

Four Essential Provisions of the Cross Of Jesus Christ

*A Series Of Lessons
by
Douglas L. Crook*

Four Essential Provisions of the Cross Of Jesus Christ

by
Douglas L. Crook

*“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption — that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.”” NKJV
I Corinthians 1:30, 31*

Everything that we will ever need in this life and in eternity to enjoy the gracious purposes of God for our lives is found in the full provision of the cross of Jesus Christ where He died as the sacrifice for our sins. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, reveals to us four of the many things that are a direct result of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross: wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. These four works or provisions of the cross are essential to every human being. Without these provisions man would be left in the hopelessness of sin, cut off from God, life and hope. Because of these provisions, man has been given the opportunity to enjoy the abundance of eternal life starting right now in this present life. It is impossible for man to be content, fulfilled and full of joy and peace without these four essential provisions of God’s grace. The misery, sorrow, suffering and

despair of the human race are evident at every level of society, from the richest to the poorest. Man is incomplete, empty and ruined without wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. In these two short verses we find the remedy to all of man's problems. These are not just religious terms that you can take or leave. It is impossible for anyone to be whole or sound without receiving these benefits. Furthermore, it is of utmost importance that we understand that Jesus is the only source and channel of these four vital blessings of God.

Each of these works has two inseparable aspects into which we must enter if we are going to enjoy the fullness of the provisions. The first aspect is the **provisional**. We may also interchange the word provisional with the phrases "our standing" and "our position," or the word "imputed." The provisional or positional aspect of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption speaks of the blessings that are automatically the possession or certain expectation of everyone who puts their faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. As believers our standing, or position before God, is based solely on our faith in the faithfulness of Christ apart from any faithfulness of our own. *"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power."* **NKJV Colossians 2:9, 10**

The second aspect of these works is the **practical**. The words "state" and "imparted" may also be used to describe this aspect of these blessings. The practical aspect of these works has to do with the believers' faithfulness to daily allow the power and reality of these provisions to manifest themselves in their lives and through their conduct. This aspect of wisdom,

righteousness, sanctification and redemption is not the automatic experience of every believer when they accept Jesus as their Savior. In fact, sadly, many Christians never enter into the power and blessing of the practical side of the provisions of the cross because of ignorance, unbelief or rebellion. The consequence of not entering into the practical aspect of these works is not the loss of the provisional blessings, but loss of the reward of faithfulness and practical everyday blessings. Faithfulness to live our life according to God's wise instruction, doing what is right in His sight on a daily basis, separating ourselves more and more from the world and its sin in order to serve the Lord with all of our heart, mind and body, and living daily a life that is free from the influence of sin's pull to disobedience has promise of reward in this life and in the life to come. *"For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."* NKJV **I Timothy 4:8 (I Corinthians 3:11 – 15)**

In Christ – Before we look at the four specific works listed in **I Corinthians 1:30, 31**, we must take note of the opening phrase. These blessings are the result of us being *"in Christ."* "In Christ" is that spiritual position, condition or realm in which God sees all who have put their faith in His Son, Jesus. It is a position of acceptance, life, grace and blessing in the presence of God. These four things are the rights and freedoms of all the citizens of the kingdom of God's dear Son. (**Colossians 1:12, 13**)

Of Him – How did we get in Christ? We do so of or by God. These are provisions of God's doing and God's grace. There is nothing that we have done or can do to merit or gain these blessings by our own effort. It was God's plan and purpose that Jesus become the source and

fountain of these wonderful works of His grace. It was His execution of His own plan that established Jesus as the source of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. (*Ephesians 1:1 – 14*) Man needs wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption and there is no other source for them, other than in Jesus Christ. To say that there are other sources to attain these things is to call God a liar and is to be left destitute of His life and blessings. Jesus, Jesus alone, became for us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

Wisdom

Let's consider the first provision listed in Paul's list. We must begin with a proper definition of "wisdom" to help us understand what Christ has given us by dying on the cross. Webster's dictionary gives this definition of wisdom: "the understanding of that which is true, right or lasting." Studying the Biblical use of the term we could also define wisdom as "the proper and productive application of knowledge."

From God - The Apostle Paul clarifies that this wisdom is "*from God.*" This is not man's wisdom. We live in the information age. Man has never been so educated or possessed so much knowledge in so many different fields. The rate of the growth of scientific technology and knowledge in our generation alone is staggering. We have gone from computers that needed entire buildings to house them, to microchips that fit undetected under the skin and contain a lifetime of data and information.

There is nothing wrong with that knowledge in and of itself. I think it is prudent to be as knowledgeable in as

many fields as is possible. I think we should be as educated as we can be, as God directs us and gives us opportunity, in order to earn the income needed to help support and proclaim the Gospel. However, we need to ask ourselves, has mankind been made wise by all this knowledge? Has it led the human race to understand the things that are true, right and lasting in God's universe? No! In **Romans 1:20 – 32** the Apostle Paul describes the pitiful condition of the human race lost in sin. The phrase, "*professing to be wise they became fools*" is as accurate a description of mankind in our day as it was in Paul's day.

Provisional Wisdom –What is the provisional aspect of this wisdom from God that is found only in Jesus Christ? The will and the purposes of God are the only things that are true, right and lasting in this universe. Jesus Christ became the source of our understanding the fullness of the will of God when He came to open up the way into the presence of God by His death on the cross.

"And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." NKJV **John 1:16 – 18** The Greek word translated "*declared*" literally means to "lead out." The Greeks used the word to describe the action of a narrator or teacher unfolding or revealing a truth. Jesus came to reveal to us God the Father and His eternal purposes for those who put their faith in His Son.

Only in the Gospel of Jesus Christ do we find the source of truth and the proper application of that truth. "*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"* NKJV **John 14:6** "*For God so loved the world that He gave*

His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” NKJV
John 3:16 – 18

When you say yes to Christ, you say yes to wisdom. You say yes to eternal life. You exchange the lie of sin and it’s bondage for the truth of the forgiveness of your sin and the liberty it brings. “*We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.*” NKJV
I John 5:19 - 21 Idols are anyone or anything that distracts you from Christ and the truth that is revealed in and by Him. Idols can include false doctrine and those who promote it.

