord Jesus—who is alive in us. Because all of us who are in Christ are connected by this presence of the Holy Spirit, we need one another. We cannot make it on our own. As we receive counsel (Truth), we continue to heal. We can then give counsel to others, guiding them to the Way, the Truth, the Life that is Jesus. With our trusted brothers and sisters, we engage the battle day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute. We are wounded. We sin. We fail. We are beaten up. But Jesus has the words of life. He is our life. As we receive His life, *we can* let go of our life and pour it in to others. We can “die” (to ourselves) so that others may live. This is what we are called to as followers of Christ Jesus.

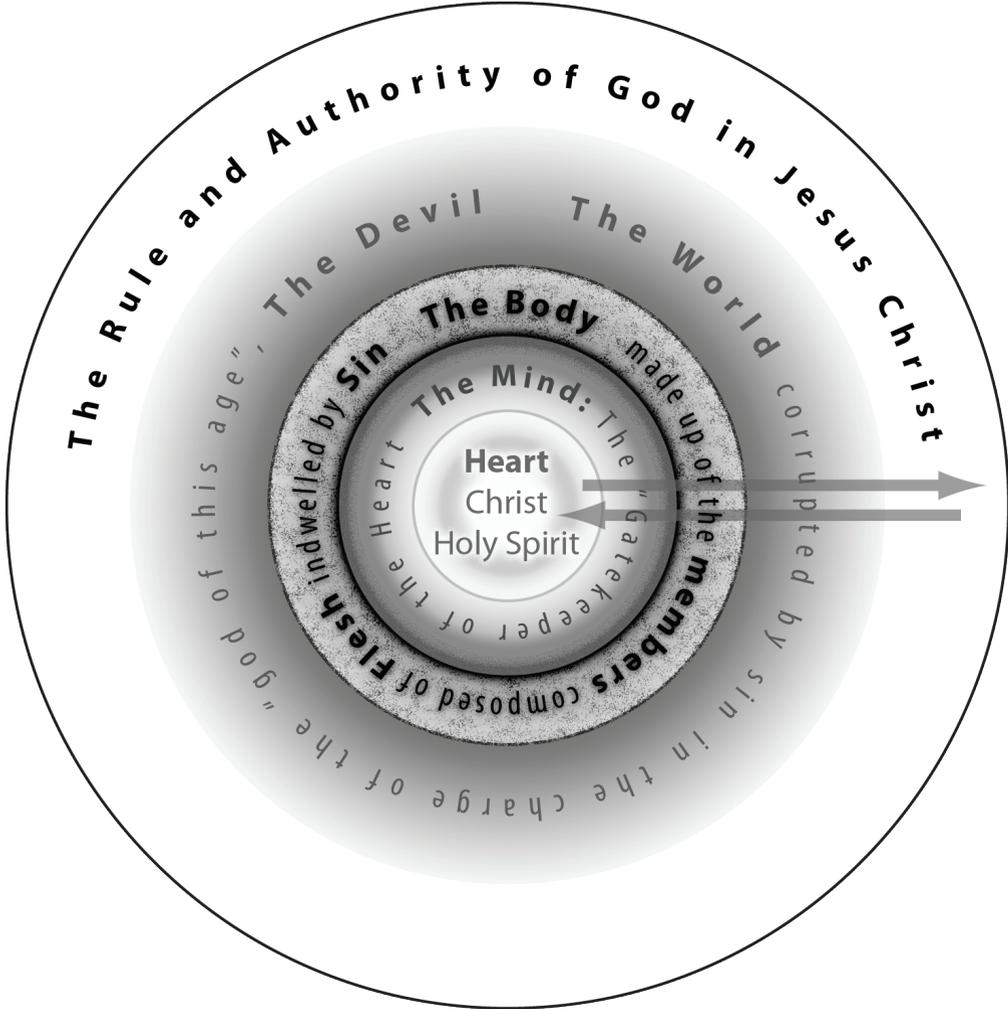
1 John 4:4 You are from God, little children, and have conquered them (the false powers of this world), because *the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*

3.4

Seeing the Big Picture of the Great Spiritual War

There is a diagram on the next page that illustrates how all of this fits together. Take a few minutes to look over it. The most important thing to *realize* and understand is the reality that *Father God is sovereign in Christ*—He is graciously and providentially in *control*—*over this whole framework.*

Remember Jesus said that “all power/authority in Heaven and Earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18). There is nothing, absolutely *nothing* that exists that is not under Jesus authority and care. As we move through this study, we will seek to cultivate a worldview where Father God is present in every aspect of our battles, working for us in Christ what we cannot accomplish on our own.



 Think about the cycle of Warfare > [Counsel > Healing] > Warfare... Can you see how this has worked in your own experience? Explain.

Session 4

How Do We Put On The Full Armor of God?

Core Truth: Father God has made provisions for us to stand firm against the attacks of our external enemy—The Devil—who is at work in the World. We stand firm by “putting on” and living in the reality of our new identity in Christ.

To Remember: “...take up the full armor of God so that you may be able to stand your ground on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand.” [Ephesians 6:13]

Objective: In this session we want to look at the 6 pieces of armor that God has made available to us to stand firm against the schemes and devices of our Evil Enemy. We will also look at the critical role that prayer plays in our daily battles.

Prayer: *Father, thank you for providing your spiritual “armor” to defend against the attacks of our Enemy. Help me to stand firm in the truth, confident in all that Christ has done and is doing for me. Help me to realize the power I have access to in the Holy Spirit who lives within me. Help us all - all my brothers and sisters in Christ - to live in the reality of these truths. Amen*

WORDwork | Day 1**4.1 What Is The Spiritual Armor of God?**

Ephesians 6:13-20 For this reason, take up the full armor of God so that you may be able to stand your ground on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm therefore, by fastening (1) the belt of truth around your waist, by putting on (2) the breastplate of righteousness, 15 by fitting your feet with (3) the preparation that comes from the good news of peace, 16 and in all of this, by taking up (4) the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And take (5) the helmet of salvation and (6) the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 With every prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and to this end be alert, with all perseverance and requests for all the saints. 19 Pray for me also, that I may be given the message when I begin to speak that I may confidently make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may be able to speak boldly as I ought to speak.

- ? 14 What does Paul mean by “for this reason”?
- ? 15 In verse 13, for what purpose or reason are we to take up the armor?
- ? 16 What six items does Paul mention as key components of the armor?
- ? 17 What is the main topic of verses 18-20?
How important does Paul seem to think this activity is?

In verse 11, Paul exhorts us to put on the “full armor” of God. The word that is used here is *panoplia* and it is used in non-biblical contexts to refer to the armor which would have been worn by a Roman foot soldier. You may know that Paul is in house arrest as he writes this letter to the Ephesians. More than likely, as he writes he is looking at one of the Roman guards who would have been assigned to keep an eye on him.

The main point of this armor is that *it has been given* to us so that we can stand firm, stand our ground—**STAND** against the wicked rulers and authorities with whom we are battling day by day. Paul does not seem to indicate that we should use this armor to go on the offensive, to “attack” the forces of evil. **We are simply to stand firm in the victory that Christ has already won for us!!!** These powers are trying to take back ground that Christ has won for us. Paul alluded to this earlier in the letter:

Ephesians 4:26-27 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on the cause of your anger. *27 Do not give the devil an opportunity.*

One of the key realities that we have to keep in mind is that the Devil and his minions have already been stripped and shamed by Father God in Christ at The Cross as we discussed in our first session. *Remember:*

Colossians 2:15 Stripping the rulers and authorities [the demonic rulers in the heavenly realms], He [Father God or Christ] has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the Cross.

We need to understand three things about this truth:

1. The Demonic forces have *already been* stripped and shamed by Jesus’ victory on the Cross. Jesus now has ALL authority in Heaven and on Earth (see Matthew 28:18)
2. The Powers of evil are not yet *deposed* and *destroyed*. The Devil and his forces are still at work in the World. Satan is still blinding unbelievers in this present age (see 2 Corinthians 4:3-4). The Evil One still has power in this world (see 1 John 5:19-21). However, Jesus has already defeated Him. Satan and his demonic forces are still agents of chaos and evil, but they have already lost the War!
3. **Christ Will Destroy All His Enemies in the Last Day.** Jesus is now waiting in Heaven for the day when “His enemies are made a footstool for his feet” (Hebrews 10:12-13). At the end, the Devil himself will be

cast into the Lake of Fire, the place of eternal torment and destruction (see Revelation 20:10).

For all of these reasons, Paul exhorts us to ***stand firm***. The War has already been won. We are to stand together, in the strength of the Lord and not allow these dark forces to bully us and steal the joy and blessing that Christ has already provided for us. Remember, our Enemy seeks to kill, steal and destroy. *He is a spiritual terrorist*. We must take up the wisdom and resources that God gives us to stand against the Devil's schemes.

If we trust what the Scriptures teach us, we can know that Christ will be finally victorious over all His enemies. In the present it is very important for us to keep this in mind. We live in a World that is darkened by sin and corruption; sometimes it looks as if the Enemy is winning. *But this is not reality*. His doom is certain. Christ has already triumphed—we are simply waiting for the time when His Kingdom will come and all will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.

We have to remember that we were once part of the Demonic Rebellion. We were once enslaved to the Devil. We were once part of the World. We were once completely enslaved to our own evil desires (see Ephesians 2:1-3). But then we were saved by Father God because of His great love for us. The Devil and his demonic forces are simply trying to take back territory in our lives that they lost when we were washed, transferred, and rescued. So what do we do? **We stand firm. We stand together and we stand firm in the strength of the Spiritual Armor that has been provided for us in Christ.**



Think about all that we have discussed so far in these sessions. Take note of how many times the idea of “standing firm” or “being firm” has appeared.

WORDwork | Day 2

4.2 **What Are The Pieces Of God's Full Armor?**

Today, we begin looking at the six pieces of our Spiritual Armor and their significance in our life. As we discuss these pieces we are going to talk about two aspects of their blessing: their *objective reality*—Father God has done something to us, given something to us and their *subjective reality*—We should do something with these pieces of armor. Simply stated, Father God has blessed us with these things, now we must put them to good use.

4.2.1 **The Belt of Truth**

The first item that Paul mentions is the Belt of Truth. This may be analogous to the *cingulum militare* or *balteus* of Roman armor. This would have been a long apron like garment of sewn leather thongs that functioned to protect the thighs. Other weapons could have been hung on this “belt” and other garments could have been tucked into this belt to allow the soldier greater mobility. This belt is the central part of the armor.

Spiritually speaking this belt *is* truth. As we take up this belt and put it on, we are clothing ourselves with the truth that God has revealed to us by His Word. We live in light of the Gospel, the Message of Truth. As we “put on” this truth, we should become people who are truthful. So, we have received Truth from Father God and so we ourselves should “walk in the Truth.” *Where there is truth, the Devil has no foothold.*

4.2.2 **The Breastplate of Righteousness**

This is probably analogous to the Roman *pectorale* which was a fabricated metal plate worn to protect the chest and back. The importance of this piece of defensive armor is obvious in that it protects the vital organs.

Spiritually speaking, this piece of armor is defined by righteousness. Objectively, we have been justified by God, which means that God has declared that we are right with Him because we have done the right thing, in the right way, at the right time, with the right motives when we placed our faith and trust in Christ. Remember your blessings? Righteous is related to justification.

Since we have been objectively declared to be righteous by God's grace and Christ's faithfulness, *God desires that we live as righteous people.* As we gird our waist with the truth, we live out this truth in righteousness by doing the right things, in the right way, with the right motivations, at the right time. We become

concerned with doing all things which are pleasing to Father God in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And notice, as we take up this piece of spiritual armor, it protects the vital organ of our heart. There is no greater defense against the Devil and His schemes than living according to the righteous pattern that we see in our Lord Jesus Christ. Where goodness and righteousness prevail, the coming Kingdom of Christ outshines the dark dominion of our wicked Enemy.

