

Truths Christians Forgot

Series 1-15

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Introduction to the Series: Truths Christians Forgot

There are certain phrases in the Bible that do not merely inform the mind. They expose the heart. They do not walk into a room quietly and ask for permission to be heard. They confront. They rebuke. They uncover. One of those phrases is the repeated biblical challenge, “Know ye not?” That question is not aimed at pagans who never heard the truth. It is aimed at people who should have known better. It is addressed to those who had already been given light, already been taught, already been warned, and yet were living beneath the truth they professed to believe. That is what makes it so piercing. It reveals one of the central tragedies of the Christian life, not merely ignorance of truth, but forgetfulness of truth already revealed.

That is the burden behind this series. *Truths Christians Forgot* is not an attempt to manufacture sensational ideas, hidden codes, or novel teachings that no one has ever seen before. This series is built on the exact opposite principle. It is a return to plain things. It is a recovery of truths that were already there in the word of God, truths that believers should have known, should have remembered, and should have been living by. The problem in much of modern Christianity is not that the Bible has failed to speak clearly. The problem is that men have heard clear truth and then drifted from it. They have grown familiar with the language of Scripture while becoming increasingly distant from its force. They have learned how to repeat the right phrases without allowing those phrases to govern the inner life.

That is why the repeated “Know ye not?” passages are so powerful. Paul was not speaking to total strangers of Christian doctrine when he used those words. He was speaking to churches, to professing believers, to men and women who had enough truth to walk straight and still managed to wander. He asked, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?” “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?” “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?” In each case, he was not unveiling some secret known only to spiritual elites. He was dragging neglected truth back into the center of the conscience. He

was saying, in effect, You already had enough light to know better. Why are you living like this?

That same rebuke belongs to this generation. Never has there been more Bible access with less Bible weight. Men carry multiple copies of Scripture, hear sermons every week, consume endless religious content, and still live with astonishing shallowness. Churches are filled with people who know enough doctrine to argue online, but not enough fear of God to govern their private lives. They know enough verses to speak Christian language, but not enough submission to let that truth search them. They know enough about grace to talk about liberty, but not enough holiness to stop using grace as a covering for compromise. They know enough about salvation to say they are secure, but not enough about sanctification to realize the Christian life is a race, a war, a stewardship, and a calling. In other words, modern Christianity is suffering from a dangerous kind of amnesia. It has not always lost the truth from the page. It has lost it from the pulse.

This series is meant to confront that forgetfulness head on. Each essay takes up one of those neglected truths and presses it back into view. Some of those truths deal with identity, what happened when a believer was united with Christ in death and resurrection. Some deal with holiness, what it means for the body to belong to Christ and to be the temple of the Holy Ghost. Some deal with obedience, reward, discipline, self-examination, and the judgment seat of Christ. Some deal with separation, worldliness, the spread of tolerated corruption, and the danger of false assurance. But underneath every subject runs the same burden. Christians often fail not because truth was unavailable, but because it was neglected. They did not hold fast what they knew. They did not continue in the things they had learned. They did not let plain Bible truth remain alive in the conscience.

That is why this series does not end merely with the “Know ye not?” passages. It broadens into the wider biblical burden of remembrance itself. Scripture repeatedly tells believers to remember, to be mindful, to continue, to hold fast, to stir up pure minds by way of remembrance, and to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints. The Christian life was never meant to run on novelty. It was meant to be rooted in truth. It was never meant to be sustained by trends, entertainment, and emotional stimulation. It was meant to be built on things most surely believed. The old paths are still the safe paths. The old truths are still the strong truths. And the saints who remain grounded in them will still be standing when the restless spirit of the age has exhausted itself chasing one new thing after another.

So this series is both doctrinal and deeply practical. It is doctrinal because it insists that real Christian living begins with real Christian truth. It is practical because it shows that what a believer remembers or forgets will shape the entire direction of his life. Forget that your body belongs to Christ, and bodily sin becomes easier to excuse. Forget that sin

enslaves, and compromise begins to look manageable. Forget that a little leaven spreads, and corruption is tolerated in the name of peace. Forget that the race must be run, and spiritual laziness starts masquerading as contentment. Forget that friendship with the world is enmity with God, and separation begins to look extreme instead of sane. Forget that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, and false assurance begins to settle in where holy fear should have lived. The truths are not disconnected. They form a whole structure. Pull one loose, and others begin to weaken with it.

My prayer for this series is simple. I do not want it merely to be admired for being sharp, thorough, or convicting. I want it to be useful. I want it to serve as a wake-up call to believers who have grown too comfortable with truths they no longer tremble at. I want it to expose the danger of managing appearances while neglecting reality. I want it to strip away religious laziness and spiritual fog. I want it to help readers return to the plain words of God with fresh seriousness. And above all, I want it to point back to the Lord Jesus Christ, because every one of these forgotten truths finds its center in Him. He is the One who saved us, indwells us, owns us, sanctifies us, judges our works, calls us to holiness, and prepares us for glory.

So as you step into this series, do not read it like a spectator. Read it like a believer under examination. Read it like someone who knows the word of God has the right to search motives, expose compromise, and call things by their proper names. Read it not merely asking what others have forgotten, but what you may have allowed to slip from the center of your own life. The issue is not whether the truth is still in the Bible. The issue is whether it is still alive in you. And if this series does what it ought to do, it will not merely remind you of things you once knew. It will press those truths back into the conscience with enough force that they are no longer treated as old information, but as living realities from the mouth of God.

1 of 15: Truths Christians Forgot - Know Ye Not?

Introduction

There are some phrases in the King James Bible that do not stroll into a room politely, shake your hand, and sit down for a calm little conversation. They come in like a sheriff with a warrant. They come in like a prophet with his finger in your face. They come in like the Lord Himself overturning tables in the temple. One of those phrases is this one: "Know ye not?" When the Holy Ghost puts that phrase in your Bible, He is not asking for information because He lacks it. He is not trying to discover what you think. He is not opening the floor

for a committee meeting, a panel discussion, or a theological guessing game. He is rebuking somebody who ought to have known better. He is putting a spotlight on neglected truth. He is calling out spiritual forgetfulness in people who had the light, had the words, had the preaching, had the warning, and still managed to live like God had never said a thing. That little phrase is one of the sharpest blades in the New Testament because it exposes a problem that has not gone away. Men do not always perish because truth was unavailable. Many times they stumble, drift, fall, corrupt, and collapse because truth was available in abundance and they ignored it like fools.

That is the condition of modern Christianity in a nutshell. Never in the history of the church has there been so much access to so much Bible material with so little obedience to the plain words on the page. A man can carry a Bible in one hand, a phone in the other, search ten commentaries, listen to forty sermons, quote five Greek words he cannot define, and still live like a baptized heathen with a church schedule. He can talk about grace while living in lust. He can talk about liberty while serving sin. He can talk about the Holy Ghost while defiling the temple. He can talk about the kingdom while living like this world is all there is. He can talk about discernment while being eaten alive by carnality. That is why the phrase “Know ye not?” hits so hard. It strips away the excuse that the believer just did not know. It puts the issue where it belongs, on memory, honesty, and obedience. The tragedy in the church right now is not simply doctrinal ignorance, although there is plenty of that. The greater tragedy is neglected knowledge. Men have heard the truth often enough to choke on it, but they do not let it govern their conduct. They know enough to do right and still choose wrong. They have been warned and still wander. They have been instructed and still act shocked when sin bites them like the serpent it always was.

That is why this series matters, and that is why this opening essay matters. We are not digging for some mysterious code hidden in the backside of a lexicon. We are not trying to manufacture new light because the old Book somehow ran out of power. We are not going hunting for sensational novelties to keep religious consumers entertained. This series is about recovering truths Christians forgot. It is about dragging neglected doctrine back into the center of the conscience where it belongs. It is about taking the words “Know ye not?” seriously enough to let them search the life, judge the heart, expose the compromise, and strip the varnish off modern religious gamesmanship. Paul uses that phrase in Romans and Corinthians because the churches he wrote to were full of saints who had drifted into confusion, compromise, pride, sensuality, party spirit, doctrinal weakness, and moral contradiction. James uses the same kind of language because believers were flirting with the world like spiritual adulterers. The rebuke still applies because the disease is still the same. Forgotten truth always leads to defeated living. And a people who forget what God

said are only a few steps away from losing their power, their testimony, their joy, and their ability to tell the truth without apologizing for it.

1. “Know Ye Not?” Is the Holy Ghost Rebuking Spiritual Amnesia

When Paul says, “Know ye not?” he is not introducing a fresh doctrine to a room full of blank slates. He is putting his finger on truth those people should have already understood. Romans 6:3 says, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Romans 6:3). Romans 6:16 says, “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey” (Romans 6:16). Romans 7:1 says, “Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?” (Romans 7:1). Then Paul turns around in 1 Corinthians and starts firing the same question like a machine gun because that church was stuffed full of saved people acting like unsaved idiots. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God” (1 Corinthians 3:16). “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (1 Corinthians 5:6). “Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” (1 Corinthians 6:3). “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?” (1 Corinthians 6:9). “What? know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?” (1 Corinthians 6:15). “What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body?” (1 Corinthians 6:16). “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost” (1 Corinthians 6:19). “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?” (1 Corinthians 9:24). Then 2 Corinthians 13:5 asks, “Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” and James 4:4 asks, “Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” That is not accidental language. That is inspired repetition.

The repetition tells you something. The Holy Ghost knows that one of the chief weaknesses of the believer is not merely lack of instruction but failure to retain, apply, and live by instruction already given. The Christian life is not lost because God was silent. It is lost because man is careless. A saint sits under preaching long enough to know that sin enslaves, then toys with sin like it is a household pet. He hears that his body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, then fills that temple with trash from the world. He hears that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, then acts surprised when tolerated corruption spreads through the church, the home, or the heart. He hears that the friendship of the world is enmity with God, then spends his days seeking the smile of the very system that crucified his Lord. That is what “Know ye not?” exposes. It exposes the insanity of hearing the truth, affirming the truth, and then living in contradiction to the truth.