Paul wrote to Timothy in **II Timothy 3:14 – 17** that the Scriptures are able to make one wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Because of Jesus Christ, I understand that I was born in sin and was worthy of the just wrath of God. (**Romans 3:23**) I understand that Heaven and earth will pass away and that the elements will melt away under the mighty hand of God. (**II Peter 3:10 – 12**) I understand that Christ is Lord of lords and King of kings and is returning to judge all who oppose God and His eternal purposes. (**Revelation 19:11 – 21**) However, I also know that God has made a way of salvation for all who believe. Jesus died for my sins. He

willingly took upon Himself the guilt of my sin. Forgiveness and eternal life are promised to all of those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God. By the Holy Spirit, I've been given the wisdom to properly and productively apply that knowledge by repenting of my sins and confessing that Jesus is Lord and Savior. I've been made wise unto salvation. Thank God, He ordained that Jesus become wisdom for me! Every other philosophy or religion or lifestyle has proven itself to be vain and foolish and unable to produce lasting peace, joy and the hope of eternal life. This wisdom that leads to eternal life is the eternal possession of everyone who believes that Jesus is the Son of the Living God.

Practical Wisdom – There is also the practical side of this wisdom from God in which every believer should daily walk, but, tragically, not all do. This practical aspect of the wisdom of God comes only from Him through Jesus Christ, but we must daily apply it to our lives. Remember, wisdom is not just the possession of knowledge, but also the proper and productive application of that knowledge. It's not enough to know truth; you must let it govern your every thought and action. *“And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” NKJV **Philippians 1:9 – 11*** The phrase, *“approve the things that are excellent,”* means to test and prove by experience the things that differ or that are superior. The exhortation to approve the things that are excellent is not an exhortation to simply rate things as good, better, best, but rather to put them to a test to see which things pass and which things fail. If they

pass the test of God's Word, they are excellent, superior things. If they fail, they are inferior and are to be abandoned.

There are so many choices in our day-to-day life. There are choices of lifestyle, attitude, conduct and activities. How do we know the things that are best, true, right and lasting? We find several answers in ***Ephesians 5:8 – 21***. We make wise choices daily when we yield to the ministry of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus sent when He ascended to Heaven. We experience the superior things of life when we examine them in the light of God's Word, the Bible. We make choices that lead to experiencing the things that are true, right and lasting when we live a life of selflessness. Truly the superior life is a life of divine love. (***I Corinthians 12:31 / 13:1 - 8***)

“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia — remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.” NKJV ***I Timothy 1:3 – 7*** The Apostle Paul tells Timothy that too many of God's people are not wise concerning the doctrine they hear and support, and therefore they are not wise in their conduct. Most Christians today feel doctrine doesn't really matter as long as you love Jesus. Many may agree that it matters how you live, but that doesn't have anything to do with doctrine. The Apostle Paul's exhortation to Timothy reveals the error of such thinking. The sound doctrine of the Apostle Paul is the only

message that can produce a life of love, blameless conscience and genuine faith that pleases and glorifies God. This is why Paul writes Timothy in his second letter to his spiritual son, *“Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.” NKJV II Timothy 1:13*

In this day and age when there are so many different versions of the Gospel of Jesus Christ being preached, we need to be wise and discern that there is a difference between one message and another. We need to examine all things in the light of Scripture to know which teaching is excellent, which teaching is superior because it is true, right and lasting and reject all other teaching as inferior and failing to pass the test of truth. *“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” NKJV I John 4:1* We must test the spirits and the teachings they produce.

If someone declares that to be saved and remain saved you must daily keep the Ten Commandments, don't say that's just as good as Paul's declaration that no man shall be justified by the law. *(Galatians 3:11)* Justification by faith alone is a superior doctrine because it's true, right and lasting according the Word of God as opposed to justification by works, which is an inferior, false doctrine that contradicts God's Word. The two doctrines are different. One is right the other is wrong. Right doctrine is always superior to false doctrine. If someone says that the infilling of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues is not for today, don't say that's fine when Peter declared that the promise was for all that the Lord would call. *(Acts 2:38, 39)* If someone says that if you have faith you will always be rich, never be sick or have a need, don't say that's a wonderful teaching when Paul says I've learned to abound and I've learned to be

abased; I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (*Philippians 4:11 – 13*) If someone says that all God's people will have the same place in Heaven, they deny Paul's teaching about the prize being reserved for those who run well. (*I Corinthians 9:24 – 27*)

Saints, if we believe, preach and teach the whole counsel of Paul's Gospel, our doctrine is good, excellent and superior to those who believe or preach something that contradicts that doctrine or only embraces a part of that doctrine. We are not superior. Nor is the doctrine superior because we believe or teach it, but it is more excellent because God has declared it to be true, right and lasting. We simply agree with God. God's ways are the best ways. God's teaching and instruction are superior. Sound, wise doctrine will produce sound, wise conduct.

God went to great lengths to open up the fountain of wisdom through the work of Jesus Christ. I want to be wise. I want to live life wisely and properly so that I might bring the greatest glory to God. Read *Colossians 2:1 – 10*. In Christ and through the sound doctrine that reveals Him, we have all riches, full assurance of understanding, knowledge of the mystery of God, all treasures of wisdom and knowledge, we are not deceived by persuasive words of men, not cheated through philosophy, and we are complete in Christ.

I thank God that Christ became the source and fountain of wisdom for me. In Christ, God has revealed to me His eternal will and purposes for the human race and for me personally. Being wise leads to prosperity. Being wise with the wisdom that is in Christ Jesus leads to eternal, spiritual prosperity that begins now.

Righteousness

The second in Paul's list of provisions of the cross is righteousness. Righteousness is a legal term that has the same meaning as justice. The adjective forms are, "righteous," and "just." The derived definition of righteousness is "conformity to a law or standard." The most literal definition of righteousness is "right" or "straight." A law or a standard is used to measure the status or condition of the people or things that are governed by that law or standard. For example: a man breaks in to another man's home. The intruder tries to kill the homeowner, but the homeowner is able to defend himself and kills the intruder. The law declares that the homeowner is "justified" in killing the intruder. It is called justifiable homicide. He was right and his actions were in conformity to the provisions of the law. Now let's consider a different outcome to the same break in. Let's say the intruder kills the homeowner. Was he right or wrong? The law says he is a murderer and judgment must be executed. The execution of judgment is referred to as justice. The right thing is done in conformity to the law, which is the standard of what is right and appropriate.