4.2.3 **The Feet Prepared by the Gospel**

Roman legionnaires wore heavy sandals (*caliga*—“half boot”) studded on the bottom with hollow headed nails. This gave the soldiers great traction in rough terrain as they came together to form *the phalanx*—a square of several lines of soldiers grouped together to make a near impenetrable box.

Spiritually we prepare our feet with the “preparation of the Gospel of Peace.” The spiritual reality that prepares us to stand firm is the content of the Gospel (the Good News in Christ, the message of Truth). This True Gospel is all about Peace: peace with God, peace with one another, peace coming to our war-torn world.

Here the idea is not so much that we are “preaching the Gospel” (although that is very important) but that we are “standing firm” in the Gospel that we have received and believed. Peace is the natural outcome because the Gospel tells us that the True King has come, He has taken up His authority and that He has defeated His enemies so that He will bring peace to all of creation. We stand firm, in the Gospel in the Peace that it brings to us.

As we do this, we become people who are characterized by peace. We turn away from our old way of life filled with hatred, fighting and shame and live with one another and with all people, giving all a taste of the Kingdom to Come (see Romans 12:18-21 and 14:17-20).

4.2.4 **The Shield of Faith**

Paul shifts emphasis a little at this point. Where as the other pieces of armor that we just discussed are all explanatory of how we “stand firm” (the main verb of that section), now Paul uses another main verb “take up” to indicate that we are not to forget three very important pieces of our armor: the shield, the helmet, and the word.

The word that is used of our shield here is a word that is related to “door.” This refers to an oblong shield (*scutum*) that looks like a door. Polybius, a Roman historian, describes such a shield as being 2 ½ feet wide and about 4 feet tall. The

shield was made of planks of wood covered by canvas and then calf skin which could be watered down to protect the soldiers from flaming arrows.

This type of shield was used to cover and protect the whole body. In some instances, the shield would have a lip around the outer edges that could be locked together with other soldiers' shields standing side by side to make a wall of complete defense.

Spiritually speaking our shield is made of faith. The shield is such an apt metaphor for our faith. The thing that defends us in battle more than anything else is our trust in the person and plan of God. And as we come together as the people of God and "lock our faith" together, being of one mind and heart, we set up a defensive perimeter that not only blocks the "flaming arrows" of the Enemy, but also extinguishes them so that they become completely useless. *We will continue our discussion of the armor in tomorrow's reading.*



Before moving on, make sure you understand the pieces of armor we have discussed today. Do you understand the spiritual significance of these things and how they equip you for the attacks of the Enemy?

WORDwork | Day 3

4.2.5 **The Helmet of Salvation**

Today we continue our discussion of the Armor that God has given to us to *stand firm* against the attack of our external enemy,—Satan who is at work in the World. As we heard yesterday, the last three items—the shield of faith, the helmet of Salvation and the Sword of the Spirit and are all things that we are to take up in all circumstances. These last three are critical pieces of our armor.

The first of our last two items is the “Helmet of Salvation.” In Roman times, such a helmet would have been made of bronze fitted with an iron inner cap lined with leather or cloth. Just as a helmet protects that head of the soldier and thus brings a sense of protection in battle, as we take up our “Helmet of Salvation” spiritually speaking, we are taking up the protection and security of knowing that we have been saved by God (past), we are being saved by God (present), and we will be completely saved by God (future). Our complete and final salvation is in our Father’s care.

As we engage the battle, we must know that we are secure in God’s care. The Helmet of Salvation protects our “mind” as we remain firmly convinced that we possess the reality of God’s salvation. *We belong to Him and He has full possession of us.* The Enemy cannot defeat us; Christ has already won the victory for us. This is why we think on, meditate on, dwell on these truths day in and day out.

4.2.6 **The Sword of the Spirit – the Word of God**

The last thing that we are to take up is our sword which is the Word of God. In a Roman’s armor, the *gladius* was a short double edged sword about 2 feet long and was used for close, man to man fighting. *This sword is the only offensive weapon mentioned in the context.*

Although this is an offensive weapon, we must remember that it is a weapon that we use to defend our territory when the Enemy pulls in close. *Notice that this sword is the weapon that the Spirit uses, namely the Word of God.* Thus, when the Enemy draws close, the greatest power that we have available to us to defeat his schemes, temptations and distraction is the spoken Word of God. Just as Jesus Himself used the Word to confound the Devil during His temptation, so also we should do the same (see Matthew 4:1-11). We believe that the Written Word of God is tied to the Living Word of God—Jesus Christ. We are convinced this is what the writer of Hebrews is talking about:

Hebrews 4:12-13* For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword, piercing even to the point of dividing soul from spirit, and joints from marrow—judging the desires and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from *Him*, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must render an account.

Jesus is the Living Word. He is the One before whom nothing is hidden. He is the Judge of all as we have already heard. The Written Word points us to Him. So in both the Living and Written Word of God we make our stand.

4.2.7 **The Power of Effective Prayer**

In these final verse, Paul gives us the attitude with which we are to take up our helmet and our sword (along with the other pieces)—*constant, alert, persevering prayer*. Although the prayer is not part of the Armor, it is nevertheless critically important in the context of our Spirit Warfare. We are convinced that there is nothing we do is important than prayer. As we pray, we take our requests to the One who has the power to do all that is necessary. Also as we pray, we shape our hearts and minds by the desires and the counsel of the Head of the Church, our Savior and King—Jesus. Consider these other passages on prayer:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 “Rejoice always; *pray without ceasing*; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 12:12 Rejoice in hope, endure in persecution, persist in prayer.

Colossians 4:2 Be devoted to prayer,
keeping alert in it with thanksgiving.

Ephesians 6:18 With every prayer and petition,
pray at all times in the Spirit,
and to this end be alert,
with all perseverance and requests for all the saints.

James 5:16 So confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. *The prayer of a righteous person has great effectiveness.*

In the verses listed above, the focus is placed on praying, entering into dialogue with God. So we pray constantly, at all times, soberly, alertly, realizing that

our prayers have great effectiveness. Paul tells us in Romans 8:26-27 that *we do not know how to pray as we should* but the Holy Spirit within us translates our words and intercedes for us according to God's will. Maybe it is not primarily important how we pray, *but that we simply pray and then we pray and then we pray some more.*

We discussed the spiritual exercise of prayer in our last workbook, "*Realizing Your New Identity in Christ.*" Prayer is the natural response to our hearing the word of God. Father God initiates towards us in His word, we respond in prayer. Father speaks, we respond. And as we pray, we may be surprised that Father God reveals His presence to us there as well.

As we pray, we are bringing our day-to-day world into the vast scope of God's sovereign Kingship and Kingdom. We express to Him that we exist by His will and desire and that we desperately need His grace in order to survive the forces of chaos and despair and distraction that surround us. As we pray, we gain an eternal perspective as our words are mingled with God's words in the outworking of His Divine will. Prayer is our means of discussing with the Father what He is doing *in us* and in our world through the work of His Spirit within us.



Take some time to reflect on all that you have heard this week in these sessions. Rehearse each of the pieces in your thoughts again and what they mean. Use this as an opportunity to pray, give thanks to Father God for all that He has done to us and for in Christ by means of the Holy Spirit.

WORDwork | Day 4

4.3 **Why Do We Need One Another in Our Struggles?**

In Isaiah we read this about the Messiah who was to come:

Isaiah 59:17 He put on righteousness as a breastplate,
and a helmet of salvation on his head;
he put on garments of vengeance for clothing,
and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak.

Does any of this sound familiar. Most agree that Paul uses this passage as the basis for talking about our Spiritual Armor in Ephesians. Of course this passage from Isaiah is speaking of Jesus our King. Here He is being equipped to serve His role as King of all the Earth. As we think about our “Spiritual Armor” we should always remember that *it is our King who has done and does all the real fighting for us*. He has won the victory and only asks that we stand ground with Him victoriously. Consider this:

2 Corinthians 2:14-16 ... *thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and who makes known through us the fragrance that consists of the knowledge of him in every place. 15 For we are a sweet aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing 16 to the latter an odor from death to death, but to the former a fragrance from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?*

This imagery is all taken from a Roman victory parade where a victorious Roman general would return to Rome celebrating his victory and conquest of foreign lands. Riding with the general would be his family and children. Behind, the prisoners of war would be led naked and chained in shame and defeat. Once in Rome, the “pagan leaders” would be killed as a final display of Roman domination. Paul applies this imagery to Christ and his defeat of the powers here and in Colossians 2:15 that we have already heard earlier in the week.

Think about all of this discussion of Spiritual Armor and Victory in the larger context of a military operation. An army is not made up of one person. As we think about all that Father God has given to us personally and individually, we must never forget that this armor binds us together as a unit, as ONE. We need

one another in our battles. We need one another in this War. As we counsel one another, we should constantly point one another back to these truths.

Day by day, we are on the front lines of the battle. As Paul says, to one group of people (those who are still in the camp of the Enemy) we are the odor of death. Why? Because Jesus has already prevailed and those who are still enslaved by the Enemy are on the wrong side of all things. Unless they are freed and turn, they will be destroyed. But to those who are in allegiance with King Jesus we are the fragrance of life. *Our lives are eternally significant. The Great Spiritual War is real and it is fought in the souls of men and women that we live with.* As Paul says, “Who is adequate for such things?” Christ has made us adequate for all that He calls us to because of all that He has given to us.

Harold Hoehner has captured the spirit of the text we have been studying well, and so let’s close by thinking on his words:

“... nuclear wars cannot be won with rifles. Likewise satanic wars cannot be won by human energy. Thus, Paul has warned the saints to constantly pray and remain alert, ready to don the helmet of salvation and grasp the sword of the Spirit in order to do battle at a moment’s notice. Neither of these pieces of armor, nor all the other pieces, are available as the result of human endeavor.” (*Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 859)

All the pieces of armor have been given to us by Father God in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. This armor equips us to be effective in the Great War. *But we must always keep in mind that we are not called to fight our battles alone.* We are called to fight with our other brothers and sisters in Christ. We are called to help one another, counseling one another with the Truth, pointing one another to our already Victorious King. As we do these things, our Enemy—Satan who is at work in the World—we not be able to get a foothold; His schemes to deceive and distract us will be frustrated. Remember, the Devil does want us to know how loved and powerful we are in Christ. He will do whatever it takes to steal this Truth away from us, to kill it, to destroy. Stand firm in Christ. Stand firm with your other brothers and sisters. Stand firm.



Do you have other brothers and sisters who are standing firm with you, supporting, encouraging, counseling you in your daily battles? If not, why not? If not, pray that the Lord will bring people to you who will fight with you and stand firm with you. (This question is not meant to stir up feelings of guilt, etc.)

- ☞ It may be that you need to rehearse all that we have discussed in this session each day as you awake and start things off. Just as we need to be ever mindful of who we are in Christ, we must also remember that our Enemy does not want us to realize how blessed we are in Christ. Keep these truths in the forefront of your thoughts.

- ☞ Do you have people that you pray for or with or both daily? If not, think about setting aside just 5 minutes each day to pray for others that you know who are struggling in the midst of this Great Spiritual War. As you set aside small periods of time to pray, you may be surprised that before you know it you are just talking with the Father and the Lord through the Spirit in everything you are doing.

Philippians 4:5–7 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything. Instead, in every situation, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, tell your requests to God. 4:7 And the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Session 5

How Do We Put On The New Person?

Core Truth: In Christ, we are new creations. We do not have to give in to our sinful, rebellious desires. Instead, we can “put on” our *new self*—the new person—that has been created for truth, righteousness and holiness in Christ.

To Remember: “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.” [Romans 13:14]

Objective: In this session, we want to look at the “internal conflict” which we all experience as believers. This conflict is between the Holy Spirit who dwells in our hearts and the Sin that still lives in our Flesh. The way we overcome in this conflict is by putting off the “old self” / “old me” with all of its corruptions and twisted desires and putting on the “new self” / “new me,” created in Christ Jesus to express the goodness and glory that defines the Lord Himself.