There is something else in that phrase that modern churchianity hates. It assumes responsibility. It does not treat the saint like a helpless victim of every appetite, influence,

trend, and mood that blows through town. It treats him like a man accountable for what he has been taught. That is why the phrase hits harder than a sweet devotional booklet and a cup of coffee at a men's breakfast. The church likes its rebukes diluted now. It likes correction wrapped in therapy jargon and softened with apology. The Holy Ghost did not speak that way. He said, "Know ye not?" because the people ought to have known. That phrase tears through excuses. It tells the believer, You had light and did not walk in it. You had warning and did not heed it. You had doctrine and did not submit to it. It is the rebuke of spiritual amnesia. And once you understand that, the whole series opens up because the rest of these essays are going to deal with truths Christians should have remembered if they wanted victory, purity, power, discernment, and peace.

2. Carnality Grows Where Truth Is Forgotten

The Corinthian church is one of the greatest case studies in the New Testament of what happens when saints have truth in their heads but not rule in their hearts. Paul says to them, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:1). There were saved people in that church, indwelt people, gifted people, informed people, and yet Paul could not address them like grown men. Why? Because they were living beneath the truth they possessed. They had party spirit. They had envy. They had strife. They had moral disorder. They had disorder at the Lord's Table. They had confusion over gifts. They had arrogance in the face of open sin. They had knowledge, but they did not have mastery over themselves. That is the perfect setting for the phrase "Know ye not?" because it shows that carnality does not always grow in the dark. Sometimes it grows in a place where truth is preached but not obeyed.

That is the thing some believers never seem to learn. Bible exposure alone does not make you spiritual. Knowing the right answers does not make you clean. Being able to argue doctrine online does not make you holy. Being familiar with the passages does not mean you are submitted to the passages. The devil is not scared of a man who can quote a verse while living like a fool. The flesh is perfectly content to wear orthodox language so long as it keeps the steering wheel. The Corinthian believers could talk enough religion to impress half the internet if they were around today, but Paul cut through all that smoke and called them carnal because their conduct contradicted their confession. That is why he keeps saying, "Know ye not?" He is not impressed by what they can recite. He is confronting what they have failed to practice.

Modern Christianity is drowning in that same contradiction. Men can build ministries, podcasts, channels, and platforms while living in private defeat. Churches can have branding, lighting, programs, and polished speech while the spiritual backbone of the place is made of wet cardboard. Families can sit in church every week and still be ruled by

bitterness, vanity, lust, and worldliness because hearing truth has become a ritual instead of a call to action. That is carnality. It is not always open wickedness with a neon sign over it. Sometimes it is simply truth neglected long enough that flesh takes over the operating system. And once flesh is running the thing, you can preach, sing, post, gather, shout, clap, and still be spiritually anemic. Carnality grows where truth is forgotten, and the Holy Ghost says, “Know ye not?” because forgetting truth is never a neutral event. It always has consequences.

3. Christians Forgot What Happened to Them in Christ

Paul begins his line of “Know ye not?” questions in Romans by grounding everything in the believer’s union with Jesus Christ. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Romans 6:3). There is the first forgotten truth. Something happened to the believer when he got saved. Salvation was not a religious upgrade, not a denominational initiation, not a moral renovation project, and not a ceremonial entry into a church club. The believer was placed into Jesus Christ. He was identified with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection. Paul says later, “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). That means the Christian is not supposed to think of himself as merely the old man with better habits. He is a man identified with the crucified and risen Christ.

You would not know that from the way many Christians live. They talk as if salvation left the center of gravity untouched. The old life still rules, the old appetites still define them, the old excuses still govern them, and Christ has been reduced to a helper on the side instead of the Lord of a new creation. But if you have been baptized into Jesus Christ, then the old life has been judged at Calvary. The believer is called to “reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11). That is not positive thinking. That is doctrinal reckoning based on a spiritual fact. Christians forgot that they do not begin the Christian life by trying to improve the flesh. They begin by standing in what God already did in Christ. They forgot that self is not to be polished and presented. It is to be counted as judged.

That forgetfulness explains a mountain of defeat. If a man thinks the Christian life is basically self-improvement, he will always end up either proud or crushed. He will be proud when he thinks he is doing better than the other fellow, or crushed when he realizes his flesh is worse than he admitted. But if he remembers that his standing is in Christ, his life is hidden with Christ in God, and his calling is to walk in the power of the risen life, then he has the right foundation to fight sin without trusting the flesh. That is why Paul says, “Know ye not?” He is bringing the believer back to the starting point. Christians forgot what

happened to them in Christ, and when they forget that, they start trying to live the Christian life in the strength of the very nature God judged. That is like trying to fix a rotten bridge by painting it.

4. Christians Forgot That Sin Makes Servants

Romans 6:16 is one of the plainest verses in the New Testament, which is probably why the flesh hates it so much. “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey” (Romans 6:16). There is no mystery there. Whatever you yield to, you serve. Whatever you repeatedly obey, you come under. Whatever you keep feeding, you empower. Paul then sets the two roads side by side, “whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Romans 6:16). That means sin is not just an occasional misstep. It is a master looking for servants. Righteousness is not just a nice concept. It is a governing path for a yielded life. But modern Christianity has talked so much sloppy nonsense about grace that many believers now act like sin is a minor inconvenience instead of a tyrant.

That is not how your Bible speaks. Sin promises liberty and delivers bondage. It smiles like a salesman and then locks the door behind you. It tells a man he can dabble without consequence, flirt without falling, indulge without chains, and compromise without surrendering ground. That is a lie from the pit. The Bible says the thing you yield to becomes your practical lord. That is why so many Christians are miserable. They are saved men with the wrong master running the daily operation. Bitterness tells them where to go. Lust tells them where to look. Pride tells them how to answer. Covetousness tells them what they must have. Envy tells them whom to resent. Fear tells them what not to do. And because they have repeated those acts of surrender over and over, the habits get stronger and the conscience gets weaker.

The church has not helped much because it often speaks about these things with the urgency of a sleepy librarian. The Holy Ghost did not speak that way. He said, “Know ye not?” because Christians should know that repeated obedience creates bondage. Grace does not remove that principle. Grace teaches a believer to submit to the right Master. Paul says a little later, “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you” (Romans 6:17). Notice that. Doctrine is not decoration. Doctrine is deliverance when it is obeyed from the heart. Christians forgot that too. They forgot that right doctrine is not only to be admired, defended, and quoted. It is to be obeyed. And when it is not obeyed, sin takes the place doctrine should have occupied and runs the soul like a jailer with keys on his belt.

5. Christians Forgot the Difference Between Liberty and Lawlessness

Romans 7:1 says, “Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?” (Romans 7:1). Paul is dealing with the legal authority of the law and the believer’s death with Christ, which changes the whole relationship. This is where Christians have been making a mess for centuries because they forget one side or the other. Some forget that the believer is not under the law for justification, acceptance, or standing before God. Others forget that liberty in Christ is not a hall pass for sin, filth, rebellion, and doctrinal sloppiness. One group chains the believer to a system Christ fulfilled. The other group uses grace language to excuse what the flesh was looking for all along. Both are wrong because both forgot the whole counsel of God.

Paul’s argument is plain. Death changes legal claims. He uses the marriage illustration to show that the law’s dominion is bound up with life, and the believer’s identification with Christ changes the jurisdiction. “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ” (Romans 7:4). That means the saint is not standing before God trying to earn favor by legal performance. He is accepted in the Beloved. He serves in “newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter” (Romans 7:6). But the flesh hears that and immediately starts planning a vacation in Sodom. That is because the flesh never understood grace in the first place. Biblical liberty is freedom to serve God, not freedom to offend Him. It is freedom from condemnation, not freedom from holiness. It is freedom from the law as a condemning covenant, not freedom from righteousness as a way of life.

Modern Christians forgot that distinction, and the results are ugly. Legalists build systems of fear and outward performance that can look strict while the heart remains proud, hard, and rotten. Libertines talk about grace while living like the blood of Christ was spilled to buy them a front row seat at the carnival. Neither side remembers that the believer has been brought into a new relationship where Christ Himself is the life, the motive, the righteousness, and the power. That is why “Know ye not?” matters here. The Holy Ghost is reminding believers that doctrine forgotten always gets replaced by an error that flatters the flesh. If you forget liberty, you drift into legal bondage. If you forget holiness, you drift into lawless indulgence. If you forget both, you end up with religion on the outside and rebellion in the engine room.

6. Christians Forgot That Holiness Matters Because the Body Belongs to Christ

When Paul gets into 1 Corinthians 6, he starts hammering on a subject modern Christianity handles with oven mitts and nervous laughter. He says, “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?” (1 Corinthians 6:15). Then he says, “What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh” (1 Corinthians 6:16). Then he follows it with, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you” (1 Corinthians 6:19). There is a line of argument there that ought to

shake a saint to the core. The believer's body is not an isolated piece of real estate detached from spiritual reality. It belongs to Christ. It is a member of Christ. It is a temple of the Holy Ghost. That means bodily conduct matters deeply to God. The modern world mocks that truth because it worships appetite. The church often softens that truth because it wants to keep the crowd comfortable. Paul did neither.

Notice how direct he is. "Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid" (1 Corinthians 6:15). He does not treat sexual sin as a private experiment, a harmless phase, or a personal preference. He treats it like a grotesque contradiction against union with Christ. And he is right. The church has lost its recoil. It blushes at rebuke more than it blushes at sin. It is embarrassed by holiness and fascinated by corruption. That is backwards. A Christian should know that purity is not prudishness. It is sanity. It is reverence. It is the logical result of belonging to someone else. Paul finishes the matter by saying, "ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). That is not old-fashioned repression. That is blood-bought reality.