Let's ponder one last example to illustrate the thought of "straightness" that is found in the word "righteousness." A building inspector who suspects a wall to be dangerously out of plumb, meaning it is not absolutely straight up and down, will use a level or a plumb bob. A plumb bob is nothing more than a weight on the end of a string. Gravity causes the weight to pull the string straight. Then the straight string is placed along side the wall. The straight string exposes the crookedness of the wall.

The United States is a country that is governed by law. We understand the importance of a justice system and are

quick to demand that justice be done. Yet, when it comes to acknowledging God's righteousness and our need to conform to what He, as the Creator of this universe, has declared to be right and wrong, the human race scoffs at the very idea of such a righteousness.

God is righteous. He always conducts Himself in conformity with His holy and pure nature. He always acts according to His revealed will. In dealing with man, either in judgment or blessing, He always acts in accordance to His Word. In the course of history, God has dealt with man according to the provisions of several different covenants at several different times. He has always kept His end of the deal because He is righteous. Man, on the other hand, since the sin of Adam, has not measured up to God's standard of right and wrong and therefore is declared to be unrighteous by the court of heaven. (*Romans 3:10 – 18, 23*) There are none righteous; all fall short. No human being measures up. We often try to measure ourselves by comparing ourselves to others. Such attempts to justify ourselves are futile. This is God's universe. We must use God's standard. To be declared unrighteous by the court of heaven is to be worthy of the just wrath of God.

The Bible teaches us that through one man, Adam, sin and death entered the world and spread to all men, that judgment has been issued resulting in condemnation and that all of Adam's race have been made sinners. (*Romans 5:12 – 21*) "That's not fair," cries the natural man. Nevertheless the reality of the human experience is that because of Adam we are born into the human race facing away from God and as we begin to live our life, we walk further and further from Him.

A modern day example of how parents can and do choose the conditions in which their children are born and

raised might be the tragic experience of children raised by parents who are drug dealers and who operate a Meth Lab in their home. It is tragic to see children raised in such an environment. The parents choose that life for those children. The children are exposed to all the dangers of that life. If they survive infancy and early childhood and are never delivered from that realm, what will they grow up to be? Drug dealers. The moment they cook their first batch of Meth or sell their first drug, they are criminals by practice.

Our father Adam, chose sin. We are born into the realm of sin. We are exposed to all of its dangers. We grow up sinning because that is the realm in which we live. We are separated from God. The moment we commit our first act of selfishness we become sinners by practice and fail to measure up to God's standard of right and wrong.

This condition of unrighteousness has a profound impact on every aspect of the existence of man. Many say, "righteousness, that's a religious term, that has nothing to do with me. I don't believe in religion." Wrong! The unrighteous state of man makes his life unsound, unstable, dangerous and ready to collapse at any moment. Let's go back to the example of the building inspector and his plumb bob. Why does he condemn the leaning wall? He condemns it because it's unsafe and dangerous. Why are individuals so unstable, insecure and self-destructive in their choices and habits? Why are they empty and unfulfilled despite the full lives that they live? It is because they are not right with God! To be right with God is to be sound, whole and complete.

Another example of why the unrighteous man is unfulfilled and empty is that of a fugitive from the law that is constantly on the run. Many times, after someone

has been a fugitive from the law, running and hiding from authorities, and then is caught, they often express relief, because a life on the run is not a pleasant, rewarding life. They are always looking over their shoulder, never able to settle down and lead a meaningful existence. Man is running from God. He cannot ever occupy himself in things that really matter in the light of eternity. He can never settle down and enjoy life because he is not right with the God of time and eternity who is the Judge of heaven and earth.

Provisional Righteousness - Thank God, Christ has become the source of righteousness before God! *“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” NKJV II Corinthians 5:21* This is the provisional aspect of God’s righteousness that is given to all who believe in Jesus Christ. We are given a right standing before God on the merit of the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Christ’s righteousness is imputed to our account. Jesus paid the debt of every sin that I ever have or ever will commit by the sacrifice of Himself on the cross. *“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” NKJV Romans 5:1, 2* It is well with my soul! Instead of being God’s enemy and running from Him, I have an eternal standing in His favor. I’m whole, spiritually and eternally sound in Christ. My certain expectation is eternal glory, not eternal condemnation.

Being made righteous does not mean that we are automatically made morally pure or that we never again sin against God’s standard. We never reach sinless perfection in this life. Many try to make themselves right

with God by trying to live righteously by observing the Ten Commandments or some other rule of morality. That would be like a mass murderer standing before a judge and saying, “I’d like to make up for all the murders I’ve committed and the evil influence I’ve had on others. I’d like to make it right. I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I’ll wash your car for the rest of my life. Or, I’ll never kill anybody ever again.” Even if he could do what he said he would do, would that satisfy the just demands of the court? No! The condemned has no right to negotiate his sentence. (*Romans 3:19 – 28*)

Sin requires the shedding of blood, death. (*Hebrews 9:22*) The price must be paid. God, from the beginning of time, revealed that in His standard of justice, a substitute, paying the price of sin, would be accepted on behalf of the offender. However, the substitute must be free of any sin himself. There is only one such substitute for the sin of man, God who became man, Jesus Christ who became a part of the human race that He might die as our representative before the Judge of Heaven and Earth. There is only one Mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ. (*I Timothy 2:5*) The shed blood of Christ satisfied the just demands of a righteous God. God’s provision of Grace satisfied in full His own righteousness.

Faith in Jesus Christ is the only source of righteousness, a right standing before God. (*Romans 3:19 – 28*) To pretend to be right with God through any other means than faith in Jesus Christ is to rebel against the righteousness of God and to remain condemned and bound for an eternity of eternal, just punishment apart from the presence of God. When you stand before God, when this short life is over, God will not weigh your good deeds against your bad deeds to see if your goods deeds

outweigh your bad ones and thus earn you eternal life. The shed blood of Jesus Christ is the only thing that appeases God's wrath. Thank God, my right standing before Him has been secured, not by my works, but by the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Practical Righteousness – Since our right standing before God has nothing to do with our works or morality, does that mean that there is no accountability or consequences for sin in the life of the believer? Please, read **Romans 6:1, 2, 12, 13, 20 – 23**. Sin always produces some form of death, even in the life of the believer who possesses eternal life. Being made righteous I have now been given the ability to daily live righteously to do what is right in God's sight on a daily basis. *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."* NKJV **Galatians 2:20**