Prayer: *Father, thank you that you have made me a whole new person in Christ. Help me to realize all that this means. Help me to live this new reality out day to day, hour to hour, minute to minute. Amen*

WORDwork | Day 1

5.1 **What Is The Old Me Versus The New Me In Christ?**

Hear the following passages and consider the questions:

Romans 6:6-7* We know that our old self was crucified with Christ so that the body of sin would no longer dominate us, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 (For someone who has died has been freed from sin.)

- ? 18 What happened to the “old self” according to this passage? What is the result of this? How did this affect our relationship to sin?

Ephesians 4:22-24* You were taught with reference to your former way of life to *lay aside the old self who is being corrupted in line with deceitful desires*, 23 to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and to put on the new self who has been created in God’s image—in *righteousness and holiness that comes from truth*.

- ? 19 What are we supposed to do with the “old self” according to this passage? What is happening to the “old self”? What desires define the “old self”?

- ? 20 According to verses 23 and 24 what are we supposed to do? What does the “new self” look like according to verse 24? What two specific “virtues” are mentioned and where do they come from?

Colossians 3:9-11* ... *you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have been clothed with the new self that is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created it.* 11 Here ... Christ is all and in all.

- ? 21 According to this passage, what have we done?
How is the “new self” being renewed? What “image” does it bear?

In our times, there has been a resurgence of emphasis on spiritual warfare. This is good because many are waking to the reality of the World in which we live. In some cases, this has been negative because this topic has not always been placed in the proper context of Jesus’ victory on the Cross and His present ruling authority. There is also an unhealthy and unbiblical focus on the “works of the Devil” as being behind everything that goes wrong with us. The truth is, there is evil within us that we still need to understand and deal with in the Way Christ has provided for us.

In the first part of this study we focused on some of the foundational blessings that have come to us “in Christ” that redefine our identities and our position before God. This entirely new identity is what the Bible refers to as the “new self,” “the new man,” “the new person,” *created in Christ to bear the image of Christ. The New You in Christ is created to reflect and display the goodness, truth and glory of Jesus Himself!* We need to learn how to *realize* this truth—make it real in our own experience. We will spend the next several lessons exploring these issues. Take note of three key ideas:

5.1.1 **Your Old Self Was Crucified So That You Can Be FREE**

Paul’s writings in Romans 6-8 as well as the whole book of Galatians is central to understanding the core truths that we need to know when it comes to the internal conflict that we experience as followers of the Lord Jesus. It is beyond the scope of this study to go into all that in any depth. Instead, we will summarize what Paul reveals there so that we can have a foundation for understanding what is going on within us.

First, we have to know and realize that “in Christ” the old person, your old self, the “old you”—characterized by spiritual death and corruption—has been put to death. The “old you” has been destroyed so that identity does not have any control over us any longer. As Paul says, the “old self” was crucified so that “the body of sin would no longer dominate us...” This is absolutely great news. As we will see, so much of our sin is rooted in keeping ourselves (even our physical bodies) at the “center of the universe.” The “old self” wants to focus on **me**, on my will, on my desires, on my pleasure, on my comfort. However, even when it gets what it thinks it wants, *it wants more*. In Christ, this old self has been put to death

so that we can be free **from** the power of sin and free **to** follow Christ as He leads us to a life of eternal security and satisfaction.

5.1.2 **The Old Self Was/Is Being Corrupted By Deceitful Desires**

Even when the Old Self got what it wanted, it was never enough. The reason is because our old desires, desires shaped by the way of death and corruption “in Adam,” were twisted and bent, deceptive because they were shaped in the unreality of the lies and treachery of the Devil at work in the World. These deceitful desires could never produce real *soul-satisfaction* because they were leading to corruption not the “righteousness and holiness that comes from the truth.” The Truth binds us together; sin tears us apart. These deceitful desires produce the “works of the flesh”:

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, murder, drunkenness, carousing, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!

5.1.3 **The New Self (The New You) Is Being Renewed To Reflect The Image Of The One Who Created It: The One True God**

The One True God is shaping us to be like Himself. As we put on the “New Person,” the “New Me” in Christ, the Holy Spirit will produce His “fruit” in and through us:

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, being jealous of one another.

The key in all of this is learning to put off the “old self” ruled by sin at work in our flesh and to put on the “new self” led by the Holy Spirit who lives in our Hearts. In this way, we learn to live (“walk”) by the Holy Spirit.



Are you aware of the “old person” in your thoughts and desires?
 Are you aware of the “new person” in your thoughts and desires?
 Are you aware of a struggle within you between these two?

WORDwork | Day 2

5.2 **What Is The Sin That Still Lives In Our Flesh?**

As we think about the reality of the “old self” and “the sin that dwells in our flesh” we must realize that *this is the enemy that we deal with more than any other*. Satan and his dark forces are working in our world, but we must not be tricked into thinking that they are the only or even the main problem. ***We must constantly deal with the reality of the evil that is present within us.*** Twenty four hours a day, seven days a week this Sin that lives in us seeks to keep us from following our pattern of HEARING > [TURNING > TRUSTING] > FOLLOWING Jesus.

5.2.1 **The Sin That Lives In Us Is A Real Thing**

Most of us only think of sin as something that *we do*—some action or thought that is contrary to the truth and goodness of God. This is sin, but we must also understand that sin is a *spiritual power, force* that is at work in us and in our world. In fact, the first time sin is illustrated in the Bible it appears as a vicious and ravenous beast:

Genesis 4:6-7 But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door. It desires to dominate you, but you must subdue it.”

Here, God warns Cain (the first murderer) that sin, like a lion waiting to attack, was sitting outside his door ready to pounce on him and eat him alive. Unfortunately, sin—the power of sin—is not just outside, it also inside us. Remember what we have already heard concerning this:

Romans 7:18, 22-23 For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For I want to do the good, but I cannot do it... For I delight in the law of God in my inner being. 23 But I see a different law/principle in my members waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law/principle of sin that is in my members.\

Key Definition: **Sin.** The basic idea of sin is any *idea, thought, or action* that is not shaped by or in line with the Truth, Goodness, or Glory (Beauty) of the Lord God. This is rooted in the *power* of sin that has corrupted the whole world.

5.2.2 **Our “Internal Conflict” Is A Battle Of Desires**

We also want to remember that this conflict within us is one of *desires*; the corrupt desires of the Flesh vs. the Good desires of the Holy Spirit:

Galatians 5:17 For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want.

The key thing we want you to realize is this: *The sin that lives in your flesh constantly wars against the Holy Spirit who lives in your heart.* This Sin that dwells in you is real, it is relentless and it will never be tamed. The good news is that you don't have to submit to its power. We have to submit ourselves to one of these powers. In Christ, we don't have to follow Sin, we can follow the Holy Spirit.

5.3 **What Gives Power To The Sin That Lives In Us?**

Romans 7:5 For when we were in (controlled, dominated by) the flesh, the sinful desires, aroused by the law, were active in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

Before we became followers of Christ, we were completely ruled, dominated by Sin. This is what it means to be “in the Flesh” as Paul says above. The Old Self is completely wrapped up in the Old Self; it is all about me! In this state, our sinful desires were stirred up, aroused by the Law and so we produced actions that were “dead”—incapable of exhibiting truth, goodness or beauty.

In Paul's writings, the term Law refers primarily to the revealed Law of God - The Ten Commandments (plus the other 603 commands) given in the Hebrew Scriptures. Yet Paul tells us that Law is the very thing that “arouses” our sinful desires. Consider this:

1 Corinthians 15:56 The sting of death is sin, and *the power of sin is the law.*

As we have already said, it is beyond the scope of this study to deal with all of this in detail. For we need to summarize some of the foundational truths. First, don't misunderstand what Paul is saying here. Paul does not think something is wrong with the instructions and commandments of God - they are holy, just and good (Romans 7:12-13). *The problem is with us* and the Sin that lives in us. Sin actually wants us to try and keep the Law so that it can take control. Paul tells us:

Romans 7:8-11 ... sin, seizing the opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of wrong desires. For apart from the law, sin is dead.

The sin that lives within us is so deceptive and treacherous it actually uses the good commandments of God to come alive, deceive and destroy our ability to do what is good, right and true.

Key Definition: **Law.** Law is *any* list of external do's and don'ts that we think we can keep to do what is right and pleasing to God. It includes God's revealed Law but may also include our own list of "dos" and "donts."

There are at least three problems with Law: 1) Law is extremely "impersonal" and Father God desires to have a personal relationship with us, and 2) Law focuses on the failure of the individual, and 3) the Law focuses on what I do. This is the old way of the "old self." The Old Self wants us to think that God accepts us for what we do, rather than on the basis of what Christ has done for us.

The problem with this is that this is not the Way of Jesus. God desires to relate to us directly, not through Law. The Law was given to point out our sinfulness, not empower us for righteousness (see 1 Timothy 1:8-11). But there is another way, the way of the Spirit and that is what we will consider tomorrow.



Although these may be new ideas to you, it is very important that you are understanding what we are discussing in this session. If you are still unclear, take a few minutes to go back over this discussion and make notes on what is not clear. As we bring all these ideas together, we hope it will be clear in the end. *Pray for help in understanding this key truths.*

WORDwork | Day 3

5.4 **How Do We Live in the New Life of the Spirit?**

Romans 7:6 But now we have been released from the law, because we have died to what controlled us, so that we may serve in the new life of the Spirit and not under the old written code.

Father God has set us free in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. He had to do this so that we could become the people that He desires for us to be. In order for us to grow to maturity we need the freedom to do two things: 1) to fail and 2) to choose to follow the good desires of the Spirit. In Christ, the Father gives us freedom to do both.

Yesterday we heard that the power of sin that dwells in our flesh is actually empowered by the Law. We can state this as a principle:

THE LAW/PRINCIPLE OF SIN AND DEATH: If I try to keep the Law (Legalism, self-salvation) in order to be pleasing to God, the Sin that dwells within me will come alive producing corrupt desires that will lead to sinful actions.

This seems counter-intuitive, but even experience teaches that it is true. How many times have you said, “Ok, I am NEVER going to do this again!” only to fail miserably. When we try to live by the “external empowerment of Law” we fail. Thankfully there is another principle that we can follow:

THE LAW/PRINCIPLE OF THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT: If I follow the Spirit He will empower my desire for good which will lead to living in ways that are pleasing to Father God in Christ. *He will lead me in the Way shaped by Love.*

Consider this:

Romans 8:1-4 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the life-giving Spirit in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Sin and its power does not define who you are—*your core identity*. (Remember all that you are in Christ? Sinner is no longer part of your core iden-

tity; that is who you used to be.) *We still sin. Se still fail.* But that does not define who we are. Here in Romans 8:1 Paul says one of the most incredible statements in the whole letter: “*There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!*” We are now defined and identified by Father God working in Christ the Son through the Holy Spirit for our transformation. We are no longer defined by our sin. For this reason we are not condemned. God has accepted us and welcomed us into His eternal fellowship. How did this happen?

Romans 8:3 For God achieved what the law could not do because it was weakened through the flesh. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the righteous requirement of the law may be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

God has sent Jesus to do for us *what we could not do for ourselves*—to expose and judge sin in order to break its power. This is what it means that Jesus “condemned sin in the flesh.” Jesus did this in his death on the Cross. That Jesus came in the “likeness of sinful flesh” means that Jesus was a real human being; He had a physical body just like ours, but He was not corrupted by sin and death as we are. When Jesus was put to death on the Cross at the hands of sinful people for the sins of us all, He exposed sin for what it is—*ultimate evil*—and condemned it.