This is exactly the kind of truth Christians forgot. They talk about Jesus as Savior while using the body like it belongs to the flesh. They talk about grace while giving lust a master key. They talk about the Holy Ghost while feeding the imagination with filth. Then they wonder why they have no power in prayer, no joy in the Scriptures, no strength against temptation, and no clean testimony before the lost. The Bible asked the question long ago, "Know ye not?" and the answer should have been yes. Yes, we should know that the body matters. Yes, we should know that Christ's members are not to be dragged through impurity. Yes, we should know that what the world celebrates as liberation is often just decorated slavery. A church that forgets bodily holiness will soon lose doctrinal sharpness, moral clarity, and spiritual authority because impurity never stays in one room. It bleeds into the rest of the house.

7. Christians Forgot That They Are Running a Race, Living Before God, and Courted by the World

Paul asks in 1 Corinthians 9:24, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain" (1 Corinthians 9:24). Then in 2 Corinthians 13:5 he says, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" James puts the final nail in with, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" (James 4:4). Put those three together and you get a devastating picture of what Christians forgot. They forgot that the Christian life is a race to be run, not a hammock to nap in. They forgot that the self is to be examined, not endlessly excused. They forgot that the world is

not a harmless companion but a rival lover calling them away from God. There is enough material in those three truths to diagnose half the weakness in the average church.

Take the race first. Paul does not present the Christian life as coasting. He presents it as striving. He says, "So run, that ye may obtain" (1 Corinthians 9:24). That is purpose, discipline, urgency, direction, and reward. But many believers live as though salvation was the finish line instead of the starting gun. They got saved and then sat down. They confuse safety with fruitfulness. They mistake attendance for advancement. They have no race mindset, no prize mindset, no crown mindset, and no sense that time is vanishing while opportunities to serve Christ disappear with it. Then take self-examination. The average Christian would rather review a hundred scandals in somebody else's ministry than sit alone before God and ask whether he himself is walking honestly. That is why Paul says, "Examine yourselves." That is not morbid introspection. That is spiritual honesty. It is the refusal to let hypocrisy build a nest in the heart while religion decorates the front porch.

Then James walks in and wrecks the whole modern strategy for Christian popularity with one verse. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" (James 4:4). There is the problem. Christians want to be adored by a system that hates the Lord Jesus Christ. They want the vocabulary of holiness with the approval of Babylon. They want to sing Zion's songs on the stage of the Philistines and have everybody clap. James says that makes a man the enemy of God. That is strong language because the truth is strong. The world is not merely trees, sunsets, and paying the electric bill. It is a system organized in pride, lust, vanity, greed, rebellion, and opposition to God. Friendship with that system poisons discernment. It weakens conviction. It silences rebuke. It trains the saint to edit the truth until the world stops objecting. Christians forgot they were in a race, under examination, and being lured by a hostile world. That forgetfulness has cost the church more than most people know.

Conclusion

The phrase "Know ye not?" is one of the great alarm bells in the New Testament because it exposes the tragedy of neglected truth. It tells the believer that the problem is not always hidden revelation but forgotten revelation. The Holy Ghost keeps asking the question because saints keep acting like God never said what He plainly said. They forget their union with Christ. They forget that obedience creates masters. They forget the difference between liberty and lawlessness. They forget the sacredness of the body. They forget the contagious nature of sin. They forget that the Christian life is a race. They forget that self-examination is necessary. They forget that the world is not a friend. And once those truths are forgotten, defeated living follows as surely as night follows sunset. Carnality walks in. Compromise sits down. Discernment packs its bags. Power evaporates. Testimony decays. And the

people left standing in the wreckage act amazed that such a thing could happen after God warned them in black and white.

That is why this series is needed. It is not a novelty parade. It is not a theological scavenger hunt. It is a recovery mission. It is an effort to bring plain biblical truths back into focus with enough force that a believer will stop treating them like wallpaper and start treating them like the words of God. Modern Christianity does not need another fog machine and another slogan. It needs the Book to cut again. It needs the conscience to wake up again. It needs saints who are not merely informed but governed by what they know. A church can survive many external pressures, but it cannot survive long after it starts forgetting the truths that define it. Once those truths are buried under routine, performance, and compromise, the shell may remain for a while, but the power is already leaking out the floorboards.

So the right response to “Know ye not?” is not irritation, defensiveness, or theological posing. It is repentance, remembrance, and obedience. It is the humble admission that God was right, the Book was plain, and the problem was never in the text. It was in us. The way back is the old way back. Believe what God said. Submit to what God said. Live in the light of what God said. That is where strength returns. That is where purity returns. That is where the smile of God returns. And if the saints in this generation ever recover their edge, it will not be because they discovered some hidden secret nobody found for two thousand years. It will be because they finally stopped dodging the rebuke, answered the question honestly, and remembered the truths Christians forgot.

2 of 15: Truths Christians Forgot - Ye Are the Temple of God

Introduction

There are truths in the New Testament that do not just improve a Christian’s outlook. They redefine his entire existence. One of those truths is found in Paul’s rebuke to the Corinthians: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16). That is not a decorative verse for a coffee mug, and it is not some sentimental line to tack onto a youth rally. That is a doctrinal thunderclap. Paul is not telling those believers they ought to try real hard to become spiritual enough for God to notice them. He is telling saved people what they already are by divine fact. They are the temple of God. The Spirit of God dwells in them. The trouble is they were living like that truth had never crossed their minds. They were divided, fleshly, proud, shallow, jealous, argumentative, and careless. In other words, they were acting like the average modern

church member who can sing the songs on Sunday and still live like a spiritual vagrant the rest of the week.

That is one of the ugliest contradictions in Christianity. Men claim to be indwelt by the Holy Ghost and then live as if their bodies were empty rental units available for every appetite, lust, grudge, fantasy, and worldly attachment that comes knocking. The church has turned a blazing truth into a tired religious phrase because it has gotten used to saying things it no longer trembles at. But if the Spirit of God actually dwells in a believer, then the believer is not common property. He is not his own little kingdom. He is not a free agent. He is not just a fellow trying to make it through life with Jesus as emotional support. He is a blood-bought, Spirit-indwelt temple. That means his body matters. His thoughts matter. His conduct matters. His private life matters. His habits matter. His entertainment matters. His relationships matter. The whole life comes under the claims of the One who moved in. Christianity is not attendance at a building. Christianity is God Almighty taking up residence in a man.

That is why this essay matters so much in this series. We are not chasing an exotic doctrine hidden under ten layers of speculation. We are dealing with one of the plainest truths in the Pauline epistles, a truth Christians have forgotten while pretending to defend the faith. “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you” (1 Corinthians 6:19). The Holy Ghost did not inspire that sentence so Christians could admire it from a safe distance. He put it there to arrest the believer, expose his carelessness, and remind him that holiness is not optional for someone in whom God dwells. If a man understood this truth the way he ought to understand it, it would change the way he talks, thinks, looks, chooses, abstains, resists, and walks through this world. It would shatter the lie that Christianity is a Sunday event with no governing authority from Monday to Saturday. It would destroy the cheap division between public religion and private indulgence. It would put holy fear back into a life that has gotten too casual with sacred things.

1. The Temple of God Is Not a Church Building but a Spirit-Indwelt People

One of the first things that needs to be straightened out is this modern confusion that constantly treats “the house of God” like a brick building with stained glass and padded pews. Under this dispensation, the central issue is not whether a room has a steeple on it. The central issue is whether the Spirit of God dwells in the believer. Paul says, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16). Notice that. He does not say the temple is a cathedral downtown with a mortgage and a sound system. He says “ye” are the temple of God. He is writing to saved men and women in the Body of Christ. That means the dwelling place of God in this present age is tied to His people, not to a physical shrine made with hands.

That does not mean church gatherings are unimportant. Far from it. But it does mean a Christian who thinks spirituality is confined to a building has missed the whole point of New Testament truth. Under the old covenant, God's glory had a relationship to the tabernacle and temple in a way distinct from this dispensation. Under the present dispensation, the believer himself is indwelt. The church is not a theater people visit for inspiration. It is a body of redeemed saints in whom the Spirit of God dwells. "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:18). Paul then says believers are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" and that in Him "all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2:20-21). That is not architecture. That is redemption.

The tragedy is that many Christians still think they become spiritual by stepping into a religious building for a couple of hours and then somehow revert to private ownership once they walk back outside. That is nonsense. A man who is the temple of God does not stop being that when he leaves the parking lot. He does not become secular at the office, worldly at the house, indulgent on the road, and then spiritual again when the choir starts. The indwelling presence of God means the believer carries sacred obligation with him wherever he goes. The temple goes to work. The temple drives the car. The temple eats dinner. The temple is at the computer after dark. The temple is on the phone. The temple is in the argument. The temple is in the secret place where nobody else sees. That alone ought to put some fear of God back into modern Christianity.

2. God Dwelling in a Man Is a Staggering Reality, Not a Religious Slogan

When Paul says, "the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (1 Corinthians 3:16), that ought to stop a man cold. We get used to hearing these words, and that familiarity is dangerous because it steals the shock from them. The eternal Spirit of God dwells in the believer. Not visits occasionally. Not hovers in the general area. Not drops in when the music gets slow. Dwells in you. That means the Christian life is not a self-improvement project assisted by occasional divine influence. It is a supernatural life made possible by the residence of God Himself. Paul says elsewhere, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). In 2 Corinthians 13:5 he asks, "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" That is not poetry. That is fact.

Now if a man really believes that, some things start looking different. The believer cannot honestly say his life is ordinary in the same sense a lost man's life is ordinary. He cannot talk like his body is just a natural shell to be used however he pleases. He cannot defend unclean living while confessing the indwelling Holy Ghost unless he has learned how to lie to himself with a straight face. If God dwells in a man, then that man's body is sacred

territory. It is not sacred because the man is impressive. It is sacred because of the Occupant. The tabernacle in the wilderness was not holy because the curtains had a good personality. It was holy because the presence of God sanctified it. The same principle applies here. The believer's significance does not arise from his own worthiness, but from the One who took up residence in him through redemption.