To live righteously as a believer in Jesus Christ is to conform to God's standard, but that standard is not the Ten Commandments, which was His legal standard to condemn us as guilty. (**Romans 7:1 – 14**) The standard to which we must now conform is the will of our Father. It is the law of love that we must now obey. (**II Corinthians 5:14**) Works did not save us or make us righteous, but we were saved in order that we might engage in right works of faith and obedience to His loving instruction in every area of our life. (**Ephesians 2:8 – 10**) The Grace of our loving Father instructs us how to live righteously, how to do what is right in His sight. (**Titus 2:11 – 14**)

The failure of the believer in Jesus Christ to live righteously does not result in the loss of eternal life or his right standing before God. The guilt of sin is forever

removed from the believer. It is no longer an issue between the Judge and the condemned. However, disobedience is a serious matter between a Father and his child. Disobedience results in loving discipline, broken fellowship and loss of privilege in this life and in eternity. Let's suppose there is a judge who happens also to be a good, loving father. This father raises and instructs his child to do what is right. The child learns not to hit other children, not because his father threatens to have him arrested and dragged into court on charges of assault and battery, but because he knows that such behavior displeases his father. Disobedience also brings loving discipline and loss of privilege, which are unpleasant and avoidable with simple obedience. This is the difference between trying to live the Christian life by the standard of the moral law of the Old Testament and living a life of faith and looking to the revealed will of your Heavenly Father as your standard. Both standards have the same source, but the former is a cold formula that only arouses sin and condemns it, the other is a living relationship and communion, an interaction with God and leads to ruling and reigning with Christ.

This life of obedience to the will of the Father is only possible as we learn to yield to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. (*Romans 8:4, 14*) Because I love the Lord Jesus Christ, who made me right with God, I want to always please Him and never displease Him. For those who are willing to live righteously there is a glorious promise in *II Timothy 4:6 – 8*. The righteous Judge who is always faithful to do His part, will teach us to live righteously. He will give us the desire and the ability to do His will (*Philippians 2:13*) and then reward us with the highest place in glory.

There is yet a final stage of our righteousness that

comes from Jesus Christ. *“For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” NKJV Galatians 5:5* The hope of righteousness. When Jesus comes, we will receive a new body that is forever free of the weakness of the sinful carnal nature. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Never again will we displease our Heavenly Father in any measure. **(II Peter 3:13)** I’m looking forward to that day when all unrighteousness will be done away with and only that which conforms to the will of God will remain.

Thank God! Jesus has become righteousness for me, both provisionally and practically.

Sanctification

The words “holy,” “holiness,” “saints” and “sanctification” are all used to translate the same family of words in the original languages of the Bible. The work of holiness is the same as the work of sanctification. To be holy is to be a saint. The following is a definition of sanctification from the *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. *“The generic meaning of sanctification is “the state of proper functioning.” To sanctify someone or something is to set that person or thing apart for the use intended by its designer. A pen is “sanctified” when used to write. Eyeglasses are “sanctified” when used to improve sight. In the theological sense, things are sanctified when they are used for the purpose God intends. A human being is sanctified, therefore, when he or she lives according to God’s design and purpose.”*

This definition helps to explain why individuals who have never accepted Christ as their Savior are so miserable and unfulfilled. They are not living according

to God's design and purpose for their life. They need sanctification and the only source of sanctification is Jesus Christ. *"As it is written: There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."* **NKJV Romans 3:10 – 12** The Greek word translated "unprofitable" means "to render useless or unserviceable"

Man was created to have a relationship and fellowship with God. We were made to honor and serve God. We were created to commune with Him and benefit from His love and grace. When Adam sinned, that relationship with God was broken. He plunged his race into a broken condition of sin before God. Man is born in an unsanctified state, separated from God and His blessings. There is nothing in Adam or our fallen nature that God can use to glorify Himself or to allow Him to shower us with His goodness. *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells..."* **NKJV Romans 7:18** It is no wonder that the human race is in the condition that it is in. It's broken. Sin has rendered it unserviceable and useless to God. Governments can't fix it. Money can't fix it. Education can't fix it. Not even religion, technology or philosophy can fix it. There is only one solution that has the ability to repair the damage done to the human race.

Thank God, Christ became for us the source of sanctification in order to bring us back to a relationship and fellowship with God. That right relationship allows us to properly function as human beings, created in God's image, by honoring, worshipping and serving the Living God. *"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither*

fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” NKJV I Corinthians 6:9 – 11 We have been set apart from the rest of sinful humanity and unto God for His glory. God has rejected and judged the sinful nature of man and given us a New Nature that is able to worship Him in Spirit and in truth. He didn't just fix us; He made us new in Christ. *(II Corinthians 5:17)* Old things passed away for us when they were judged on the cross of Jesus Christ. New things were given to us when Jesus rose from the dead as evidence of His divine life that has been imputed to us. *(Hebrews 10: 8 – 10)* In Christ we have been given a new and living relationship with God. He is our Father and we are His children. Every child of God is set apart to partake of God's glory and to reflect that glory starting now in this life and continuing forever. *(II Thessalonians 2:13, 14 / Ephesians 2:4 – 7)*

My life now has meaning and purpose. I can enjoy life to its fullest and look forward to eternity because Jesus sanctified me by the shedding of His blood. God has set me apart from the rest of humanity and brought me into the kingdom of His dear Son where I can honor Him and He can shower me with His grace. What joy in knowing that my destiny is not shame and ruin, but grace and glory because the blood of Jesus Christ sanctifies me. I'm a saint of the Almighty God. Man didn't appoint me as a saint. God Himself set me apart for His glory.

Provisional Sanctification – Our new relationship with God as our Father that sets us apart from the world and unto God is the provisional aspect of sanctification

that every believer experiences and possesses when they accept Jesus as their Savior. This aspect of the work of sanctification is a finished work, done, once for all. We were set apart to God forever, never to return to a ruined and lost condition in sin. Notice the passages we have referenced all refer to sanctification in the past tense. “*We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.*” **Hebrews 10:10**

Practical Sanctification – Now let’s consider some passages that speak of the work of sanctification as a present and ongoing work. These verses show us the practical aspect of sanctification. Every believer is set apart from lost humanity and will bring glory to God in eternity. However, we are to begin bringing Him glory now in this life. Sadly, many saints do not conduct themselves in a holy manner. The separation between them and the unsaved is not clearly seen in their words, actions or attitudes. On a practical and daily level we are to continually be set apart further and further from the world and closer unto God and His ways.