Now notice the effect of this: “...so that the righteous requirement of the Law might be *fulfilled* in us...” Two things are interesting about this statement. First, Paul says “THE righteous requirement” (*singular*, one requirement) not “righteous requirements” (*plural*, many requirements). What does he mean by this? Later in Romans Paul says this:

Romans 13:8-10 “Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law... Love does no wrong to a neighbor. *Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*”

When Jesus was asked what is the greatest of the commandments, you will remember that He said it was love of God and love of neighbor (see Mark 12:30-31). All of God’s commandments to us and for us are summed up by love. In fact John tells us that all of Christ’s commands were summed up in trusting Him and loving one another (see 1 John 3:23). *Love is the fulfillment of all the Law.*

The second thing that is interesting is that Paul says that the requirements of the Law will be “*fulfilled*” in us; he does not say so that the requirements may be “kept” or “obeyed” or “done” by us—all the normal activities that usually define what we do with the Law. The one requirement is “fulfilled” in us. In other words,

the Life Giving Spirit is going to work this out in our lives. As the Spirit does His work in us and we follow Him, the actual things that God's Law/Instruction requires will be fulfilled—lived out in our lives!

That brings us to the last point: all of this becomes true of us when we “*walk/live according to the Spirit.*” To “walk” here simply means to live our lives, step by step, minute by minute, following The Spirit as He leads us to follow Christ and love others. *That sounds so simple.* And it is. If we want to kill the power of sin that lives within us, we follow the Spirit as He guides us to take *the focus* off ourselves by trusting Christ and loving others. It really is that simple. The reality of this may be hard, but the principle is simple. Consider this:

Galatians 5:6, 13 For in Christ Jesus... *the only thing that matters is faith working through love.* Galatians 5:13 For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity to indulge your flesh, *but through love serve one another.*

We will pick up right here tomorrow. For now, simply understand that we live/walk in the Spirit by following Him in trusting Christ and loving others.



Give thanks that the Way of following Christ, walking in faith, is not complicated. It may be difficult, but it is not complicated. Ask Father God to help you work these truths out in your own “walk.” Ask Him to bring to mind ways you can begin to live out these truths, today.

WORDwork | Day 45.5 **How Do You Put On The “NEW You”?**

Even though we have been made spiritually complete in Christ, we are still “broken.” Part of our “brokenness” is the sin that indwells our flesh—in the members/limbs of our physical bodies (“this body of sin” Romans 6:6, “this body of death” Romans 7:24). Our bodies are the last part of us to be renovated. Now, they have not been redeemed so that they may fully reflect the glory of God as He desires. This problem will not be fully dealt with until the Resurrection when our physical bodies are freed from its corruption.

Philippians 3:20-21 ... our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 *who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body*, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Don’t misunderstand what we are talking about here. First of all, Paul and the Bible does not think that our bodies are evil as some philosophers have taught. The reality is that our bodies are twisted and corrupted. They have been marred by the effects of sin in our world. They are still subject to disease and death. But they will one day be redeemed, transformed - glorified to be like Jesus’ own powerful resurrected body.

5.5.1 **Laying Aside the “Old Person” (The Old Me)**

There are ways to deal with the power of sin at work in our flesh in our present lives, but first we must first realize and accept the fact that we are powerless to do what is right and good *by our own self-will and self-empowerment*. We, like Paul, must first cry out, “Wretched people that we are!!! Who can free us from this body of death?”

The first step, then, in “putting on the new self” is realizing and owning our brokenness: *we are still subject to sin’s power and influence if we choose some other way that is not THE Way of Jesus*. Left own our own, we are powerless to do what is good. We may desire to do what is good but we find that we are powerless to do it. Apart from God’s grace, we cannot make any progress in our spiritual growth. We lay aside, don’t identify ourselves with the “old self” that is self-focused. Instead, we put on the “new self” that is Christ focused and this means that we will be “others” focused as well.

The sin that dwells in your flesh, like a vicious and ravenous animal, seeks to kill and devour you. ***This power of sin, however, does not define who you are.*** It only lives in your flesh, on the “surface” of who you are. Deep within, at the core of your life and identity, The Spirit of Christ, who now lives in you by faith, defines your new identity and seeks to set you free from the power of sin.

Once we *admit* and *own* our own brokenness, we have only one choice to make: **who we will follow.** Will we set our minds to follow the leading of the Spirit who seeks to focus us on Christ, trusting Him and loving others, or we will set our minds to follow the desires of our flesh which seeks to keep focused on ourselves in all things.

This mindset that is shaped by the flesh (*and the power of sin that dwells there*) will never submit to God and therefore those who are dominated by this mindset will never be able to please God:

Romans 8:5-8 ... the mindset that has its basis in the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to the law of God, nor is it able to do so. Those who are in (controlled, identified by) the flesh cannot please God.

The sin that lives in your flesh actually desires that you put yourself under Law—an external list of do’s and don’ts— to relate to God. This is the “mindset that has its basis in the flesh.” This is the desire to relate to God through the way of Law (what we can do) rather than through The Way of Christ (what has been done and is being done *for us, in us and through us*). The sin that lives in our flesh seeks to have us live by our own self-will and self-empowerment. If we try to follow Christ in this way, sin will come alive and enslave us.

5.5.2 Putting on the “New Me” in Christ

Your new identity is defined by the goodness, holiness, joy, peace, love of Jesus Himself. The Holy Spirit desires to lead us in the Way of Jesus—*faith working through love*. We trust Christ to be our One and Only Savior and this sets us free to love others, giving them a taste of what Christ has given us.

When we put on the “new self” along with other brothers and sisters in Christ, we will not be surprised that our churches, our communities will be characterized by the “fruit” of the Spirit which is Love (those other “fruits” - joy, peace, patience, etc, are just results of the main fruit of love).

The New Self is concerned with others. It wants to serve other brothers and sisters in Christ, counseling them in Truth so that they may be encouraged and strengthened for their daily battle in the Great War. The New Self is also con-

cerned about others who are not yet following Christ in the New Way of Life. The New Self wants to give these who are still lost and dead in the World a taste of Jesus' self-sacrificial love so that they too may be transferred into His Kingdom.

In the end, our choice is simple: Will we submit to the sin that lives in our flesh or will we submit to the Holy Spirit of Christ who dwells in our hearts? We have to serve one or the other. If we serve the Sin that yet lives in us, we will do all of the work and those "works of the flesh" will be evident (Galatians 5:19). If, however, we submit ourselves to The Spirit of Christ who dwells in our core—our hearts—He will do the work and produce his "fruit" in us and through us (notice the difference between "work" and "fruit"—how hard does an apple tree work to produce apples?). *As we submit to The Spirit we will find that He will do in us and through us what we cannot do in and of ourselves.*

**These last sessions have only been a basic introduction to "putting on the new self in Christ." We will focus on this topic more deeply in the Phase 3: Living the Life.*



Walking/Living in the Spirit is simply following Him as He leads us in a life of trusting Christ and loving others. Does this characterize your life? If not, why not?



One strategy that is helpful in learning to "put on the new you in Christ" is to begin each day, even before you get out of bed, by praying, giving thanks for your new identity in Christ:

"Father, thank you that I am a new creation in Christ. Thank you that I am now your beloved child and that defines my true identity. Thank you for your love; empower me to love others today as you have loved me. Thank you for your grace; enable me to be gracious to everyone I meet today. Thank you for your power; help me to live by this power today."

It is important to constantly remind ourselves who we are in Christ and ask for the power we need to make this identity real in the way we live our lives in hope, trust, and love.

Session 6

How Do We Continue Walking in the Truth?

Core Truth: We are Father God’s beloved children NOW. He has given us all we need in Christ Jesus for the rest of our journey here on Earth. He has empowered us by the Holy Spirit to be the people He desires for us to be, for His glory and to our soul-satisfaction.

To Remember: “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.” 3 John 1:4

Objective: When we walk—*live*—in the Truth that is founded in the person of Jesus Christ, we display His goodness and beauty to the world that is dying apart from Him. We have been called to be people of truth, people of light. The way we live our day to day lives will be completely transformed when we live in the reality of our new identity that is shaped by all that Father God has given to us in Christ through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer: *Father, thank You for all that you have given me in Christ. Help me to hear and see and understand how much you love me. Help me to know Christ more deeply. Help me to know that I have all I need to follow Christ closely, wherever He may lead. Amen.*

WORDwork | Day 1

6.1 What Do We Really Need to Know?

Ephesians 1:15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 1:16 I do not cease to give thanks for you when I remember you in my prayers. 1:17 I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in your growing knowledge of him, 1:18 –since the eyes of your heart have been enlightened–so that you may know what is the **hope** of his calling, what is the **wealth** of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 1:19 and what is the **incomparable greatness of his power** toward us who believe, as displayed in the exercise of his immense strength. 1:20 This power he exercised in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms...

- ? 22 Why does Paul pray for the Ephesians according to verses 15?
- ? 23 How often does Paul pray for these brothers and sisters in Christ according to verse 16?
- ? 24 What specifically does Paul ask God to do in verse 17?
- ? 25 In verse 18 and 19, what three categories of things does Paul want the Ephesians to know?
- ? 26 In verse 20, how is the power of God mentioned in verse 19 related the power that raised Christ from the dead? What is the significance of this?

We began Phase 2 by looking at Ephesians 1 and the long list of blessings that have come to us as the Father, Son, Spirit have been working *for us, in us, through us*. As we have emphasized, our new identity and position before Father God is all shaped by our relationship with Him and what He has done for us and to us. In this final session, we want to focus on the last part of Ephesians chapter 1.

6.1.1 **Ceaseless, Thankful Prayer Is Powerful**

We have just talked about the power of prayer and part of the full armor of God that we put on. Notice that Paul gives the Ephesians an example of this in the passage above. At the very beginning of the letter he tells the church that he ceaselessly gave thanks for them as he remembered them in his prayers. He gives thanks because he hears about their faith, their trust in the Lord Jesus that had resulted in their love for others. This is cause for thanksgiving. We too should be thankful when we hear of others who are living, walking in the Truth in faith, hope and love. But Paul does not stop there, he tells them other things that he specifically asks for them.

6.1.2 **The Spirit Gives Wisdom and Revelation**

First of all, after the Ephesians were AWARE of all that had been given to them, Paul asks that they be given a “Spirit of wisdom and revelation.” This is most likely a way of referring to the way the Holy Spirit ministers to our human spirits: He gives us wisdom and revelation. But what does that mean?

All the truths that we have been discussing in this study can only be comprehended fully by those who have the Holy Spirit of God. Consider this:

1 Corinthians 2:12–14

Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the *Spirit who is from God*, **so that we may know** the things that are freely given to us by God. 2:13 And we speak about these things, not with words taught us by human wisdom, but with those taught by the Spirit, explaining *spiritual things to spiritual people*. 2:14 The “natural person” does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him. And he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

There is a lot of talk about “spiritual people” these days. Usually, the world refers to spiritual people as those who are “religious” on some live or in touch with “deeper things” (however that is defined). The Scriptures define a “spiritual person” as someone who have the Holy Spirit of the One True God dwelling with him or her; that is what truly makes us Spiritual. The “natural person” in this verse is the man or woman who does not have the Holy Spirit. This person

cannot understand or comprehend the things of God because only the Holy Spirit can bring this understanding.

In our next study, *Living the Life*, we are going to talk more about the Holy Spirit and what He does in us and through us. For now notice that the Holy Spirit teaches us the things that have been freely given to us by God so that we can become “spiritually wise.” This is what Paul prays for the Ephesians. This is what we should pray for our other brothers and sisters in Christ: *that we would all receive the wisdom and revelation that the Holy Spirit is giving to us*. We are not led by ourselves, we are led by the Spirit who is leading us to a deeper relationship with Christ, wise and mature “in Christ.”

6.1.3 **What We Should Continue To Know And Remember?**

Since the believers have already had the “eyes of their heart enlightened” by the glory of the Gospel, Paul asks that they would come to know (understand and comprehend) three important “Big Picture” ideas: 1) the **Hope** to which God has called us 2) the **Riches of God’s Inheritance in us** (the Saints), and 3) His **Immeasurable Power** toward us who believe, *the same power that raised Jesus from the dead!* We will spend the rest of our time this week dealing with these three big ideas. As we close today, think about this:



Do you brothers and sisters in Christ that you prayer for—continually giving thanks for them, praying for the Lord to deepen their personal and practical relationship with Him? Do you know of anyone who is praying this way for you?