That truth ought to produce both comfort and terror. Comfort, because the believer is never abandoned, never orphaned, never left to face life alone. Terror, because he has no business treating lightly what God has claimed for Himself. "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30). There is the warning. You can grieve the Spirit who dwells within you. A Christian can carry an indwelling Guest and live in a way that insults His holiness, wounds fellowship, and chokes spiritual joy. The church talks a lot about being filled with the Spirit while ignoring the plain ways the Spirit is grieved. That is because many believers like the doctrine of divine presence so long as it does not interfere with their private idols. But the indwelling Spirit is not there to endorse the flesh. He is there to magnify Christ and produce holiness.

3. The Temple Truth Rebukes Casual Christianity

The whole force of Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 3:16 is a rebuke. "Know ye not?" means the Corinthians should have known better. They were acting like religious children while carrying one of the highest truths in the New Testament. They were quarreling over men, dividing into parties, glorifying personalities, and living on a fleshly plane. Paul calls them "carnal" and says there was among them "envying, and strife, and divisions" (1 Corinthians 3:3). Then right in that context he reminds them that they are the temple of God. Why? Because carnality is especially ugly in a Spirit-indwelt people. A temple full of jealousy, pettiness, vanity, and fleshly competition is a contradiction of the worst sort.

That rebuke still lands with full force today. Casual Christianity is one of the chief diseases of this age. Men talk to the holy God of heaven as if they were chatting with a waiter at a diner. They approach worship like a consumer experience. They pick churches like entertainment venues. They discuss doctrine only when it helps them win an argument. They think the Christian life can be lived in the leftover corners of the schedule after the flesh has had first pick. That is casual Christianity. It is a religion with enough form to soothe the conscience and not enough fear of God to cleanse the life. But the temple truth destroys that nonsense. If you are the temple of God, then life is not casual. It is consecrated.

The problem is not that modern believers are too serious. The problem is they are not serious enough about the right things. They can be intensely serious about politics, sports,

hobbies, gossip, business, image, status, and online disputes, but strangely light about grieving the Spirit, defiling the temple, and walking in fellowship with God. That is upside down. A man in whom God dwells should not have to be begged to live carefully. He should not need a motivational speech to avoid what grieves the Lord. He should not need a committee to tell him the temple is not a fit place for uncleanness. The temple truth rebukes every cheap version of Christianity that treats the believer like a spectator instead of a sanctuary.

4. A Defiled Temple Is an Assault on What Belongs to God

Paul does not leave this matter in the realm of warm devotion. He brings a warning with teeth. “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Corinthians 3:17). That is not tame language. That is not how a preacher talks when he is trying to build a large, comfortable crowd that wants spirituality without consequence. God is serious about His temple. Now in the immediate context Paul is dealing with the corporate temple truth involving the church, the building of God, and the danger of corrupting what belongs to Him. But the principle remains blazing clear. Defiling what God has claimed is a fearful business. God does not shrug at the pollution of His temple.

That principle reaches into personal conduct in 1 Corinthians 6:19, where Paul says, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you.” There the emphasis falls directly on the believer’s body. That means defilement is not an abstract idea. It can happen in daily life through lust, fornication, drunkenness, filth, uncleanness, and every indulgence that hands the body over to sin as though it belonged to appetite instead of Christ. The modern world treats the body like a toy, a billboard, a weapon, a machine for pleasure, or a canvas for rebellion. The Bible treats the believer’s body like a sacred vessel under divine ownership. One of those views comes from heaven. The other comes from hell.

If Christians remembered that, they would stop asking how close they can get to worldliness without technically stepping over some imaginary line. They would stop negotiating with impurity. They would stop defending the flesh with soft language and therapeutic excuses. They would stop treating pornographic entertainment, sensual indulgence, vulgar speech, and intoxicated living like unfortunate side issues. A defiled temple is not a minor problem. It is an outrage against holy occupancy. God saved a man to glorify Himself in that man. “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:20). That verse settles the matter. The body is not yours to stain. It belongs to the One who paid for it.

5. The Temple of the Holy Ghost Cannot Be Used for Fornication and Filth

The strongest personal application of this doctrine in 1 Corinthians comes in the area of sexual sin. Paul says, “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?” (1 Corinthians 6:15). Then he asks, “shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid” (1 Corinthians 6:15). Then he says, “What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh” (1 Corinthians 6:16). Then he brings the hammer down with, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost” (1 Corinthians 6:19). That is one sustained assault on the lie that sexual sin is private, harmless, casual, or disconnected from spiritual life. Paul ties sexual conduct directly to union with Christ, the one-flesh principle, and the indwelling Holy Ghost.

Modern Christianity is embarrassingly weak here. It lives in the middle of a sex-drenched culture and often talks like a bashful therapist afraid of sounding old-fashioned. Paul did not sound old-fashioned. He sounded holy. He sounded like a man who knew what the body was for and what it was not for. “Flee fornication” (1 Corinthians 6:18) is not complicated. He did not say study it, manage it, negotiate with it, or see how much of it you can tolerate before your devotional life starts to wilt. He said flee it. Why? Because the believer’s body is not available for union with what dishonors Christ. It is the temple of the Holy Ghost. A man who understands that does not need a thousand seminar slides on sexual ethics. He needs the fear of God and a Bible.

There is more here than simply avoiding scandal. The issue is sanctity. The issue is what the body means now that redemption has claimed it. A Christian cannot say Christ is precious while handing his eyes, imagination, body, and affections over to filth. That is blasphemous contradiction. The church has spent too much time trying to sound compassionate toward sins it ought to denounce with tears and plain speech. Compassion for sinners is biblical. Flattery of sin is devilish. The temple truth does not make sexual purity optional for advanced believers. It makes purity the normal expectation for anyone who knows what it means that the Holy Ghost dwells within. If the church recovered this truth, it would shut off a thousand hidden pipelines of misery, addiction, shame, hypocrisy, and spiritual deadness.

6. The Temple Truth Exposes the Fraud of Sunday-Only Religion

One of the sharpest applications of this doctrine is against the kind of religion that performs publicly and rots privately. There are people who know how to put on church face, church voice, church posture, and church language for a couple of hours on the Lord’s Day while the rest of the week belongs to self, flesh, money, lust, anger, vanity, and the approval

of men. That religion is a fraud. It may impress simple people. It may gather a following. It may even produce an emotional atmosphere. But it is a fraud because the temple of God does not cease to be the temple on Monday morning. Paul did not say ye are the temple of God only during service times. He said the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. That means the claim of God follows the believer into every hour of every day.

This is where much of church culture is fake. It isolates devotion to certain settings and lets the rest of life run wild. Men will sing, pray, and nod during preaching, then go home and poison the house with rage, coldness, filth, or worldly obsession. Women will speak piously at church and then feast on vanity, gossip, bitterness, or sensual compromise the rest of the week. Young people will talk about Jesus in public and then feed their minds on the same sewer lines as the lost crowd. That is Sunday-only religion. It is a costume change, not a consecrated life. But if your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, then there is no private zone where Christ's authority stops. There is no dark corner where the Spirit says, Go ahead, do what you want, I will wait outside.

The temple truth destroys compartmentalized religion because it says holiness is portable. The presence of God is not locked to a sanctuary downtown. The sanctuary is walking around in the believer's skin. That means your home life is spiritual business. Your thought life is spiritual business. Your internet life is spiritual business. Your speech in the car is spiritual business. Your appetites at the table are spiritual business. Your hidden entertainments are spiritual business. There is no such thing as secular behavior for a man who belongs to Christ. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). That is the opposite of Sunday-only religion. It is a whole-life claim under the Lordship of Christ.

7. To Remember the Temple Truth Is to Recover Holy Fear, Holy Living, and Holy Purpose

When a believer remembers that he is the temple of God, several things begin to return that casual Christianity has nearly lost. The first is holy fear. Not servile terror of losing salvation, but reverent awareness that he belongs to God and carries sacred responsibility. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1). There is the response. The promises of God are not supposed to make a man lazy. They are supposed to make him clean. The fear of God is not a leftover doctrine for old grandmothers who still read their Bibles. It is essential for anyone who wants holiness to be more than a slogan.

The second thing that returns is holy living. Once a man understands that the Spirit of God dwells in him, his choices start getting filtered differently. He stops asking merely whether something is technically permitted and begins asking whether it suits the temple. He stops measuring life by what he can get away with and starts measuring it by what glorifies Christ. He begins to see sin not only as dangerous but as unfitting. That is an important change. “As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation” (1 Peter 1:15). Not some manner of conversation. All manner. The temple truth gives that command teeth because it reminds the believer that holiness is fitting for divine residence.

The third thing that returns is holy purpose. A temple is not just a cleaned-up box. It exists for God. The believer was not saved merely to avoid hell and then spend the rest of his days amusing himself on the edge of eternity. He was saved to glorify God. Paul says plainly, “therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:20). Once that truth settles in, life stops orbiting self. The question is no longer How can I arrange Christianity to support my agenda? The question becomes How can this temple serve the glory of the One who dwells here? That is where purpose gets purified. That is where ministry becomes real. That is where the Christian life stops being a religious hobby and becomes a living sacrifice.

Conclusion

The truth that believers are the temple of God is one of the most neglected and violated doctrines in the New Testament. It has been reduced to a line people quote while living in ways that deny its meaning. But Paul did not give that truth to flatter the Corinthians. He gave it to rebuke them. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16). “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you” (1 Corinthians 6:19). Those are not decorative statements. They are searchlights. They are supposed to expose worldliness, carnality, sensuality, compartmentalized religion, and the casual treatment of what belongs to God. The church has forgotten this truth, and because it has forgotten it, it has become light where it should be weighty, careless where it should be reverent, and dirty where it should be clean.

If God dwells in a man, that man has no business living like a spiritual squatter. He has no business acting like the life is his to decorate for the flesh. He has no business giving holy ground over to lust, bitterness, vanity, gluttony, intoxication, gossip, or worldly compromise. He has no business turning Christianity into a Sunday performance while letting Monday through Saturday belong to self. The temple truth forbids all of that. It says the believer is occupied territory. It says redemption carried divine ownership with it. It says the Holy Ghost does not move in to bless the flesh but to magnify Christ and produce

holiness. A man who remembers that will not be perfect in this life, but he will stop treating holiness like an optional accessory.