“Therefore, “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.” Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” NKJV II Corinthians 6:17 / 7:1 The word in this passage translated “perfecting” means “to execute in order to bring it to its full end.” Remember, holiness is synonymous with sanctification. We are called on to perfect or execute our sanctification to its fullest end. **I Thessalonians 4:1 – 11** gives us the key that enables us to perfect holiness. To live a holy life is to live in accordance with God’s will for your life. It is a life of love and selflessness under the direction and enabling of the Holy

Spirit. Holiness will manifest itself in a life of moral purity, integrity, honesty and selfless service to God and others. A sanctified life is one that is characterized by the fruit of the Spirit. (*Galatians 5:22 – 26*) Such a life will enable us to function as we were intended to function on a very practical, personal and daily basis.

Many of God's people are as dysfunctional, miserable and unhappy as the world even though they have already been set apart from the world and its destiny of ruin. This is true because they are not practically or fully entering into their sanctification. They continue to live, act and talk like the world. They continue to be slaves to the dictates of their sinful nature.

Many Christians resemble the foreigner in the following illustration. A certain foreigner is brought over to the United States from an impoverished third world country and is made a US citizen in order to benefit from our wealth and privileges. The only problem is he never learns the language, never gets an education, never leaves his house, never gets a job. He continues to practice all the customs and superstitions of his old country even though he has been separated from that country by many, many miles. That individual will not fully benefit from his separation from his old impoverished country or benefit from his identity with his new country.

We need to live as those who are in Christ. It's the only way to happiness in this life. We are created in Christ that we might bring forth the fruit of righteousness. It is the purpose for which we were designed. In this life, a carnal Christian is no good to anyone. He's no good to himself or the world or, in this life at least, he is no good to God and His purposes. There is no better illustration of this reality than the one found in *Ezekiel 15:1 – 5* where Israel is rebuked for their unfaithfulness to live up to

God's purpose for them to produce spiritual fruit as a holy nation in the middle of the unholy nations. The wood of the grape vine is good for only one thing, producing grapes. If it doesn't do that, it's useless. We are created to honor God with a life of godliness. May that be our desire and purpose for living. He will do the work, if we will let Him. *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.* NKJV *Ephesians 5:25 – 27*

Redemption

We now come to the final provision of the cross listed in *I Corinthians 1:30*, redemption. The various words used in the Old Testament and New Testament to convey the thought of redemption have to do with the thought of deliverance. It is used in a variety of ways including – *"loosing from bondage, setting free from captivity or slavery, buying back something lost or sold, exchanging something in one's possession for something possessed by another, and ransoming – price paid to free one enslaved."* (*Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*)

Like righteousness, redemption is a legal term. In ancient cultures redemption was the legally recognized and sanctioned transaction used to deliver someone or something and therefore could not be challenged or denied. Redemption secures one's freedom as a matter of law. When a ransom had been paid, one could not come into a court of law and say, that's my slave, he was born in

my house. The true owner would simply point to the bill of sale that showed the ransom paid. Case closed.

But why and in what way has Jesus become redemption for us? Obviously, many of us know the answer to that question and rejoice in our redemption secured for us by Jesus. However, let's take time to build our case from the scriptural record, which is the only authority that the court of Heaven recognizes.

Man's need of redemption – *“For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.” NKJV Romans 7:14* Man is sold under sin. Paul is describing his Old sinful nature with which we are all born. In the context of Chapter 7, Paul is talking about the battle of the two natures of the believer, the Old and the New. There was a time in Paul's life as a Christian that he still found himself under certain aspects of sin's power. Later, we will discover that, for the believer, there is victory over sin and liberty from its daily influence and dominion in our lives. However, the unregenerate person has only the Old Nature that is completely sold under sin, provisionally and practically. That is, it is fully under sin's influence and dictates just like a slave that is under the cruel demands of his taskmaster.

When were we sold unto sin? Adam was created in a living relationship and fellowship with God. He was created in God's image in a state of power and authority. He had everything he needed to be happy and to flourish in the presence of God. He had the liberty to walk with God and commune with Him on a daily basis. Because of that liberty Adam prospered and flourished in Eden. He was God's creation and God's possession.

Then he was given an offer by Eve to join her in her disobedience to God's instruction not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He exchanged

his relationship of obedience with God for disobedience to the will of God. He chose one master over another. God created Adam with that ability to choose. He sold his race into the bondage of sin.

There are only two real powers in the universe that rule in two very different realms. There is God's realm of life and righteousness and there is the realm of sin where death and evil rule. Every human being is born into the realm of sin and falls under its power and influence.

Evidence – Men and women would deny that they are slaves to sin. “I’m my own man.” “I do what I want, when I want.” But the evidence is clear, man is under an influence that dictates every aspect of his existence. Denying that you are a slave does not make you free. *“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.” NKJV Romans 5:12* Sin entered the human race through Adam's disobedience and death through sin. The universal power of sickness and death over the whole human race is one of the greatest evidences of the dominion of sin. Death is a common experience with a common cause. It is a power and influence to which we must all yield sooner or latter.

In *John 8:34* Jesus said whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. Paul wrote in *Romans 14:23* that whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Faith is to believe what God says to be true and then to live accordingly. Every action, every thought of the unregenerate man or woman, whether done or thought with noble intentions or not, is done in unbelief and rebellion against the authority of God and is therefore sin. *“A haughty look, a proud heart, And the plowing of the wicked are sin.” NKJV Proverbs 21:4* They live under sin's authority and influence and it corrupts everything they do.

Result – *“For when you were slaves of sin, you were*

free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.” NKJV Romans 6:20, 21

The unsaved person is unable to enjoy the liberty of righteousness, incapable of conforming to God’s standard of right and wrong. Death rules supreme in the realm of sin. Death is separation from God and His blessings. (*II Thessalonians 1:9*)

Illustration & Type – To illustrate man’s need of redemption, God gave the people of Israel a provision in the Law of Moses that has come to be known as the law of the kinsman Redeemer. (*Leviticus 25* and the book of *Ruth*) In ancient Israel, God gave every tribe and every adult male a portion of the land of Canaan as an inheritance to be passed down from one generation to another. This inheritance was a part of their significance and identity. It gave them liberty and enabled them to prosper. To lose your inheritance was to be without hope and without standing in Israel. Sadly, there were times when an individual would become so far in debt for one reason or another that he had to sell his land and himself to another. He lived and served another. You can imagine the sad and tragic condition of such an individual. However, God made a provision that the individual and his possessions could lawfully be bought back and restored to him. A close relative who was both rich enough and willing to buy back his brother and his inheritance would be allowed to do so. When the ransom was paid, redemption was made and the man’s inheritance was restored.