WORDwork | Day 2

6.1.4 **We Are Called to Hope!**

Ephesians 1:17 I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in your growing knowledge of him, 1:18 –since the eyes of your heart have been enlightened—**so that you may know what is the hope of his calling...**

Today we begin looking to the three foundational truths that we should know and remember. For me personally, keeping these three truths on the forefront on my thoughts has transformed the way I think about Father God, myself, my family, my brothers and sisters in Christ—all of life. I pray that these truths will be as powerful for you.

The first thing that the Holy Spirit is teaching us to know is that we have been called to HOPE. If you think back to our study *Discovering the Way* we emphasized the reality that the Gospel of Jesus gives us hope. We can look to the future with anticipation and excitement because we are fully convinced that in the End all things will be brought to their conclusion gloriously, beautifully because of the goodness of the One True God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are called to hope as people of hope. There are many passages that talk about things that we are “called” to in the New Testament. Consider a few of them:

1 Corinthians 1:2 ...to the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and **called to be saints**, with all those in every place who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

2 Timothy 1:9-10 He (God) is the one who saved us and **called us with a holy calling**, not based on our works but on his own purpose and grace, granted to us in Christ Jesus before time began, 10 but now made visible through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus. He has broken the power of death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel!

Romans 1:6 You also are among them, **called to belong to Jesus Christ**.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 But we ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. **14 He called you to this salvation through our gospel, so that you may possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Hebrews 3:1-2 Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, **partners in a heavenly calling**, take note of Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess, **2** who is faithful to the one who appointed him, as Moses was also in God's house.

We are called to be saints—those who are “set apart” as unique for the service and pleasure of God. We are called with a holy calling, by the Only Holy God. We are called to belong to Christ Jesus. We are called to complete salvation through the Gospel. We are partners in a heavenly calling. Can you see why we are called to hope? Basically all of these “callings” explain and fill out our primary calling: we have been called by Father God to be His beloved children, part of His eternal, forever-family. Because of this we can hope.

6.1.5 **We Are Christ's Glorious Inheritance!**

Ephesians 1:18: what is the wealth of *his glorious inheritance* in the saints,

Not only are we called to be part of God's family, we are also the glorious inheritance that the Father is giving to His Son Jesus! To me, this is one of the most overwhelming, glorious truths in all the Scriptures. We want you to understand this to the point that it captivates all your heart and mind.

YOU are part of the eternal inheritance that Father God is giving to His beloved Son Jesus! Notice in this verse it is not talking about “our inheritance in Christ;” it is speaking about “HIS glorious inheritance in us - the saints.” We are so precious and valuable to the Father, He actually gives us to the Son as His eternal inheritance!

In Hebrews 2, the writer presents a picture for us of the day when we will all be gathered together in the presence of Father God along with Jesus our Creator, Savior and King who is also our “older brother” in the faith. Reflect on the following passage:

Hebrews 2:11-13 Since the One who saves and those who are saved have a common origin, Jesus doesn't hesitate to treat them as family, **12**

saying, “I’ll tell my good friends, my brothers and sisters, all I know about you [Father God]”; “I’ll join them in worship and praise to you.” 13 Again, he puts himself in the same family circle when he says, “Even I live by placing my trust in God.” And yet again, “***I’m here with the children God gave me!***” (*The Message*)

Jesus sees us as His brothers and sisters. But even more significantly, He sees us as the children that God has given to Him. Jesus had no physical children, but we are His spiritual children and so *He is not ashamed to call us his family!!!* What greater comfort and joy could we know. The Creator and King of the whole universe is our older brother and He is pleased to inherit us as His eternal inheritance!!!

We also have an eternal inheritance in Christ, but in Ephesians 1:18 we need to be overwhelmed by the truth that Jesus has an inheritance in us. And notice the way Paul describes it: “... *the wealth* of His glorious inheritance...” It is if Father God is saying, “The greatest treasure I could give to my One Unique Son is all the people who have been saved and redeemed by His work.” For this reason, Jesus is not ashamed to call us family, His true brothers and sisters, His true children.



Do you understand what we have discussed today? If not, think back over it and meditate upon it. Say to yourself, “I am Jesus’ \neq eternal treasure and inheritance.”

WORDwork | Day 3

6.1.6 We Have Access to Father God's Immeasurable Power!

Ephesians 1:19 and what is the **incomparable greatness of his power** toward us who believe, as displayed in the exercise of his immense strength. 1:20 This power he exercised in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms ...

Yesterday we heard that two of the fundamental truths that we need to know as followers of Christ is that 1) We have been called to hope, and 2) We are Christ's inheritance, we are His eternal treasure! Today we consider the final fundamental truth and that is we have access to the same power that raised Jesus from the dead to live an entirely new kind of life!

Right now, in Christ, you have access to the same power that raised Jesus from the dead to live an entirely new kind of life—an eternal kind of life—shaped by the glorious life of Jesus!!! Of all the truths that we have considered in this study, this is one of the hardest to believe. But, this may be one of the most important truths for you to realize. If we desire to live in way that is pleasing to God by faith (that is by placing our ultimate confidence and trust in Jesus) then we have the power to do so. If we desire to be people who reflect His truth, goodness and glory in all that we are and do, we have the power to do so. Consider this”

Romans 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with him [Christ] through baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may live a new life.

We have died and were buried with Christ, spiritually speaking. Just as Christ was raised from the dead and empowered by the glory of the Father, so we too have been “raised” and empowered by this same glory of the Father to live a new way of life. God's glory is His limitless, powerful beauty and splendor. This “power” enables us to live in the New Way of Jesus.

In another of Paul's prayers for the Ephesians he says:

Ephesians 3:16 I pray that according to the wealth of his glory (Father God) he may grant you ***to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person***, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith ...

Here it seems that the glorious power of the Father is given to us by means of the indwelling Holy Spirit who desires to make the presence of Christ real in our deepest core—our hearts—through our faith, trust in Him.

Working, living with God's power does not mean that everything will be easy for us. God's power is inexhaustible and allows us to do what we could not do on our own. We are not passive in this process; we are not idle. We do work. But, now we work in the strength and the power the Lord provides:

Colossians 1:28–29 Him [Christ Jesus] we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 1:29 For this I toil, *struggling with all His power that he powerfully works within me.*

First of all notice that just because we have access to God's limitless power does not mean that things will be easy. As Paul says in the Colossians passage, he toils (“working his fingers to the bone” is the idea), struggling in/with all of God's power that works within Him. Paul worked ceaselessly to spread the Gospel in places that it had not been heard before. The power that empowered him was that which came through the Holy Spirit who dwelled within him. Earlier in this same letter Paul had prayed:

Colossians 1:9–12 we... have not ceased praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 1:10 so that you may live worthily of the Lord and please him in all respects—bearing fruit in every good deed, growing in the knowledge of God, 1:11 *being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might for the display of all patience and steadfastness*, joyfully 1:12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the saints' inheritance in the light.

Here we discover that we need the Lord's power to be patient and steadfast, joyfully giving thanks to Him. Notice the similar topic here that we considered earlier in Ephesians 1: “Spiritual wisdom and understanding...” We are being instructed by the Spirit and empowered by the Spirit to live in a way worthy of our calling, bearing fruit and growing. In another place Paul says this:

Philippians 4:12-13 I have experienced times of need and times of abundance. In any and every circumstance *I have learned the secret of contentment*, whether I go satisfied or hungry, have plenty or nothing. 13 *I am able to do all things through the one who strengthens me.*

Here is one of the greatest secrets in all the World: *the Lord gives us access to His limitless power so that we can learn to be completely content in Him!* At first glance this does not seem to be exactly exciting. But as we think about all of these things and as we mature in our thoughts and wisdom we discover that these are actually some of the hardest things in life: working for the Lord in the midst of a frustrating world, being patient and steadfast in the midst of difficult times, being content whether we have much or little. As we learn to live in the power of the Lord in these “small things,” He is training us now to be ready to handle the “bigger things” later.

Learning to live by God’s power in every aspect of life—in the “good times” as well as the “bad times”—is the key to learning to live with eternal significance. The same Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead (see Romans 1:3-4) is the same Holy Spirit who now lives within us, empowering us to live lives worthy of our great Father God.



In this unit, we have discussed the power of the Spirit quite a bit. Is it hard to get your mind around the idea that in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, you have access to the same power that raised Jesus from the dead? Simply give thanks that this is true. Ask the Father to help you realize this truth more and more in your thoughts and desires.

WORDwork | Day 46.2 **How Are We Transformed By The Father's Love?**

Ephesians 3:14-21 ... I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on the earth is named. 16 I pray that according to the wealth of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, so that, because you have been rooted and grounded in love, 18 you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and thus to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. 20 Now to him who by the power that is working within us is able to do far beyond all that we ask or think, 21 to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

We began this study by focusing on one core truth: **In Christ, we are Father God's beloved children NOW!** There is no greater truth for us to understand and accept other than this one. In the passage above, Paul says that this love—which is also the love of Christ for us—“surpasses knowledge.” But this is the very truth and reality that Paul prays for the Ephesians and for us to know: The love of Father God in Christ which is really beyond comprehension.

Notice in this prayer the other themes that we have developed in this study: the strengthening that comes from the glory of the Father through the power of His Spirit in our “inner person” (verse 16), Christ dwelling in our hearts through faith (verse 17), our *being rooted and grounded* in love (verse 18). Our new identity in Christ as Father God's beloved children should captivate our thoughts, our desires, our emotions. As we come to realize who we are in Christ, we will be transformed degree by degree, day by day to be people who overflow with the goodness and beauty of our Father Creator.

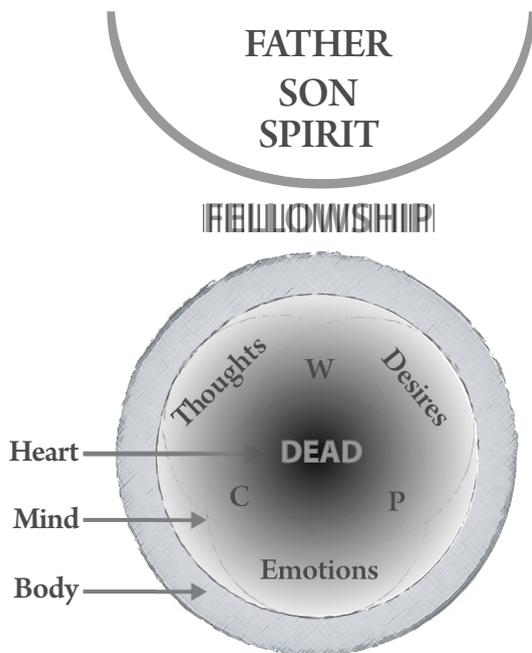
In this study, our desire is that you have become **AWARE** of how God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit all work in and through you to save you. You should also be **AWAKE** to the reality that we are living in a Great Spiritual War. Yet in the midst of this, Christ through the power of the Spirit has set us **FREE** to follow Him as He leads us in victory. In light of these realities, ***to Walk in the Truth is to live in such a way that gives expression of who you are***

in Christ. To Walk in the Truth is to live your life in way that is defined by your Father's love for you.

In our next study unit—**Phase 3: Living the Life**—we are going to pick up talking about the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives and how He empowers us to live in the reality of “the new self.” We will discuss His *leading* us to spiritual maturity, *gifting* us for service to the Body of Christ and to the World, and *empowering* us to live a life of self-sacrificial love which transforms everyone who experiences this great power.