So the call here is not complicated. Remember what you are. Remember who dwells in you. Remember who paid for you. Remember that the body matters, the secret place matters, the thought life matters, the appetites matter, the hidden habits matter, and every day of the week matters. The way back for a careless Christian is the same as the way forward for a serious one. Believe the Book. Fear God. Clean house. Yield the members to righteousness. Glorify Christ in the body. And once a believer starts living like the temple of God instead of a religious tourist, the difference will not need to be advertised. It will show up in the walk, the words, the choices, the separations, the loves, and the whole direction of the life.

3 of 15: Truths Christians Forgot - You Are Not Your Own

Introduction

One of the greatest lies ever sold to this generation is the lie of self-ownership. It is preached from pulpits without Bible, from schools without shame, from politics without restraint, and from entertainment without apology. It tells a man that he belongs to himself, answers only to himself, defines truth for himself, and has the right to use his body, his time, his mind, his money, his desires, and his future however he pleases. That lie sounds sweet to the flesh because the flesh has always wanted a throne. It started in the garden when the serpent tempted Eve with autonomy dressed up as enlightenment. It was not enough for man to live under God. He had to become his own authority. That poison still runs through civilization, and modern Christianity has swallowed more of it than most saints are willing to admit. But the New Testament comes down like a hammer on that entire philosophy with one plain statement. "Ye are not your own" (1 Corinthians 6:19). There is the funeral bell for human autonomy. There is the death sentence for the idol of self-rule. There is the Bible answer to a world drunk on personal rights and allergic to divine claims.

Paul does not leave that truth hanging in midair. He ties it to blood, purchase, redemption, and ownership. "For ye are bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20). That means salvation was not a friendly suggestion accepted by an independent citizen who retained full possession of himself afterward. Salvation was a purchase. It was a transaction. It was redemption by blood. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold... but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18-19). The

Christian is not a freelance believer who can sign Christ up for comfort, heaven, peace, and emergency assistance while withholding the deed to the rest of the life. The Christian belongs to the Lord who bought him. That purchase reaches the body, the purpose, the plans, the appetites, the future, the private world, the public world, the whole thing. A man cannot honestly call Jesus Christ Lord while keeping a hidden contract in his back pocket that says self still has final say.

That is why this truth is so offensive to the spirit of the age. This age worships self-expression, self-care, self-esteem, self-definition, self-discovery, self-fulfillment, and self-will. It takes the old rebellion of Lucifer and paints it in therapeutic colors so it looks healthy, empowering, and enlightened. But your Bible does not flatter that spirit. It crucifies it. "And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:15). There is the line in the sand. Saved people are not called to live unto themselves. They are called to live unto Christ. This essay is going straight at the nerve center of modern compromise because the deepest rot in many believers is not that they deny Christ with their lips, but that they reserve ownership of whole areas of life where they do not want Him to reign. They want His pardon without His possession, His comfort without His command, His cross without His crown, His benefits without His boundaries. The Holy Ghost says, "ye are not your own." That one truth, if believed, would destroy a thousand excuses and put the fear of God back in the Christian life.

1. Salvation Was a Purchase, Not a Partnership

The first thing that must be settled is that salvation did not create a fifty-fifty arrangement between the believer and Jesus Christ. It did not establish a partnership where Christ gets Sundays, prayers before meals, and a few tears during hard times while self keeps title to the rest. Paul says plainly, "ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). That language is the language of redemption. It is marketplace language. It is ownership language. It is rescue by purchase. A man in bondage does not negotiate partial release terms with his redeemer. He is bought out. That is exactly why the gospel humbles the flesh. The flesh wanted improvement, not ownership transfer. It wanted spiritual assistance, not surrender. But the blood of Christ did not purchase a Sunday hobby. It purchased a people.

The Bible is full of that truth. "For he hath visited and redeemed his people" (Luke 1:68). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14). "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood" (Revelation 5:9). Redemption means somebody else paid what you could never pay and claimed what sin had ruined. That means the Christian cannot talk as though he did Jesus a favor by

accepting the gospel. He was rescued from wrath, rescued from bondage, rescued from condemnation, and rescued from himself. A man bought with blood has no room to strut around like an owner deciding how much access God gets. The price was not silver, gold, or sentimental feelings. It was the blood of the Son of God. That puts an infinite claim on the redeemed life.

Modern Christianity has weakened this by turning salvation into a consumer choice. Jesus is marketed like a life upgrade, a stress reliever, a relationship enhancer, or a pathway to fulfillment. But the apostolic message is stronger than that and far more offensive to the flesh. Christ did not die to become useful to self. He died to replace self as master. “For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord” (Romans 14:8). Notice that. Not unto self. Unto the Lord. A saved man is not the senior partner with Jesus as consultant. Christ is Lord, and the believer is bought property. The sooner that truth lands in the conscience, the sooner the Christian life stops being a religious arrangement and becomes what God intended all along, a blood-bought life under the rightful authority of the One who purchased it.

2. Self-Rule Is the Old Rebellion Wearing New Clothes

The modern world talks about autonomy as if it were a noble achievement. It dresses self-rule up with words like authenticity, freedom, identity, empowerment, and personal truth. But biblically speaking, self-rule is not noble. It is ancient rebellion. “All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6). There is the root of the problem. Man’s way. Self’s way. My truth. My life. My choice. My body. My future. My dream. That language sounds current, but it is as old as sin. “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12). The flesh hears that and still says, I would rather run myself. That is because the fallen heart does not mind religion so long as religion never gets the steering wheel.

This is exactly why “ye are not your own” is such a violent statement against the spirit of the age. It does not merely advise moderation. It denies self’s right to the throne. It says the Christian’s body is not self-owned. The Christian’s purpose is not self-generated. The Christian’s future is not self-directed. The Christian’s desires do not carry final authority. The Christian does not have the right to claim Jesus as Savior and then reserve for self the authority to define morality, sexuality, entertainment, priorities, and life direction. That is not Christianity. That is rebellion with a cross necklace on. The great issue is not whether a man says nice things about Jesus. The issue is who has lordship over the life. Jesus asked, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). That question still tears through religious hypocrisy like a knife.

A lot of believers have made peace with self-rule by shrinking Christ's authority down to selected categories. He can comfort me in suffering, but not interrupt my entertainment. He can forgive my sins, but not govern my relationships. He can promise heaven, but not tell me what to do with my body. He can bless my plans, but not replace them. That is the old rebellion. It is Lucifer's disease in a church outfit. "I will ascend... I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:13-14). Self wants command. Self wants preeminence. Self wants the final word. And the gospel says no. The cross says no. Redemption says no. "Ye are not your own." Until a man settles that, he will keep trying to use Christianity as a decoration on top of self-rule instead of submitting to Christ as Lord over all.

3. The Body Does Not Belong to the Flesh

Paul grounds this truth in one of the most direct contexts imaginable. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you" (1 Corinthians 6:19). Then he says, "ye are not your own" and "ye are bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). That means bodily autonomy is a myth for the believer. The body is not a private playground. It is not neutral real estate. It is not merely biological machinery to be used according to appetite. It belongs to the One who bought it. That truth crushes the whole modern lie of "my body, my choice" when that slogan is used to deny God's rights. For a Christian, the body is temple property. It is Christ's member. It is the Spirit's dwelling place. That settles the question.

This is why Paul ties it to sexual purity in 1 Corinthians 6. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 6:15). "Flee fornication" (1 Corinthians 6:18). That is not accidental. Sexual sin is one of the clearest places where the flesh screams for autonomy. It wants the body detached from lordship, holiness, covenant, and consequence. But Paul says the opposite. He says bodily conduct is deeply spiritual because the body belongs to Christ. A believer cannot drag Christ's purchased possession through filth and then hide behind the language of personal freedom. That is not freedom. That is theft. It is taking what belongs to God and using it against His revealed will.

The same principle reaches beyond sexuality into every bodily appetite. Gluttony, drunkenness, substance abuse, laziness, vanity, indulgence, and every other bodily surrender fall under the same rebuke. The flesh keeps saying, It is my life. The Holy Ghost keeps answering, No, it is not. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). Notice that word reasonable. God is not asking something extreme when He commands a redeemed man to yield the body back to the Redeemer. That is the only sane response to grace. The insanity is a blood-bought believer acting like the flesh has seniority over the One who purchased him.

4. Christ Is Not a Comfort Object but a Master

One of the filthiest tricks of modern religion is that it presents Jesus Christ as useful without presenting Him as sovereign. He becomes the gentle helper of self's agenda. He is there to calm fears, patch wounds, strengthen goals, bless ambitions, and rescue people from consequences, but He is not treated as the rightful Lord of the life. That is why so many professing Christians talk warmly about Jesus and then ignore Him in practice. They love His promises, but not His claims. They love His compassion, but not His commands. They love the thought of heaven, but not the demand of holiness. That is a counterfeit Christianity designed for consumers, not disciples.

But the New Testament does not present Christ that way. "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Romans 14:9). There is the purpose. Lord. Not mascot. Not assistant. Not inspirational figure. Lord. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 12:3). That confession means more than pronouncement. It means recognition of authority. It means the believer acknowledges Christ's right to govern, correct, direct, restrain, command, and rule. A man who insists on final authority over his life while speaking highly of Jesus is not honoring Christ. He is using Christ.

This is where many believers need a hard reset. Jesus is not a padded comfort object to be clutched when life gets difficult while self keeps full control of the house. He is "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15). If He has saved you, He has every right to command you. If He bought you, He has every right to tell you no. If He is Lord, you do not vote on His boundaries. You obey them. That is why the phrase "ye are not your own" is so powerful. It drags Jesus Christ out of the realm of sentimental usefulness and restores Him to the place of rightful mastery. The Christian does not add Christ to life. Christ takes over life.