Adam, by choosing unbelief and disobedience, lost his relationship and fellowship with God and all of the blessings that come from walking in fellowship with the Living God. His race is hopelessly lost in the poverty of

sin. Looking at all the sorrow, sadness, evil and hopelessness, is it not easy to see the spiritual poverty of the human race? There is only one hope for the human race. We need a near Kinsman, a Redeemer who is both willing to pay the debt of our sin and who has the wealth to do so. Our Redeemer must be One who Himself is not bound by the same poverty of sin as ourselves. We need a relative who is rich in an unbroken relationship and fellowship with God. We need One who is rich in righteousness, unstained by sin. Man has only One such relative. *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.” NKJV II Corinthians 8:9* Jesus was made redemption for us by becoming both the Redeemer and the Ransom. *“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” NKJV I Timothy 2:5, 6*

Provisional Redemption - We now have a new Master. We are slaves of love to the One who redeemed us by His own blood. (*I Peter 1:18 – 21*) Our hope, our expectation is now in and from God. We belong to Him. Sin no longer has any legal claim on God’s people. This is the provisional aspect of our redemption that every child of God possesses. I have been restored to a living relationship and fellowship with God. My sins are forgiven and the debt of my sin that demanded the just wrath of God has been paid in full.

How long does our redemption last? *“Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” NKJV Hebrews 9:12* The sacrifice of the cross was not a down payment. It was not for a few

of my sins. It was to pay the debt of all my sins, once for all. God will never again see me as a debtor to His righteousness. Jesus became poor that I might be made rich in His righteousness. When Jesus redeemed us, He redeemed us to a far greater position than what Adam possessed before the fall. Adam was given dominion over the earth. In Christ we have been given eternal life, the hope of glory and the privilege to rule and reign with Christ over heaven and earth from the very throne room of heaven. (**Revelation 5:9, 10** – “on the earth” is more accurately translated “over the earth.”)

Believers are still subject to physical death. Physical death is a result of sin. We could liken this fact to one who tries to come and claim a slave they once owned, but for whom a ransom has been paid. He may snatch the ex-slave for a moment, but the courts quickly step in and say, no you have no claim, the ransom has been paid. Death could not hold my Redeemer, it will not hold me. (**Job 19:25 – 27**) My spirit and soul will immediately be released into the presence of God, which is a far better state than living in this life. (**Philippians 1:23**) My body will for a time be allowed to remain in the grave, but even that is temporary. “*In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*” NKJV **Ephesians 1:13, 14** He purchased me, body, soul and spirit. Death is not my portion. My inheritance in Christ is eternal life. Shame is not my lot. I’m reserved for glory. Poverty is not my destiny. I’m eternally rich in Christ. (**Revelation 21:1 – 4**) If it were not for the hope of redemption, I would not be able to face the things in this life that make me weep and sorrow and that cause me pain. I would not

be able to face death. But, my Redeemer has already paid the full price for my release from the lasting effects of those things and one day He is coming back to pick up what He has already paid for. Glory to my Redeemer!

Practical Redemption – We now come to the practical aspect of Jesus being made redemption for us. The practical aspect of redemption has to do with our everyday life and how our redemption comes to bear on our choices in life. We have been redeemed from the very power of sin in our day-to-day life. This aspect of our redemption is not automatically a reality in the experience of every believer. This personal, daily victory over sin is only a reality as each individual is faithful to obey the will of God on an continual basis. The way of victory over the practice of sin is an area of the Christian experience with which a great number of God’s people struggle.

“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.” NKJV I Corinthians 6:19, 20

We are to glorify God in our body, because we are bought, redeemed. Knowing this, our words and actions are to reflect that we have been delivered from sin. Our life is to be characterized by faith and obedience to the will of God in every area of our life. If this were automatic, then Paul’s exhortation to do so would be pointless. After salvation, many of God’s people remain slaves to the dictates of sin, even though they have been fully redeemed from its guilt and penalty. Those believers whose lives are characterized by sin and disobedience to the will of God are described as carnal and babes, spiritually immature. (*I Corinthians 3:1 – 3*) They obey the dictates of their fleshly nature of sin.

The consequences of such carnality are that one falls into the snares and chains of the purposes of Satan. (*II Timothy 2:23 – 26*) He desires to rob God of His glory by making His children a reproach to their Father by stealing their joy, peace and spiritual fruit. Carnality also results in loss of eternal reward and a full inheritance. (*Revelation 3:11, II John 1:8*)

Four Scriptural Keys To Living Free From The Power Of Sin – We find in the New Testament four keys to living free from the power and influence of sin. They are: 1) The New Nature, 2) The Word, 3) The Spirit, and 4) Proper Fellowship. Because Jesus went to the cross, all who believe in Him have been provided these four things. When applied, they will always result in a godly life.

1) The New Nature – If you are going to live a life of godliness that honors your Redeemer, the first thing you must understand is that, as a child of God, you now possess two natures, the Old sinful nature with which you were born and the New Nature that you received when you were spiritually born again. Paul told the Corinthians that all who are in Christ are new creatures and that old things have passed away. (*II Corinthians 5:17*) Does that mean that the desire and ability of the Christian to sin is completely removed or eradicated? Of course not, experience and sound doctrine make it clear that believers can and do sin. (*I John 1:8 – 10*) However, the Bible declares the truth that the provision has been made for us to live differently than before we were saved. Real changes have been brought to bear in our hearts and minds. Before, we had no choice but to live according to the dictates of sin. Now things have changed. Now we have a choice.

“Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism

*into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.” NKJV **Romans 6:4 – 6*** Our identification with Christ has made these changes possible. All that we were in Adam was judged and stripped of life and power before God through the sacrifice of Christ. My great-grandfather, C. E. Foster, has been quoted as saying, *“Some people preach suppression, hold the old man down, but that is not according to Scripture. Others teach eradication, to be sanctified by a second definite work of grace, have the old man eradicated root and branch. But that is not scriptural, either. The Bible teaches Paul’s message to us is not suppression, not eradication, but identification. We were identified with Christ in His death, His burial and His resurrection.”*

The following illustration may help you to understand the inward battle that goes on within the believer concerning the struggle with sin even though we have already been provisionally redeemed, liberated from the guilt and penalty of sin.