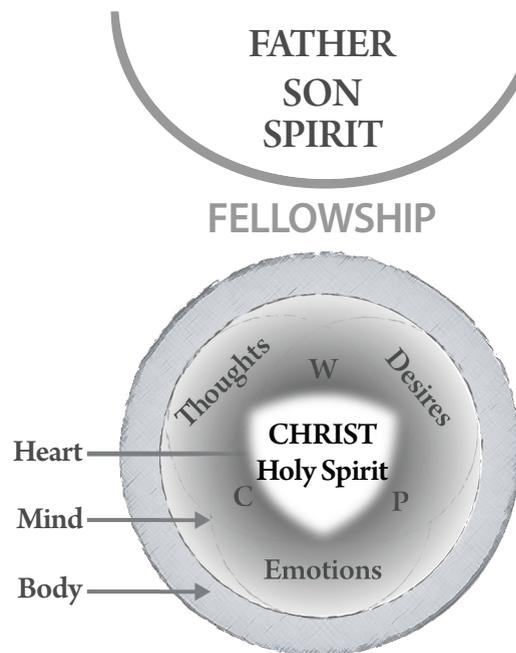
As we close out this session and this study unit we want to go back to some of the “big picture” ideas that MilktoMeat started with and contrast our old life, dead in Adam to our new life, alive in Christ. As you look over these charts, hopefully you will now have a much clearer picture by the reality of who you are in Christ—completely loved, completely secure, and eternally significant.

The Old Me—Who I WAS—“Dead in Adam”



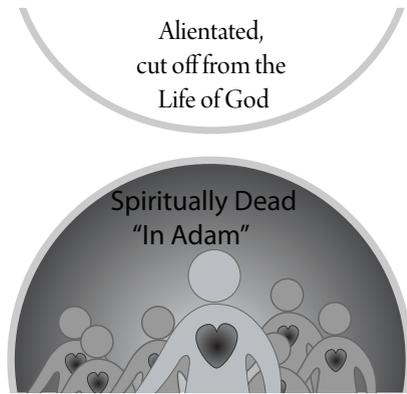
**My Heart was Darkened and Hardened
My Mind was Futile and Useless
I was spiritually dead “in Adam”**

The New Me—Who I AM—Alive in Christ



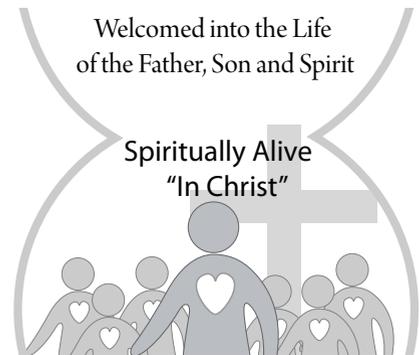
**My Heart is Alive and Enlightened
My Mind is Alive and Enlightened
I am Spiritually Alive “in Christ”**

The Old Me—Who I WAS—“Dead in Adam”



**I was enslaved in the Dominion of Darkness
I was lost in the darkness of sin and death
I was hopeless
I was headed for eternal destruction
I was powerless to do good
I was a “child of wrath”**

The New Me—Who I AM—Alive in Christ



**I am captivated by the Glory of God in Christ
I have been found by the Father in Christ
I have hope in Christ
I am now eternally significant
I have been empowered for God’s glory
I am a beloved child,
a Son/Daughter of the Eternal King**

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have finished the 4th workbook in MilktoMeat.

You are ready to continue in **Phase 3**

Living The Life Part 1: Empowered In The Spirit

You can go to

www.tsfmemphis.org/milktomeat

to order this next workbook
and find out more about MilktoMeat.

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

If this study has been meaningful for you, or
if you have suggestions on how to make it better,

Send us a note at **connect@tsfmemphis.org**

Appendices

A1 **MilktoMeat and the Big Picture of Spiritual Formation**

“ I am The Way, and The Truth, and The Life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” [Jesus, John 14:6]

The following outline gives a “Big Picture” view of Road-Map for MilktoMeat. Here you can see the major issues and the major questions we explore throughout the study. This is all designed around the idea of teaching, “*The Truth in the Right Order at the Right Time.*”

Phase 1 | Discovering the Way | Establishing HOPE (Receiving)

Issue 1 | How do we become | AWARE | of Father-God’s work in Christ through the Holy Spirit?

“ For there is one God and one intermediary between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as a ransom for all, revealing God’s purpose at his appointed time. [1 Timothy 2:5–6]

01 Who can give me a frame of reference for Life? [The Scriptures]

02 Why are we here? Where did we come from? Where are we heading? [larger STORY > life STORY]

» Point of Decision and Commitment:
Will I hear what God is telling me about Reality in His Word?

Issue 2 | What Does it Mean to be spiritually | ALIVE | in Christ?

“ For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” [1 Corinthians 15:22]

03 What has Father-God done and what is He doing in Christ through the Spirit about our rebellion and corruption? [Gospel]

04 Why is Jesus the Only Savior? [Savior]

» Point of Decision and Commitment:

Will I trust Christ alone as my Savior to lead me back to Father-God?

Phase 2 | Walking in The Truth | Cultivating FAITH (Receiving)

Issue 3 | Why do we need to be | AWAKE | to the spiritual reality of our world?

“ Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. [Romans 13:11]

05 How has Father-God provided our satisfaction, security and significance in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit? [Identity]

06 What are the “new birth” blessings and empowerment that have come to us in Christ?

» Point of Decision and Commitment:
Will I live according to my new life, position and identity in Christ?

Issue 4 | How has Father-God set us | FREE | in Christ through the Holy Spirit?

“ For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not be subject again to the yoke of slavery. [Galatians 5:1]

07 Who is battling for control of our world and us? and What is our strategy for standing firm?

08 How do we begin to walk/live by the Holy Spirit, not enslaved to our Flesh?

» Point of Decision and Commitment:
Will I stand firm in Christ's grace, putting on the full armor of God, making no provision for my Flesh?

Phase 3 | Living the Life | Living Christlike Love (Giving)

Issue 5 | How can we become | FAITHFUL | to Jesus our Servant-King?

“ Now what is sought in stewards is that one be found faithful. [1

Corinthians 4:2]

- 09 What will it cost me to follow Jesus and what will it give in return?
[Master > Apprentice]
- 10 How do I cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit within me who is leading me to follow the Lord Jesus in all things? [Transformation]

» Point of Decision and Commitment:

Will I cooperate with the work of the Spirit as He seeks to free me from myself and “enslave” me to the gracious Master Jesus and His glorious freedom?

Issue 6 | How can we become | FRUITFUL | pleasing to the LORD in all things?

“ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

[John 15:8]

- 11 Why am I indispensable to Christ’s work in the world as part of His Body, the Church? [Vision]
- 12 How do make more disciples/apprentices of Jesus our Master? [Mission]

» Point of Decision and Commitment:

Will I accept my calling and use my gifts to proclaim the grace of God in Christ to help others discover the way, the truth and the life that is found only in Jesus?

» The Ultimate “Meat” Decision and Commitment:

Will I sacrifice myself for the sake of others so that they may come to know and grow in the love and grace of Father-God in Christ through the Holy Spirit?

Issue 7 | PERFECTION | This will only take place when we finally see Christ, face to face.

“ Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure. [1 John 3:2–3]

A2

A Closer Look at Paul's Language: The Flesh, the Body and Indwelling Sin

1. The Problems at Hand

One of the most controversial aspects of Paul's theology is his usage of the term "flesh" (Greek: *sarx*) to refer to some aspect of fallen humanities' nature. Although Paul does use the "flesh" terminology throughout his letters, much of the debate centers around the even more controversial Romans 7:7-25 passage.

The goal of this brief study is to look at Paul's "anthropological language" to see his larger picture of the nature of humanity. My goal is to look at the actual language that Paul uses in context and suggest that we should let Paul define his terms and not let "encrusted tradition" hinder us from seeing both the exact language that the Apostle uses and the metaphors that stand behind Paul's understanding of humanity.

One word of encouragement and exhortation before we move on: the following discussion is definitely a "meaty" discussion. However, in the end the conclusion will be the same – the way we are to be free of the tyranny of sin is to devote ourselves to loving service and ministry just as Jesus Himself did. Love not only is the fulfillment of the Law, it is the sin-killer that is prompted and energized by the indwelling Holy Spirit for all those who are alive "in Christ."

1.1 Comparing Translations

The issues at hand can be seen by comparing two modern translations – The New American Standard and the New International Version - and their handling of Paul's term "flesh" (Greek: *sarx*).

Romans 7:5

NAS For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

NIV For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death.

Romans 7:17-18

NAS For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

NIV I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.

Romans 8:3-4

NAS For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

NIV For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 5:5

NAS I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

NIV hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

The NAS follows a more “literal” translation philosophy simply rendering the Greek term “sarx” with its English equivalent “flesh.” The NIV, following a “dynamic equivalence” translational approach has translated the Greek term “sarx” with the theological construct of “sinful nature.”

The main question that we will address in this study is whether or not translating Paul’s term “sarx” (literally “flesh”) as “sinful nature” does justice to Paul’s own development of his theology, particularly as it relates to his understanding of the nature of humanity.

1.2 The Problem of equating “flesh” with the “sin nature.”

Many theologians, following the lead of the NIV, equate some of the uses of the term “flesh” in Paul’s writings with the concept “sin nature” or “sinful nature.” The center of this debate deals with the fact that Paul has no terminology which literally translates as “sin nature.” Although we can speak generally about the “nature” of humanity, there still needs to be a clear understanding of the concepts used by Paul and the actual words used to develop his ideas.

The concept of a “sin nature” or “sinful nature,” as translated by the NIV, must be understood as a theological construct. A theological construct is simply a way to give a description and name to a complex relationship of ideas. Theological

constructs are helpful. The word “Trinity” does not appear in the Bible, it is a theological construct that helps us speak about the relationship between the One God who is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that we do see in the Bible.

However, we must always be very careful in creating and using theological constructs. Over time, these constructs may become what I call “encrusted tradition” that often “overrule” what the Bible actually says. We must always be at the work of checking and testing our knowledge and assumptions making sure that we are in line with what the text of the Bible actually says. Again we must keep in mind that nowhere in Paul’s letters is there any Greek terminology which may literally be translated as “sin nature” or “sinful nature.” If we are going to use such language, then, we must be very careful how we use it.

1.3 The Problem of Defining the term “Nature”

John Walvoord has made the following helpful comments in regards to defining and using the word “nature” particularly as it relates to Paul’s understanding of fallen humanity:

“Theological discussion in the English language struggles with the word nature, for ‘there are few words more dangerously ambiguous than ‘nature.’ The problem arises because in the Bible at least one Hebrew word and three Greek words are translated ‘nature.’ Even the same Hebrew or Greek word is used in different senses. This lack of clear definition of the word nature has led to much of the theological debate regarding the transformation that occurs at regeneration. Strangely, many writers begin discussing the subject without any consideration of the varieties of meaning in the English word or the relevant words in the original languages.” (Walvoord, *Five Views of Sanctification*, 199-200).

If we are going to use the term “nature” we must be very careful to define what we mean before we use it. Most theologians use the term “nature” to refer to a set of “dispositions” or “essential characteristics” that make up something. The Bible very clearly does speak in many ways about “human nature.” This is to say that it speaks very pointedly to the “human condition” – how we are made and how we function.

1.4 The Problem of “Two Natures.”

Traditionally, it has been very easy to explain the ongoing struggle of the believer against sin by the analogy of the “two natures” – two sets of “dispositions” or “essential characteristics” that are at conflict with one another. Again, these

natures must be seen for what they are – theological constructs. They are the reduction of a number of Biblical Concepts into a single new assimilation that seeks to clearly and simply explain a complex topic.¹ This argument is largely based on an analogy to the “two natures of Christ (human/divine).” However, it may be a logical leap to draw an analogy from Christ’s nature to the nature of humanity.

Several important questions are usually raised when we begin to think about “two natures” within the believer. And this discussion is limited only to those who are “in Christ.” Theologians agree that those outside of Christ have just one nature – sinful alienated from God and under His wrath (cf. Ephesians 2:3). However, those who are “in Christ” are spoken of as having two “natures.” So the questions are just how does a believer have a “new nature” in Christ and a “sin nature” at the same time?

Again there is nothing inherently wrong with using “nature” language. If we do, we must be careful to make sure that our construct matches the ideas that we see in Scripture.