5. Your Ambitions, Appetites, and Private World Are Included

One of the favorite tricks of the flesh is to pretend that surrender to Christ applies only to obvious public sins while private ambitions, resentments, fantasies, and personal plans remain exempt. But the lordship of Christ is not that narrow. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). There is no hidden exemption clause in that verse. Whatsoever ye do. That includes the appetite, the schedule, the career direction, the relationships, the emotional world, the grudges, the secret entertainments, the online life, the spending habits, the motives, the goals, and the private dreams no one else sees. The Christian cannot honestly hand God the public shell while reserving the inner chambers for self-rule.

This is where “ye are not your own” turns into a searchlight. It exposes the fact that many believers are content to avoid scandal while still living inwardly unto themselves. Their ambitions are still self-centered. Their grudges are still defended. Their plans are still non-negotiable. Their entertainment habits are still flesh-fed. Their emotional reactions are still untamed. Their imaginations still belong to self. But God does not purchase only the visible layer of a man. He claims the whole man. “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly” (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Not partially. Wholly. “My son, give me thine heart” (Proverbs 23:26). That is the part people withhold while pretending full devotion.

A saved man cannot reserve whole sectors of life for private independence and still walk in peace. The Spirit of God will keep pressing on those locked doors. That is mercy. Christ is not cruel when He lays claim to what He bought. He is righteous. He is cleansing a temple. He is reclaiming stolen ground. He is confronting the lie that some areas belong to Him while other areas are still self-governed territories. Christians forgot that. They forgot that the blood claims the ambition. The blood claims the appetite. The blood claims the plans. The blood claims the private world. And until those things are surrendered, the Christian life will remain cramped, frustrated, and inconsistent because two masters are trying to inhabit the same throne room.

6. Living Unto Self Produces Misery, Not Liberty

The flesh always markets self-rule as liberation. It tells the believer that real happiness lies in keeping certain zones under personal control. Do not let God interfere with this relationship, this dream, this pleasure, this bitterness, this habit, this image, this comfort. But that is a baited hook. Living unto self does not produce liberty. It produces misery. “For to be carnally minded is death” (Romans 8:6). Not physical death in that verse, but the death-like consequences of carnality, deadened joy, deadened prayer, deadened discernment, deadened fellowship. The believer who insists on self-rule will not lose the Holy Ghost, but he will grieve Him. He will not lose sonship, but he will lose sweetness. He will not lose heaven, but he will lose power on earth.

The Bible states the opposite path plainly. “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself” (Romans 14:7). Then Paul adds, “For whether we live, we live unto the Lord” (Romans 14:8). That is the only sane way for a redeemed person to live. The Christian was not made for self-centered orbit. He was made to revolve around Christ. Once he starts trying to live unto self again, everything goes crooked. Relationships become demanding. Goals become consuming. Resentments become addictive. Pleasures become tyrants. Identity becomes fragile. That is because man was not designed to be his own center after redemption. Christ is the center now, and peace only returns when life is ordered around Him.

You can watch this happen in real time. A believer clings to self-will in one area and suddenly has to defend that area with ten more sins. A grudge has to be fed with pride. Lust has to be fed with secrecy. Ambition has to be fed with compromise. Vanity has to be fed with constant comparison. Self-rule always expands its supply chain. It takes more lies, more excuses, more rationalizations, more hidden darkness to keep the illusion alive. That is not liberty. That is bondage with makeup on. The Christian who yields to Christ may have battles, but he walks in truth. The Christian who yields to self will always be maintaining a fiction, and fiction is exhausting. That is why so many church people are miserable. They are trying to enjoy Christ's benefits while resisting Christ's rule.

7. The Only Right Response Is Total Yielding

Once a believer understands "ye are not your own," there is only one right response, yielding. Not partial cooperation. Not selective obedience. Not periodic surrender when circumstances get rough. Total yielding. "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God" (Romans 6:13). Notice both parts. Do not yield the members to sin. Yield yourselves unto God. The Christian life is not lived by accident. It is lived by consecration. Day by day, desire by desire, choice by choice, the believer hands the life back to the rightful Owner. That is not misery. That is worship.

Paul describes it in Romans 12:1 as presenting your body "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." A sacrifice is not self-directed. It is placed on the altar. That is where many believers stop short. They will sing about the altar, preach about the altar, quote about the altar, but when God asks for their actual plans, relationships, entertainment, pride, body, bitterness, or ambitions, suddenly they start negotiating. That is because the flesh loves religious symbolism and hates practical surrender. But the Lord is not fooled by emotional language. He is looking for yielded reality. "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). That is the pattern from the Lord Himself.

A yielded life is the only life that makes sense for someone bought with blood. It is the only life that honors the Purchaser. It is the only life that brings the joy of alignment instead of the misery of resistance. A believer who yields does not become a lifeless robot. He becomes most fully what grace intended him to be. The will of God is not the death of meaning. It is the death of rebellion. It is where purpose clears up, where peace strengthens, where holiness grows, and where the life finally stops fighting the One who redeemed it. Christians forgot that surrender is not a loss. It is the restoration of order. The creature belongs under the Creator. The redeemed belongs under the Redeemer. The bought belongs to the Buyer. "Ye are not your own" is not the end of joy. It is the doorway back to it.

Conclusion

The statement “ye are not your own” is one of the most offensive truths in the Bible to an age drunk on self-rule, and that is exactly why it is so necessary. It crushes the fantasy of autonomy. It tears up the deed self has been waving around. It exposes the fraud of trying to enjoy Christ while reserving private ownership of the life. The Christian was bought with a price. That price was the blood of Christ. Therefore the Christian does not belong to himself in body, purpose, affections, direction, or final authority. He belongs to the Lord who redeemed him. Every area of life falls under that claim, from the obvious outward conduct to the hidden ambitions and appetites tucked away where only God sees.

This truth is not harsh. It is holy. It is not oppressive. It is liberating in the only way that matters, because it frees the believer from the impossible burden of trying to be his own master. Self was always a cruel ruler. It never keeps its promises. It always asks for more. It always leaves the soul thin, tired, and dirty. Christ is the rightful Lord, and His yoke is easy because it is fitting. It matches reality. The redeemed life belongs to the Redeemer. When a believer stops fighting that and starts yielding to it, the whole Christian life begins to make sense. Holiness no longer feels like arbitrary restriction. It feels like the normal order of a temple under divine ownership.

So the call of this essay is plain. Stop talking like you belong to yourself. Stop defending corners of life Christ paid for. Stop using Jesus for comfort while resisting His control. Stop pretending lordship is optional. If you are saved, you are bought. If you are bought, you are not your own. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s (1 Corinthians 6:20). That is not a suggestion for elite Christians. That is the normal response of anyone who believes the gospel. The sooner the church remembers that, the sooner it will stop looking like the world with a Bible verse attached and start looking like a purchased people who know who their Owner is.

4 of 15: Truths Christians Forgot - Baptized Into His Death

Introduction

There are some truths in Pauline doctrine that divide the men who merely admire the Christian life from the men who actually live it. One of those truths is found in Romans 6:3, where Paul asks, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Romans 6:3). That is not a light question. That is not a ceremonial footnote. That is not Paul discussing some harmless religious vocabulary for

people who like doctrinal trivia. He is laying hold of one of the deepest realities of salvation itself. The believer has been identified with Jesus Christ in His death. That means salvation is not merely a decision to improve your habits, clean up your language, turn over a new leaf, join a church, or start acting religious. Salvation is a spiritual union with the crucified and risen Lord. God did not save a man to help the old life function better. God judged the old man in Christ and brought the believer into a new life that is connected to the resurrection power of Jesus Christ.

That is exactly where shallow Christianity falls flat on its face. It is always talking about blessing, favor, success, breakthrough, comfort, healing, peace, joy, increase, and victory, but it gets nervous the second the conversation turns to death. It loves resurrection language as long as nobody mentions crucifixion. It loves kingdom language as long as nobody mentions the cross. It loves power as long as nobody says the flesh has to die. That is because modern religion is full of people who want Jesus to decorate the self-life instead of destroy its rule. They want sanctification without surrender. They want liberty without mortification. They want heaven without holiness. They want Christ to make the old man feel better instead of agreeing with God that the old man deserved judgment. But Paul does not talk that way. Paul starts with death. He says the believer was “baptized into Jesus Christ” and “baptized into his death” (Romans 6:3). That means the first great truth of victorious Christian living is not self-esteem. It is self-judgment in light of Calvary.

If the church ever recovers its strength, it will have to recover this truth. Too many believers are trying to win a spiritual war while still pampering the very nature that betrayed them from the start. They are trying to improve what God condemned. They are trying to reform what God crucified. They are trying to negotiate with the flesh while the Bible says, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him” (Romans 6:6). There is the line in the sand. The old man was not given therapy. He was not sent to a seminar. He was not given a ten-step plan. He was crucified with Christ. Until a believer gets hold of that, he will keep circling around the same defeats and wondering why all the sermons on victory are not helping him. Victory over sin begins when a Christian remembers what happened to him in Christ, stops arguing with God about the sentence passed on the flesh, and reckons that sentence to be true.

1. Paul Begins with a Rebuke Because They Should Have Known

Romans 6 opens with Paul answering the filthy suggestion that grace gives a man room to keep playing with sin. “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid” (Romans 6:1-2). Then he does not move immediately into practical advice. He moves into doctrine. He says, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Romans 6:3). There is that phrase again,

“Know ye not.” That means the truth he is about to state was not supposed to be foreign to them. It was something that should already have been shaping their conduct. The problem was not that the grace of God was weak. The problem was that believers had forgotten what salvation actually did to their standing in relation to sin.

That rebuke still fits the church today. There are Christians who talk like sin is some unavoidable roommate they must humor indefinitely because grace is available. They treat grace like a mop instead of a master teacher. They treat it like permission instead of power. But Paul will not allow that because grace is rooted in identification with Christ. The reason a believer cannot continue in sin as a way of life is not merely that it looks bad. It is because something definitive has happened at the root of his relationship to sin. He died in Christ. He was baptized into Christ's death. The whole premise of Romans 6 is that Christian living must flow from Christian position. If a man forgets what happened to him in Christ, then his practice starts floating loose from doctrine, and when practice floats loose from doctrine, flesh always takes over.