At the time of this writing, the United States is in the middle of a post war conflict in the country of Iraq. Before the war, Sadaam Hussein was the absolute dictator of Iraq. His word was law and the citizens of Iraq had only one choice, obey. Sadaam was overthrown and defeated in a decisive victory by an overwhelming force of American and coalition troops that liberated Iraq and now occupy the country. The cost of the liberation was paid at the expense of the liberators. The war was won and

Sadaam overthrown, but at the present time, Sadaam is suspected of still being alive somewhere in Iraq. Many Iraqis don't know how to act. Many are still afraid of Sadaam and are afraid to speak against him since that has been their way of life for decades. His influence still has an affect upon them, even though he has been decisively removed from power. Many suspect Sadaam or at least those closest to him are behind the many terrorists' attacks that are taking place in Iraq against American interests and against the Iraqi people. Yet despite the ongoing battles and post war conflicts, things are different now. The Iraqis now have a choice to enjoy the benefits of freedom from Hussein. That choice of liberty is something they did not possess before. As the Iraqi people learn to identify themselves with the American forces and the newly formed government, and as they rely on American power and resources, they can begin to enjoy the prosperity of peace and Sadaam's influence over the daily routine of the Iraqis will diminish. But if many Iraqi's continue to choose to identify with Sadaam and his old ways, or resist the American backed government, the country will be in a constant state of conflict for a long time to come.

The power and authority of sin was defeated on the cross of Jesus Christ. The Old Man, all that we were in Adam, including the sinful, fleshly nature, the power within us that pulls us away from God and towards all that is against God, was stripped of its authority and right to rule us. Before, we were helpless to resist sin's power, but now things are different. We've been given a new life. Like Sadaam, (at the time of this writing) the sin nature doesn't just go away. It is not annihilated. It still tries to exercise power and resist the clear superiority of the new life of Christ that has come to occupy the heart of

the believer. As we learn to identify with the Christ life within, we will begin to experience the reality of our liberty in Christ from sin. If we rely on the power and resources of the New Man, we will begin to enjoy the blessings of the liberty purchased for us by the victory of the cross. If we do not, our life will be characterized by the constant inner conflict described by Paul in **Romans 7:14 – 25**. Please, take time to read **Romans 7**. Paul speaks of two “I’s,” “two laws,” of the “sin dwelling within” and the “inner spiritual man.” This conflict with the sinful nature within is a lifelong conflict, but the good news is that we need not daily loose the battle. We can always overcome the temptation to sin by relying on the strength of the inner man. At the stage in Paul’s Christian experience of which he wrote in **Romans 7**, he had not yet learned that secret.

Some may ask, “Why did God choose to leave the Old Nature within the believer?” God is certainly able to eradicate the sin nature within us, and will do so in eternity, but God has chosen to allow the sin nature to remain in the believer that we might be taught and prepared now to rule and reign with Christ in eternity. We must learn the way of victory in this life if we are going to sit with Christ in His throne. We must live by faith, trusting and relying on God’s Word and faithfulness to do for us, in us and through us what He said He would do. (**Romans 5:17**)

The way of victory over sin is not eradication. Sin still dwells within and resists the will of God. Nor is it by suppression. We cannot try to beat back the appetites of our Old Nature with will power or rules and regulations. The Iraqi people were unable to throw off Sadaam’s chains by their own power and they are still powerless to resist his terrorists’ attacks by their own power. The only

way of victory for the believer is through identifying ourselves with and relying on the power and provisions of the New Nature, the Christ within.

Since our victory is found only in the power and provisions of the New Man, let's look at how He is described in the New Testament. In *II Peter 1:2 – 4* it is described as the divine nature. It is the very nature of God that resides within us. In *I John 3:9* we are told that that nature, which is born in us of God, cannot sin. *Philippians 2:12, 13* reveals to us that it is God, that divine nature within, that works in us godliness and obedience to the will of God. We read in *Ephesians 4:17 – 24* that we are to put off the habits or lifestyle of the Old Nature and put on the provisions of the New. Just as we go to the closet each day and choose what clothes we are going to put on today, we must daily go to the Lord in prayer and choose to walk in the power of the Christ within. I am weak, but He is strong.

Please, take time to read *Romans 6*. In *verse 11* we are told to reckon, which means to count with God. In other words, we need to say what God says about our circumstances, our choices and ourselves. Instead of constantly making excuses for our sin, we need to say, “*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*” *Philippians 4:13* Thank God for the Christ within that is able to resist every temptation. When we do fail, we must still reckon with God and call it what it is, sin. Such reckoning will lead us to repent and return to a life of obedience.

In *Romans 6: 12, 13* we read the following phrases; “do not let,” “do not present... to sin,” “present,” or yield “to righteousness.” Sin for the believer is not an inevitable, unavoidable, irresistible force. Sin is a choice not to yield to the Christ within. The way to victory over

sin in your daily life is to choose, today, to yield your will to the will of God.

Romans 6:16 tells us of the importance of simple obedience. Simply do what the Christ within compels you to do. The New Nature cannot sin. It can only do the will of God. Obey it and you will do the will of God. Godliness, for the believer in Jesus Christ, is as simple as choosing to obey the will of God.

2) The Word – The second key to an overcoming life of godliness is an understanding and an application to our lives of the Bible. If you are going to be strong in the inner man, you need a steady, well-balanced diet of spiritual food. (**Hebrews 5:12 – 14**) The spiritually mature, by an understanding of the Word, are able to discern between good and evil, righteousness and sin. The Bible reveals the will and purposes of God. If we are ignorant of that will and those purposes, how can we possibly live according to them? Knowing and obeying the truth of God's Word will free you from the ignorance of sin. (**John 8:31, 32**)

Paul wrote the Thessalonian saints and commended them for their exemplary faith. How were the Thessalonians able to walk worthy of the Lord? They received Paul's doctrine as God's Word and obeyed it. That Word of God became a power, a force, and an energy that worked in them effectually to produce a life of godliness. (**I Thessalonians 2:11 – 13**)

Colossians 3:16, 17 teaches us that we should let the word of God dwell in our hearts, that is, let it take up residence in our heart in order that whatever we do or say is done for the glory of Jesus Christ. The Psalmist who wrote **Psalms 119:9 – 11** understood the power of hiding the Word in his heart in order that he might not sin against God.