If we take the NIV translation “sinful nature” and think of it in terms of the above illustrations in the context of Romans 7:7-25 we have some problems. In Romans 7, it is clear that Paul does not limit the operation of sin only to the *sarx* “sinful nature” (literally “flesh”) - it is also at work in the “members of the body” (cf. 7:5, 23). In fact, Paul seems to be saying that sin – the actual corruption that dwells in Adam’s fallen descendants – takes up it’s headquarters in the physical body. We will say more about this a little later.

Also, the above illustrations raise some very thorny theological questions and problems based on other passages that describe a believer’s spiritual position in Christ. If we are cleansed from sin, perfected spiritually forever so that we are now “new creations in Christ” then how is it that there is still something in my “spiritual self” that has not been redeemed in Christ? (cf. Hebrews 9:13-14; 10:14; 2 Corinthians 5:17)

Before we can make any head way in dealing with these questions and problems we must first deal with the “grammar” of Paul’s theology and define the terms that he uses based on the contexts in which he uses them.

2. Defining Our Terms

2.1 How Does Paul Use the Term *Sarx* – “flesh”?

In order to do justice to this study, we should first look at every instance of the term *sarx* (flesh) in Paul’s letters. In the Appendix you will find a list of the 90

occurrences of this term in Paul's letters. I would encourage you to read through each of Paul's uses to get a sense of how he uses this term.

The most concentrated use of this term occurs in Romans (26 times) and Galatians (18 times). In all but 10 of the 90 times this term appears in Paul's letters the connotation clearly points to something that is "earthly" or "physical." However, in the remaining 10 uses in Romans and Galatians some commentators see Paul referring to something that is inwardly linked to the "spiritual" reality of humanity making a sharp distinction with what is physical. These 10 or so occurrences are commonly referred to as the "ethical" uses of *sarx* ("flesh").

Many have never considered the metaphoric construct that Paul employs in his use of the term *sarx* "flesh." The primary question that must be answered is, "If Paul means to communicate an idea that is primarily ethical or spiritual in nature, then why does he use such 'physical' language?" With the wide range of 'non-material' words that he could have drawn from to communicate his ideas, he choose a field that clearly points to the physical/material realm. In this sense, Paul seems to think of the "flesh" in the larger analogy/metaphor of "flesh as physical substance."

If Paul does have in mind physical flesh in some sense in these passages, then it must also be kept in mind that Paul is no ascetic or Gnostic. Paul does not necessarily view the "flesh" as inherently evil. Instead He seems to follow the stream of Hebrew thought from the Old Testament which views "flesh" (*bsr* used only 23 times in the OT) with reference to "human beings in their frailty and transience, to man in his limitations, as distinct from the infinite God" (Ladd, *NTT*, 458).

In order to understand Paul's "flesh" terminology we must see its relationship to three other key concepts: 1) the body, 2) the members of the body and 3) the sin that dwells within us.

2.2 The Body, its Members and Indwelling Sin

As already stated, Roman 7 is one of the most controversial chapters in the New Testament. However, it is a key context in which to understand Paul's linking together the three concept just mentioned: body, members and the sin that dwells within us. As we begin let me say that I believe Paul is dealing primarily with the question "Can anyone (particularly a believer) live under the Law in order to pursue righteousness?" The answer will obviously be and emphatic "NO!!!" because Law only stirs up and empowers sin (Romans 5:20, 7:5; 1 Corinthians 15:56).

Lets take a few minutes to first read through Romans 7 then come back to make some observations about specific verses. Generally speaking I believe that Paul is arguing that when we submit ourselves to external law – even and particularly the Law of God, sin (that dwells within us) comes alive to produce sinful passions and acts of sin. We might think about Paul’s theology here in terms of the following “equation”:

Law + Indwelling Sin > Sinful Passion & Acts of Sin.

Notice carefully what Paul says in Romans 7:18, “But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law, sin is dead.” Sin (the sin that dwells in us) apparently “feeds on” or is energized by Law. When we seek to live by external “Law righteousness” instead of by faith, submitting to the work of the Holy Spirit who writes the Law inwardly on the heart, sin comes alive to produce acts of sin. The body made of flesh then becomes the vehicle for the expression of sin. Take a close look at the following verses:

7:14 – “For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold in bondage to sin.”

** This is a very difficult verse and is probably the key to the whole passage. As we will see, it may be that Paul is saying that as long as he (we) remain in our fallen physical bodies we will be subject to the possible domination of sin if we do not live by faith according to the Spirit.

7:17 – “So now longer am I the one doing it (the sin that I hate), but the sin which dwells in me”

7:17 – “Now I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is in my flesh”

** Notice Paul is very quick to clarify what he means by “nothing good dwells in me.” He locates the “nothing good” in his flesh. Clearly, Paul does have “good” dwelling in through the Holy Spirit.

7:20 – “I am no longer the one doing it, but the sin which dwells in me”

** Notice that Paul does not blame the “flesh” for what is taking place here, but the “sin which dwells in me.”

7:23 – “I see a different principle in the members of my body, waging war against the principle of my mind and making me a prisoner of sin which is in my members.”

** Notice in this verse, the sin is not associated with his “flesh” but with the “members of his body” - a clear reference to the physical body.

7:24 – “. . . who will set me free from the body of this death?”

7:25 – “with my mind I serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin”

From these uses, I observe three key ideas:

- » 1. *The Law is not to blame for producing sin. It is only the stimulus, the fuel that “the sin that dwells in me” feeds on.*
- » 2. *The “flesh,” “body,” and “members” are all held captive by the power of sin. By this Paul must mean his physical body. His point would be that the physical body is the location or “headquarters” of “indwelling sin” as well as the “instrument” sin uses when it comes alive through the Law.*
- » 3. *It is “the sin that dwells in me,” (what I will refer to as “indwelling sin”) that is viewed as the power behind the act of sin. This indwelling sin seems to function as a living power or perhaps a “spiritual organ” in Paul’s yet fallen, unredeemed, physical body.*

Ben Witherington has some valuable insights on this passage:

“In 7.22 - 25 mind is contrasted with flesh. Flesh in this passage is associated with sin that dwells in one’s members, while the mind is associated with the inner self or conscience attempting to serve the law of God. This passage suggests, then, that mind involves the inner being, the self, the conscience, and is seen here as a good thing as opposed to flesh, which involves sinful desires grounded in a fallen physical nature. What Paul calls a “fleshy mind” or “mind set on the flesh” is a conscious orientation that follows this fallen nature. Paul thinks the mind is the key to one’s orientation; hence he can discuss the renewal of the mind in Christ (Rom 12.2)” (Witherington, 210) emphasis mine.

Paul’s main point is that the believer cannot submit to the Law as a means of sanctification. “The sin that dwells in the body made of flesh” short-circuits the whole operation. This of course does not excuse the sinful actions of a believer. Paul’s argument in this section focuses on what it means to live maturely, free from the tyranny and enslavement of sin. And this leads to our next important observation.

2.3 Sin is Not Just the Evil that We Do

Sin in the Bible, particularly in this passage from Paul, is not merely associated with our “wicked actions” or “immoral, ungodly behaviors.” Sin is a personified, real, spiritual force or “stuff” that corrupts and contaminates everything that it touches. Thus after the Fall of Adam, the whole world was subjected to the futility and corruption of sin (cf. Romans 8:20-21). Animals and plants die in this

world, clearly showing that although none of their ancestors ever sinned, they nevertheless are subject to the final corruption of sin – death.

Notice how Paul speaks about the “sin that dwells in him”: 1) it “seizes an opportunity” through Law to produce sin (7:8), 2) it “come alive” through the Law (7:8-9), and 3) it actually deceives Paul through the Law (7:11). Thus Paul presents “the sin that dwells within” as a living, deceiving, killing power that feeds of Law. This is a thoroughly Jewish conception of sin. After the fall of Adam, the first time we actually “see” sin is in the story of Cain and Abel as God counsels Cain about his murderous intent, “... sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it” (Genesis 4:7). Sin is portrayed as a vicious animal waiting to pounce on and devour Cain alive. This “personification of sin” is often a foreign concept to western minds.

2.4 The Body is the Last to Be Redeemed

In the first 17 verses of Romans Chapter 8 Paul continues his line of thought. Many commentators do not link chapters 7 and 8 together sufficiently. In chapter 8 Paul spells out how one is to have victory over the “sin dwelling in the body made of flesh.” Going into this discussion takes us too far off our main topic and will be left to another discussion. However, Paul does make a significant statement in this chapter that needs to be considered:

Romans 8:10-11 “If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Here, notice that Paul specifically says that the body is dead because of sin. I believe in the larger context, Paul definitely is referring to our physical bodies. However, although not yet redeemed even our physical bodies will be redeemed by the Spirit in the resurrection. This seems to be the point of verse 11. This also may be a key verse in helping us understand 7:14. The believer although regenerated through the work of the Spirit spiritually is also still attached to a fallen physical body unredeemed - dead and dying under the power of sin that rules in this present world system.

Although we will develop these ideas a little further, it seems that in the context of Romans 7 Paul views the physical body as being made up of flesh which is still indwelt by sin. This “indwelling sin” comes alive when it is given Law and thus produces sinful passions and sinful actions. This does not make the physi-

cal body evil, but simply still subject to the decay and sinful corruption of this present fallen world system. Thus although the “outer man” (physical self) is still decaying and dying, nevertheless, the “inner man” (spiritual self) is being renewed day by day.

“The inner person has to do with the mind or heart or spirit; the outer person has to do with the body. These two dimensions of human nature affect each other, and both need renewal and regeneration in Christ. In Paul’s view new creation happens now in the mind or spirit but later, at the resurrection, in the body. This means that while the inner person is being steadily renewed, the outer person. . . is wasting away (2 Corinthians 4.16-18)” (Witherington, 228).

As we move to our next topic, it is important to consider the fact that Paul seems to place the “sin that dwells in us” in the realm the physical – in our bodies, in our flesh.

2.5 The Relationship of “Flesh” (sarx) and “Body” (soma).

For Paul, the Body is composed of flesh. Although neither is inherently evil, they are both seen as elements which are temporal and belong to the fallen world where sin and death still reign.

The exact relationship that Paul delineates between “flesh” (sarx) and “body” (soma) is the key to understanding Paul’s overarching concept of humanity. For Paul, it seems that the Body is the “storehouse” of both the physical/material aspects of humanity as well as the spiritual/immaterial. It is a mistake to make too sharp a division in these areas because in the Biblical worldview there is a vital link between what is physical and what is spiritual. The two are intertwined in the Body so that the individual is more than the sum of the parts.

Thus we may speak of the “outer self” – the Body, and the “inner self” – the spiritual aspects of our being. It is the inseparable mingling of these two diverse components that makes a human being a “living soul,” so to speak. Ben Witherington’s comments in this area are helpful:

“There is a limited anthropological dualism in Paul’s letters. We hear of a spirit versus mind, spirit versus flesh, or even spirit versus body. Such terms lead us to question Paul’s inner person/outer person terminology (see, e.g. 2 Cor 4) and old person/new person terminology. In Romans 7.22-23 the innermost self is either identified or closely associated with the mind. Paul does not see the body and the prison house of the soul, nor does he denigrate the physical body. He is a

Jew with strong creation theology based in Genesis 1-2. Paul does not simply adopt the Hellenistic contrast between inner and outer person; he adapts this terminology for his own purposes.

For example, in 2 Corinthians 4.16 it is the inner person who is being renewed . . . So the inner person cannot simply be identified with the ‘new creature in Christ’ or the ‘new person.’ Rather, ‘inner person’ refers to the mind and/or the human spirit, both of which need renewal, being part of fallen human nature. Paul repeatedly says that the ‘old person’ or the old nature has been crucified and put off at the point of conversion (cf. Rom 6.6, Eph 4.22, Col 3.9) This means that the ‘outer person’ must be seen as the physical body subject as it is to disease, decay and death.” “Yet this limited dualism does not lead Paul to view the Body as evil (as the real problem) or the mind as good (as the higher nature). As we have seen, sometimes he speaks of carnal minds or defiled spirits. (Witherington, 212)

Paul in Romans 6 makes the case that our actions, whether righteous or sinful are expressed through the “members of our body.”