Notice how Paul frames it. He does not say, “Would you kindly consider a more disciplined lifestyle?” He says, “Know ye not?” That is a rebuke to spiritual forgetfulness. It means the believer should have already understood that salvation involved far more than forgiveness of acts. It involved a union with a Person. That Person died, was buried, and rose again. So if you are in Him, then His death has a direct bearing on the old man you used to be. The problem with much of modern teaching is that it talks about Christian growth as though the key is simply trying harder. Paul starts somewhere else. He starts with a spiritual fact. You cannot live right until you know what God has already done. And once you know it, you are responsible to reckon it to be true.

2. Baptized Into Jesus Christ Means Spiritual Union, Not Mere Ritual

The moment Romans 6:3 is read, somebody usually shows up wanting to drag the verse down into a mere external ceremony and miss the whole force of the passage. But Paul is talking about something deeper than getting wet. He says, “so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death” (Romans 6:3). That is spiritual union. That is identification. That is the operation of God placing the believer into Christ. It is connected with the same line of truth found in passages like 1 Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13). Paul is not discussing whether somebody's robe fit right on baptism Sunday. He is discussing what happened when God saved a sinner and joined him to His Son.

That matters because the modern church is full of people who settle for outward symbols without understanding inward reality. They can talk about baptism, communion, church

attendance, testimonies, altar calls, and all the furniture of religion, but when you ask them what happened to the old man in relation to Christ, they stare at you like you started speaking Aramaic. That is because shallow Christianity is obsessed with visible activity and often careless with spiritual union. But in Romans 6 Paul roots the whole argument in union with Christ. The believer is not just inspired by Christ. He is in Christ. He is not just admiring a historical event from a distance. He has been spiritually joined to the crucified and risen Savior. That changes everything.

If a man misses that, he turns the Christian life into moral exertion. He starts trying to imitate Christ in the energy of Adam instead of understanding that God has already put him into a new position before Him. The Christian life is not the old man straining to copy Jesus. It is the new man walking in the power of a life joined to Jesus Christ. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17). There it is. In Christ. That is the location of victory, the ground of acceptance, and the fountainhead of sanctification. The believer is not outside Christ trying to climb in by effort. He has been placed in Christ by God Himself. Once that truth gets hold of a man, the Christian life ceases to be a religious charade and becomes the outworking of a spiritual reality.

3. His Death Means God Has Already Passed Sentence on the Old Man

Paul does not leave this truth vague. He begins unpacking it with language that should end half the confusion in the Christian life. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death" (Romans 6:4). Later he says, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him" (Romans 6:6). That means the old man is not under probation. He is not being rehabilitated. He is not in God's recovery program. He is crucified. God has already passed sentence. The flesh wants improvement. God says execution. The flesh wants dignity. God says death. The flesh wants to be trained into usefulness. God says it has been judged at Calvary.

Now that does not mean the flesh has vanished from the believer's experience. Any honest Christian knows better than that. The flesh is still present, still corrupt, still dangerous, and still ready to grab the wheel if given the chance. But its standing before God has been exposed and condemned in the death of Christ. That is the point. God is not asking you to slowly discover whether the old man can be trusted. He already told you what the verdict is. "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18). The believer's problem is that he keeps wanting to keep alive what God has already judged. He keeps trying to draw strength from a source God declared bankrupt.

That is why many Christians stay defeated. They are constantly shocked by the flesh as though it betrayed some trust. The flesh does not betray trust. It is treacherous by nature. It

cannot be educated into holiness. It cannot be improved into spirituality. It must be denied, mortified, and kept in the place God gave it at the cross. “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Galatians 5:24). That is not the language of self-expression. That is the language of execution. Christians forgot that salvation meant God agreed with the sentence due the old man and united them with His Son in that death. Once a man remembers that, he stops trying to make peace with the flesh and starts treating it like the condemned traitor it is.

4. Burial Means the Old Life Is Not Meant to Be Carried Forward

Paul says, “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death” (Romans 6:4). Burial is one of those truths the modern church likes to pass over quickly because it is too final. Everybody likes resurrection talk. Burial talk makes people uncomfortable because burial means something has truly ended. You do not bury a thing you intend to keep carrying around as a companion. You bury it because it is finished. In the believer’s identification with Christ, burial signifies the end of the old order. The old life under Adam, under sin, under self-rule, under the dominion of the flesh, has been brought to a decisive end in God’s reckoning.

That is why it is such a contradiction when a saved man keeps digging up the old life and trying to drag it into the new one. He wants to keep the old grudges, the old pride, the old appetites, the old vanity, the old self-glory, the old ambition, and just put a little Christian language around it. But burial says no. Burial says what belonged to the old man has no rightful place as the governing principle of the new life. Paul says elsewhere, “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds” (Colossians 3:9). There is the language again. Put off. Not polish. Not showcase. Put off. The believer has no business walking through the Christian life wrapped in grave clothes from Adam.

This is why so many people are spiritually stale. They never embraced the finality of burial. They accepted that Jesus died for them, but they never faced the fact that God is not interested in carrying their old self-life into the new creation project. He is interested in replacing its rule. The old life was not meant to become the board chairman of your sanctification process. It was meant to be buried. That means some relationships have to change, some habits have to go, some dreams have to die, some attitudes have to be put off, and some private loves have to be confessed as graveyard material. Burial is not sentimental. It is final. And until a believer gets that settled, he will keep trying to make the Christian life into a decorated continuation of the old one.

5. Resurrection Means the Christian Life Is a New Walk, Not a Nicer Old One

Paul does not stop at death and burial. He says the believer has been joined to Christ in order that “like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). There is the positive side. Christianity is not mere negation. It is not only that something died. It is that something new has begun. The believer is connected to resurrection life. He is not left in the graveyard of self-denial with no power to move. He is joined to the risen Christ. That is why the Christian life is not just restraint. It is newness. It is new life, new direction, new affections, new resources, new power, new standing, and new possibilities in Jesus Christ.

That phrase, “walk in newness of life,” destroys shallow religion. The modern church often presents salvation as though the goal is to make the old life more respectable. A little cleaner language, a little less scandal, a little more church attendance, a little more polished morality, and maybe a testimony video. But Paul is talking about something deeper than social improvement. He is talking about newness of life rooted in resurrection union. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above” (Colossians 3:1). There it is. Risen with Christ. That means your life is no longer meant to be earthbound in its governing affection. The believer has been connected to another world, another Head, another power source, another destiny.

This is where victory begins to breathe. A Christian who only sees the negative side of sanctification, death to self, denial of the flesh, burial of the old man, can become grim and introspective. But the Bible does not leave him there. It says the risen Christ is his life. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Colossians 3:4). That means the believer is not merely trying to stop bad things. He is called into a new walk animated by a living Savior. The Christian life is not Adam with better manners. It is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Christians forgot that. They forgot that salvation was not God making the old man more religious. It was God uniting them to His risen Son and calling them to walk like resurrection was more than a doctrine on paper.

6. Reckoning Is the Believer Agreeing with God About What Happened

One of the great practical words in Romans 6 is found in verse 11. “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11). That word “reckon” is critical because it shows how doctrine becomes practical. Reckoning is not pretending. Reckoning is not mind games. Reckoning is not a self-help chant in front of the mirror. Reckoning is faith counting as true what God has declared to be true. God says the believer has been united with Christ in death and resurrection. Faith says, Then I will count that as the governing reality whether my flesh screams against it or not.

That is where so many saints miss the whole thing. They are waiting to feel dead to sin before they reckon themselves dead to sin. They are waiting for the flesh to go quiet before they believe God's verdict on it. That will never happen this side of glory. The flesh will continue to complain, tempt, seduce, threaten, and agitate. But reckoning does not consult the flesh. It consults God. God says the old man was crucified with Christ. God says you are alive unto Him through Jesus Christ. God says yield your members accordingly. So reckoning is the believer stepping into practical obedience based on a divine fact rather than on a fluctuating feeling.

This is why Romans 6 is so powerful. It refuses to let Christian living rest on mood. It roots the whole thing in what God has done and then calls the believer to count it true. "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God" (Romans 6:13). There is the next step. Reckoning leads to yielding. If I agree with God that I died with Christ and now live unto God, then my hands, eyes, tongue, body, mind, and affections are not to be loaned out to sin as if the old master still owns the place. Reckoning is not passive. It is doctrinal realism that produces practical surrender. Christians forgot that victory does not come from emotional hype. It comes from believing what God said about union with Christ and acting on it.

7. Death to Self Is the Missing Note in Much of Modern Preaching

If there is one thing this doctrine exposes, it is how shallow and man-centered much preaching has become. Modern sermons can talk endlessly about purpose, blessing, breakthrough, influence, favor, healing, and success while rarely saying a serious word about death to self. But Paul could not discuss victory over sin without taking the believer to Calvary. He did not say, Think more highly of yourself. He said, "our old man is crucified with him" (Romans 6:6). He did not say, Find your best life in self-expression. He said, "let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body" (Romans 6:12). He did not say, Live however you like because grace will sort it out later. He said, "yield yourselves unto God" (Romans 6:13).

That missing note explains why so much Christian teaching sounds upbeat and still produces weak people. If the cross is removed from sanctification, then the believer is left with one of two options. Either he will try to improve himself in the flesh, which leads to pride or collapse, or he will excuse the flesh and call it grace, which leads to bondage and defilement. But the cross cuts through both errors. It says the old man deserved judgment and the believer's hope is found in union with the crucified and risen Christ. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). There is the balance. Crucified with Christ, yet living through Christ.

A church that will not preach death to self cannot preach biblical victory. It can preach inspiration, but not victory. It can preach motivation, but not victory. It can preach emotional uplift, but not victory. Victory comes when the believer stops pampering the flesh and starts agreeing with God about it. The way up is down. The way to live is to die. The way to power is through the cross. That is why men hate this doctrine. It gives no place to boasting. It leaves no room for self-glory. It strips the old man and magnifies Christ. Christians forgot that. They forgot that the crucified life is not some optional level for spiritual elites. It is the normal path of anyone who has been baptized into Christ's death.