This is why the study of the Bible is so important. Carnality and all of its bondage and loss will characterize Christians who are ignorant of the teachings and instructions of the Bible. Do you want to live a life of godliness that glorifies the Lord? Dedicate yourself to the study of God's Word. (*II Timothy 2:15 / II Timothy 3:16, 17 / I Timothy 4:12 – 16*)

3) The Spirit – The third key to godly living is found in *Romans 8:1 – 17, 26 – 27*. This passage reveals to us the secret that the Apostle Paul learned in order to overcome his constant failure in his struggle with indwelling sin that is described in *Romans 7*. The way of victory over sin is to fully surrender to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In *Romans 8:2* Paul describes two laws, principles or forces; the law of the Spirit and the law of sin and death. The Spirit frees us from sin because He is more powerful if we will yield to Him. He reveals to us the will of God and then enables us to obey. (*Philippians 2:13*)

We find the phrase, “*according to the flesh*” in *Romans 8:5* In *Romans 8:8* we have the phrase, “*in the flesh.*” These are important phrases to understand if we are going to understand the way of victory over sin. All who are not saved are in the flesh. They are citizens of the realm of sin and death. Those in the flesh cannot please God. Believers are not in the flesh, but can walk according to the flesh. The saved can act and think like the unsaved. This does not please God. To be carnally minded, which is the only mind the unsaved have, is for a Christian to think like the world. To be carnally minded is death. (*Romans 8:6*) Carnally minded believers experience death to testimony, spiritual fruit and reward.

All believers possess the life of Christ within as well as the Holy Spirit, by virtue of being partakers of the

divine nature, which we receive from the Triune God. (*II Peter 1:4*) Therefore we are not in the flesh, but in Christ and He is in us. (*Romans 8:9 – 11*) The Spirit dwells or has taken up residence in every believer as described in *Romans 8:9*. He has sealed us unto God. (*Ephesians 1:13*) He is the agent of our new birth and is a part of that divine nature of which all believers have partaken. This gives us the potential for full victory over sin in our lives. However, there is a fuller sense in which we should allow the Spirit to dwell in us or to inhabit our heart, mind and body as His own abode. It is to give Him full control of our life. Giving the Spirit full control of your life entails seeking and receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, as well as daily seeking His direction and enabling to do the will of God. Those that are led by the Spirit are mature sons that will enter into a full inheritance with Christ. (*Romans 8:14 – 17*)

To be led of the Spirit is to consider Him to be the One in charge of your body, your life. (*I Corinthians 6:19, 20*) Our body is His Temple. We need to stop acting like our life is ours to live. You wouldn't walk into someone else's house and start moving things around or bringing things in to that house that you knew would upset the owner. Don't live your life without seeking the direction of the Holy Spirit. "*I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*" NKJV *Galatians 5:16, 17* This is the way of victory over sin. If you don't take time to seek and be sensitive to the Spirit's direction, you will be characterized by carnality. Pray, read the Word of God that the Holy Spirit inspired, meditate on it. Give the Holy Spirit opportunity to guide you.

4) Proper Fellowship – The fourth and final key to

victory over sin is to seek out proper fellowship. I want to be careful with this point, because it is possible in some rare circumstances, that this key element may not be available to us. In such cases, it is important to understand that the New Nature, the Word and the Holy Spirit are quite sufficient for us to live a life of godliness. In those rare occasions where fellowship with godly people is not available, God will enable you to live godly.

Nevertheless, God's order for His people is that we assemble ourselves together and fellowship with one another for the purpose of promoting godly living in ourselves and in one another. This is one of God's gracious provisions to us, the fellowship of the body of Christ and to deliberately choose to neglect it leads to carnality. *Ephesians 4:11 – 16* teaches us that there is strength, health, maturity for every member of the body as each one does their part when we come together to minister and to be ministered to.

“Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.” Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.” NKJV I Corinthians 15:33, 34 Many believers never learn to live godly lives because they constantly surround themselves with ungodly friends and counselors. Their ungodly or carnal friends and family have more influence on them than does the Christ within or the Word and the Spirit.

Obviously, we are called to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel to the lost of this world. We have constant interaction with the ungodly at work, school and in the community; and we are to take advantage of those opportunities to represent Christ and His love to them. However, we are not to look to those relationships for the kind of companionship that is necessary for mutual

strength, comfort, encouragement and guidance. (**II Corinthians 6:14—18 / Amos 3:3**)

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” NKJV Hebrews 10:24, 25 Those who neglect the assembling of themselves together with God’s people are characterized by carnality and spiritual immaturity because they are rebelling against God’s order for their spiritual growth and well-being.

“Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” NKJV II Timothy 2:22 We are to pursue righteousness together with others who are doing the same. It will strengthen and encourage you in your walk of godliness.

Conclusions

Those who are characterized by carnality and disobedience to the will of God have failed to avail themselves of one or all of these key provisions of the Cross of Christ. They fail to enter into the practical aspect of their redemption. Those who are characterized by godliness are not superhuman. They are simply those who have availed themselves of God’s gracious provision of a New Nature, the Word of God, the Holy Spirit and proper fellowship.

“For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.” NKJV Romans 5:17 Because Jesus became for me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, I have been given the

ability to reign over sin in my life and to walk in godliness. The reward of reigning over sin in this life will be to reign with Christ in eternity. To identify with the Christ within today will result in being identified with the Christ revealed and glorified in eternity. *Revelation 19:6 – 8* reveals that the eternal partner of Christ, the Lamb's Wife, will have made herself ready to rule together with Him by preparing herself a wedding garment that is made up of the righteous acts of the saints represented by the clean, white, stain free linen. Sin and carnality are stains and blemishes in the lives of God's people. Those who overcome sin and learn to walk in victory are preparing themselves to be the Lamb's Wife. They are sewing their wedding dress now. Thank God for the privilege of being identified with Christ in all His power, wealth and glory!

Without **wisdom** man is left to make foolish, self-destructive choices that will leave him spiritually bankrupt. Without **righteousness**, man stands condemned and guilty before the Judge of heaven and earth. Without **sanctification**, man is in a condition of malfunction. He is useless to God, man and himself. His life has no purpose. Without **redemption**, man is bound by the cruel master of sin and is without liberty to serve and worship God. Praise His name, Christ became for us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption provisionally and practically!

Douglas L. Crook, Pastor
Abundant Grace Fellowship
4535 Wadsworth Blvd.
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033
303-423-2625
dlcweston@juno.com