Romans 6:12-13 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, 13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

This is also Paul’s point at the end of Romans 7:

Romans 7:21-24 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law (principle) in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

The Body composed of flesh is viewed by Paul in one sense as a “neutral instrument” that can either be used by sin or the Spirit. Thus when one puts oneself under Law, Sin comes alive and subjects the person once more to the tyranny of sin. However, if a person lives by faith according to the Spirit, the power of sin that indwells the flesh is short-circuited.

It seems clear that in Paul's language there is war that is taking place in the body of the believer between the sin that dwells in the flesh (the physical realm) and the Holy Spirit that dwells in the inner man (the spiritual realm):

Galatians 5:16-23 “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, . . . , and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

It is interesting to note the contrast in the Paul's language in the above passage: deeds or works of the flesh / fruit of the Spirit. “Deeds/works” are seen as something produced by human will and effort. “Fruit” however is not produced by will and effort. A tree produces fruit when it is placed in the proper soil, with the proper watering and nutrient. The same is true in the life of the believer. If we, by faith, nurture the life of the Spirit within us, He will produce His “fruits” in and through us.

In Summary, let me simply define the key terms and concepts we have discussed so far:

1. **Body** – the physical body, it is composed of the individuals members.
2. the **Members** – The hands, eyes, feet, etc. of the Body that is composed of flesh. The “members” are the “weapons” than can be used for the sinful purposes of the Flesh (indwelled by sin) or the righteous purposes of the inner man (heart) indwelled by the Holy Spirit.
3. **Flesh** – the “stuff” the body is made of. It, and therefore the body, is yet unredeemed, and still contaminated by sin.
4. **Indwelling Sin** – the actual spiritual power (maybe “spiritual organ”) of sin that still remains in an unredeemed physical body.

2.6 Jesus Also Had a Body

In this discussion, we must keep in mind that Jesus also had a body made of flesh. However, there is one major distinction between His body and our own: His

was not contaminated by sin. The Bible makes it clear that we have all inherited sin from Adam. And this means that we have inherited not just the guilt of his sin, but also the corruption of his sin.

Jesus however is not a son of Adam. His father is, literally, God and therefore He did not inherit either the guilt or the corruption of Adam's sin. In Romans 8 Paul says of Christ:

Romans 8:3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh...

Paul's main point here seems to be that Christ Jesus truly came as a human "in the flesh" – not as a fallen human as we all are, but "in the likeness of sinful flesh." Jesus was physically a real human being. This passage causes a real problem for the translators of the NIV. Notice how they have rendered it:

Romans 8:3-4 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,...

In this verse they are forced to translate *sarx* (flesh) not as "sinful nature" but as "sinful man" in the later half of the verse, because "sinful nature" would make no sense in this context. Christ did not come in the likeness of the "sinful nature" but in the likeness of "sinful flesh," that is to say He came as a human being, but not as a sin-full human being. He was entirely free of sin.

3. Living in the Body made of Flesh

Looking at all the uses of the term "flesh" (*sarx*) in Paul's writings we might come to the conclusion that he has a dual understanding of the nature of the "flesh":

Romans 7:18 "I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is in my flesh"

Galatians 2:20 "... the life that I now live in the flesh,
I live by faith in the son of God"

Not all of Paul's usages of the term "flesh" are negative ones. In some instances they are simply neutral – referring to some aspect of "existence in this present physical world."

Although these passages seem to be contradictory, they actually provide some insight into the way Paul views the flesh. Again, in its general usage, "flesh"

simply refers to “physical substance.” Thus the physical body and its members, although composed of flesh may be used through the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit for good and righteous purposes.

Shortly we will discuss how these concepts work together in but for now we may summarize the ideas like this:

1. The Body, composed of Flesh (my physical self) may become the vehicle for the expression of work of the Holy Spirit by Faith.

Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 1:12, 3:3, 4:11, 10:2-4; Galatians 5:16, 17, 24, 6:8; Philippians 1:22, 24; Colossians 1:22, 2:11

** Notice especially Paul’s positive uses of “flesh” in Colossians 1:24 where he states, “and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions.” In a similar usage Jesus “has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death” (Col. 1:22). In both of these contexts Paul must use sarx as a reference to the physical body.

2. The Body, composed of Flesh (my physical self) may become the vehicle for the expression of the work of indwelling sin through the Law.

Romans 3:20; 6:19; 7:5, 14, 18, 25, 8:3, 8; Colossians 2:18

It seems that the physical body of the believer is the great war zone where Spirit battles against the sin that dwells in the flesh. Again Witherington is helpful:

In fact, the body is caught in the middle of a struggle between the inner person and the reign of sin, in the case of the nonbeliever (Romans 7), and between flesh and Holy Spirit, in the believer (Galatians 5.16-25)” (Witherington, 212).

So, what has God done for us that gives us the ability to use our the members of our bodies as instruments of righteousness empowered by the Holy Spirit? Again we must turn to another passage that may help illuminate this issues for us.

3. Conclusions

Let me conclude with some observations and exhortations. First, please do some work reading and meditating on Paul’s usage of the term sarx “flesh.” In the appendix I have provided for you a list of all 90 places Paul uses the term in his letters. You will benefit greatly by doing a detailed reading of these references in their contexts. I don’t claim to have this all figured out. Let us work together to “grow in the grace and knowledge” of Lord Jesus.

From Paul’s usage I have concluded the following things about the “flesh” and the “nature” of humanity.

1. Every human being born after Adam inherits both the objective guilt of his sin, and also the subjective corruption of his sin. We are born “sinners by nature.”

2. Once regenerated by the application of Jesus’ work through the Holy Spirit the believer becomes a “new creation” spiritually. Paul refers to this as the “new man” that has been hidden in Christ thus eradicating the “old man” in Adam. Spiritually, we might say that the believer has one “new spiritual nature” that is identified and in union with Christ. We might also speak of an “old nature” that associated with the yet unredeemed body composed of flesh indwelt by sin.

3. The human body (soma) that we have inherited from Adam, corrupted by sin in the fall, is the collective that unites both our spiritual and physical aspects. Even after conversion, the believer is still confined to the body and its corruption. Although the body is not inherently evil, it is weak and prone to the power of sin. For the believer there is the choice of submitting one’s members to the Holy Spirit by faith, or flesh by Law. Christ makes this possible through His “circumcision made without hands.”

4. At work within the body composed of flesh (sarx) is a principal and/or power of sin. We may refer to this aspect as indwelling sin. This sin produces a complex of desires and volition in the believer that is contrary to the rule and revelation of God. This indwelling sin is fueled and made active by Law. Those who try to live life by “law” (specifically the Mosaic Law) quench the work of the Holy Spirit who is at the business of “writing the law on the heart.” Thus indwelling sin is empowered by the Law so that those who try to live by Law become captivated by the passions and actions of sin - “The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law” 1 Corinthians 15:56.

5. The struggle within the believer is not between “old” and “new” spiritual natures, or “old” and “new” men, but between the work of Holy Spirit in the “New Spiritual Creature” and the power of indwelling sin housed in the physical body composed of flesh.

It must be remembered that in the final analysis of Paul’s thought, the metaphoric pool that Paul draws from is based on terminology rooted in “life as physical existence.”

The flesh is not inherently evil. It is polluted, however, by indwelling sin. So as Paul makes clear in Romans 7:13-25 it is not Paul as a unity (Body, flesh, spirit) that is producing acts of sin, but indwelling sin, rooted in the flesh, empowered by the Law. “Now if I do what I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law that it is good. So then it is no longer I who do it, but the sin which dwells in me” (Romans 7:16, 17).

Paul does not use this logic to excuse sinful actions in the believer, far from it in fact. In this larger context of Romans 6-8 Paul is arguing that maturity in Christ, walking by the Spirit is produced only as one takes responsibility to live by faith, not giving sin a “foothold” by giving it Law to feed on.

The believer, then, regenerated by the application of Jesus’ work through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is freed from the power of indwelling sin by “walking by the Spirit,” which is living a life of faith expressed in love.

3.1 The Usage of the Term “Nature”

Finally, lets get back to where we started. I began by questioning whether or not it is entirely accurate to equate Paul’s term *sarx* with the theological construct “sinful nature.” Let me say now that I do not believe it is entirely inaccurate to use the theological construct “sin nature” so long as a proper understanding of the various components that make it up are not confused or mixed.

Since there is no specific language in Greek or Hebrew that corresponds to “sinful nature” we must be very careful how we use this terminology. When we begin to talk about “two natures” the discussion becomes very complicated, especially when compared with the actual language of Scripture.

The thing that must be stressed is that the “sin nature” cannot simply be equated with the “flesh.” The “flesh” is part of a much larger relational construct as it relates to the body, the members of the body, the sin that “dwells within” and the “sinful passions” which are aroused by the law.

The following chart maps out the proper relationships between these concepts:

Improper Construct:	Proper Construct:
“flesh” = sin nature	Sin nature = Body composed <i>of</i> flesh <i>indwelled</i> by sin <i>empowered</i> by Law Producing Sinful Passions & Sinful Actions

In order to make our teaching more simple, it seems best to me to use the actual language of Scripture, free from as many “theological constructs” as we can manage. It seems best to me, if we are going to use the term “nature” to speak about a “new spiritual nature” and an “old physical nature.”

Thus if follow Paul's own language, we see that the war that is within us is not between two competing "spiritual natures" (making us almost schizophrenic psychologically), but between the life of God made real by the indwelling Holy Spirit in our deep inner selves (heart and mind) and the power of sin still indwelling our unredeemed bodies made of flesh. In Christ, we are truly "new creations" spiritually. However, until the resurrection of our bodies we will not be made perfect – free from all the effects and (possible) domination of sin.

Simply stated, the power of the Holy Spirit takes up its residence in the "headquarters" of our spiritual selves (Soul: Heart & Mind) whereas indwelling sin takes up its residence and "headquarters" in our physical bodies of corrupted flesh. The heart and mind can still be affected by the power of indwelling sin if we place ourselves under law, or if we seek in any way to accomplish our own purposes in our own will and power.

In the end it seems best to simply use Paul's own language in our theological constructs and perhaps speak about the "old outer person, made of flesh indwelt by sin," and the "new inner person, indwelt by the Spirit." This would save us the trouble of having to give a lengthy explanation of "nature" before we ever get started.

5. Paul's Use of the Term *sarx* – "flesh"

Rom. 1:3; 2:28; 3:20; 4:1; 6:19; 7:5,18,25; 8:3-9,12-13; 9:3,5,8; 11:14; 13:14;
 1Cor. 1:26,29; 5:5; 6:16; 7:28; 10:18; 15:39,50
 2Cor. 1:17; 4:11; 5:16; 7:1,5; 10:2-3; 11:18; 12:7;
 Gal. 1:16; 2:16,20; 3:3; 4:13-14,23,29; 5:13,16-17,19,24; 6:8,12-13;
 Eph. 2:3,11,14; 5:29,31; 6:5,12;
 Phil. 1:22,24; 3:3-4;
 Col. 1:22,24; 2:1,5,11,13,18,23; 3:22;
 1Tim. 3:16

5.1 Semantic Domains for Paul's use of *sarx*

There are probably 5 or 6 broad domains in which Paul uses the term *sarx*:

1. "Flesh" - of animals and humans. Ro 2.28
2. "Body" - the physical body of a human - 1 Tim 3.16
3. "Humanity" - representative of the human race - Ga 1.16
4. "Nationality" - ethnic or national distinction - Ro 10.1
5. "Human Nature" - The psychological aspect of human nature which contrasts with the spiritual nature - 1 Co 1.26, Ga 5.19, 6.8

“. . . Some scholars understand the meaning of *sarx* as being a per-

sons “lower nature” rather than simply ‘human nature,’ but the distinction between lower nature and higher nature seems to be primarily one arising out of typical Greek thought rather than out of the Semitic background which seems to be so pervasive in the use of the term *savrx* in such contexts in the NT” (Louw and Nida, 322-323).

6. “Physical Nature” - the physical aspect of human life - Ga 4.23