Conclusion

Romans 6:3 is not a side issue. It is one of the foundational truths of Christian sanctification. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3). That means the believer's relationship to sin, self, and the old life has been decisively altered by union with Christ. The old man has been judged. The old order has been buried. A new life has begun in resurrection connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian is not called to patch up the flesh. He is called to walk in newness of life. He is not asked to negotiate peace with the old man. He is told that the old man was crucified with Christ.

That truth is desperately needed because much of what passes for Christianity now has no depth to it. It talks about peace without death, blessing without surrender, joy without holiness, grace without reckoning, and victory without the cross. But the apostle starts at Calvary. He starts with identification. He starts with death. That is not because Christianity is miserable. It is because resurrection life can only be understood on the other side of a cross. The believer who refuses this truth will keep trying to improve Adam and wondering why the thing still stinks. The believer who embraces it will begin to see that God never intended Adam to be improved. He intended Christ to be everything.

So the practical call is plain. Remember what happened to you in Christ. Stop treating the old man like a misunderstood friend. Stop acting surprised when the flesh behaves like flesh. Stop measuring truth by your feelings. Reckon yourself to be what God says you are, dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:11). Then yield the members accordingly. That is where victory begins, not in pretending the battle is gone, but in standing on the fact that Christ has already settled the sentence on the old life and raised you into a new one. Christians forgot that, and because they forgot it, they keep trying to win spiritual battles with the wrong man. The answer is not to strengthen the old man. The answer is to remember he was crucified with Christ.

5 of 15: Truths Christians Forgot - Servants to Whom Ye Obey

Introduction

One of the most dangerous lies ever preached to a church crowd is the lie that a man can yield to sin without eventually serving it. That lie has wrecked homes, ministries, marriages, testimonies, churches, and consciences from one end of the age to the other. It usually comes dressed up in soft religious language. It says grace will cover it, liberty allows it, weakness explains it, and private indulgence contains it. But the Holy Ghost cuts through all of that syrupy foolishness with one hard question in Romans 6:16: “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey” (Romans 6:16). There is no fog on that verse. There is no wiggle room. There is no complicated theological dance to get around it. The man you obey becomes your practical master. The thing you repeatedly yield to begins to govern you. The appetite you feed grows teeth. The habit you excuse learns how to chain your hands.

That is exactly why this truth is so hated by the flesh. The flesh wants to believe it can sample sin without serving sin, negotiate with sin without being ruled by sin, and entertain sin without ever putting a collar around its own neck. But sin was never a toy. It was never a pet. It was never a harmless little side habit that could be tucked away in a private corner while the rest of life remained clean. Sin is a master seeking dominion. The first time it is invited in, it acts like a guest. The second time, it acts like family. The third time, it starts moving furniture. Before long it is giving orders in a house that once belonged to righteousness. That is why Paul brings this doctrine right into the middle of his teaching on grace. He knows the human heart. He knows how quickly people will twist grace into an excuse for compromise. So he does not let them do it. He reminds them that every act of yielding creates a line of practical obedience, and practical obedience always has a master on the other end.

That is what this essay is going after. We are not dealing with some abstract theological category meant only for seminary notes and polite doctrinal discussions. We are dealing with one of the great forgotten truths of the Christian life, that obedience forms servitude. If a man yields to lust, lust will rule him. If he yields to bitterness, bitterness will poison him. If he yields to greed, greed will own him. If he yields to pride, pride will blind him. If he yields to envy, envy will eat him alive. If he yields to righteousness, righteousness will shape him, strengthen him, and lead him into holiness. The problem with much modern Christianity is that it wants the fruit of righteousness while making peace with the habits of sin. It wants liberty while keeping little chains in every pocket. The Holy Ghost says that is impossible.

“Whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness” (Romans 6:16). The road forks there, and no amount of soft preaching changes where those roads go.

1. Yielding Is Never Neutral

The first thing Romans 6:16 destroys is the lie that yielding is morally neutral. Paul says, “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey” (Romans 6:16). That means yielding is not a harmless motion. It is not a casual shrug. It is not just a momentary lapse with no direction attached to it. It is an act of surrender. The word “yield” in this context carries the idea of presenting oneself, handing oneself over, placing oneself at the disposal of another authority. Every time a man yields, he is making a directional choice about who gets to govern that moment. He is not floating in a neutral zone. He is stepping under command.

This is one reason so many believers stay confused. They keep talking as if they can bounce back and forth between masters without consequence. They think a little indulgence in the flesh will remain just that, a little indulgence. They imagine sin to be a side room in the house rather than a rival claimant to the whole property. But Paul says the very act of yielding carries spiritual meaning. When the believer yields his mind to lust, he is not just thinking thoughts. He is placing that faculty into the service of lust. When he yields his tongue to gossip, he is not merely speaking loosely. He is putting that member into the service of corruption. When he yields his heart to envy, he is not merely feeling a passing emotion. He is allowing envy to start governing perception and response.

That truth needs to be pounded back into modern Christianity because the age is built on the myth that choices are self-contained and consequences are optional. But the Bible never talks that way. “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God” (Romans 6:13). There are only two directions in the verse. Unrighteousness unto sin, or yielding unto God. The Christian who forgets that starts treating temptation like recreation. He starts playing around with things that were never designed to stay small. Yielding is not neutral because there is no neutral ground in a life claimed by God. Every yielded member is either moving toward righteousness or serving rebellion.

2. Sin Does Not Want a Visit - It Wants Dominion

Paul does not say sin wants a little attention. He says if you yield to it, you become its servant. That means sin is imperial by nature. It seeks dominion. It wants rule. It wants command. It is never satisfied with being given a chair at the table. It wants the head seat. “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Romans 6:12). Notice that word “reign.” Sin wants the crown. It wants the scepter. It wants

the right to issue orders and see those orders obeyed. That is how the Holy Ghost speaks of it, and any view of sin that is softer than that is a fleshly lie.

This is why people get trapped. Sin never introduces itself honestly. It never says, I am here to enslave you, break your peace, stain your mind, harden your heart, wound your testimony, and make you miserable. It comes smiling. It comes offering relief, pleasure, release, revenge, comfort, control, or satisfaction. It presents itself as a servant of your happiness while secretly planning to become your master. A man thinks he is using sin. Sin is using him. A woman thinks she is indulging a manageable resentment. Resentment is setting up a throne in the soul. A young man thinks he is visiting lust for a moment. Lust is learning the route to his mind and memorizing the locks on every door.

That is why the Bible warns so sharply. “His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins” (Proverbs 5:22). There are the cords. Sin binds. It wraps. It tightens. It trains the body and mind to move under its pull. Modern compromise laughs at that and calls it dramatic. But the people trapped in pornographic filth, in drunken living, in greed, in pride, in rage, in jealousy, in obsessive comparison, in manipulative control, in secret envy, in chemical dependence, in chronic bitterness, they know those cords are real. What began as a choice became a groove. What became a groove became a chain. What became a chain became a practical servitude. That is exactly what Paul is warning about.

3. Grace Does Not Cancel Consequences

One of the filthiest abuses of Bible doctrine is when men twist grace into a shelter for sin. Paul had already answered that spirit in Romans 6:1-2: “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.” Then he keeps building the case until he arrives at Romans 6:16. The whole point is that grace does not erase moral consequences. Grace changes the believer’s standing before God. Grace secures him in Christ. Grace teaches him how to live. Grace empowers obedience. But grace does not turn sin into a harmless hobby. It does not remove the practical law that what you repeatedly obey becomes your master.

That is why the lazy grace teaching of this age is so spiritually destructive. It tells believers that since they are under grace, the warnings of bondage, chastening, corruption, and death-like consequences are overblown. But the Holy Ghost never said that. He said, “whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness” (Romans 6:16). In the Christian life, sin still leads toward destruction in practical experience. It deadens prayer. It clouds discernment. It wounds fellowship. It hardens the heart. It steals joy. It destroys peace. It weakens testimony. It invites chastening. The believer does not stop being a son

when he yields to sin, but he does begin to feel the rods and shadows that accompany that choice.

Titus 2:11-12 settles the matter. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly” (Titus 2:11-12). There is grace teaching. It is not permissive. It is not indulgent. It does not say, You are safe, so relax with sin. It says, Deny ungodliness. Deny worldly lusts. Live soberly, righteously, godly. If a man uses grace as an excuse to keep yielding to the flesh, he has not understood grace. He has weaponized a doctrine of mercy against the very holiness that mercy was meant to produce. And that is one reason so many professing Christians are in chains. They mistook forgiveness for freedom to indulge, and their indulgence taught them the hard way that grace never canceled the enslaving power of what is obeyed.

4. Lust, Pride, and Bitterness Are Not “Struggles” Only - They Are Masters in Training

There is a way people speak now that hides the seriousness of sin behind soft language. Lust becomes “a struggle.” Pride becomes “a personality issue.” Bitterness becomes “hurt.” Envy becomes “just being human.” Greed becomes “drive.” Anger becomes “passion.” The modern vocabulary is carefully designed to shave the sharp edges off the truth. But Romans 6:16 puts the edge right back on. The issue is not merely that these things are weaknesses. The issue is that if you yield yourself to them, they become masters in training. They are learning how to direct you.

Take lust. A believer entertains it in the imagination, then in the eyes, then in the habits, then in the schedule, then in the body. He thinks he is “struggling,” and in one sense he is. But if he keeps yielding, he is also serving. Lust has become more than an unwelcome temptation. It has become a pattern of obedience. Or take pride. A man keeps yielding to self-importance, to the need to be right, to the itch to be praised, to the inability to be corrected, and before long pride is not simply present. It is governing interpretation. It colors every conversation. It poisons every rebuke. It turns every disagreement into a personal assault. That is mastery at work.

Bitterness works the same way. The first grievance comes in as a hurt. The second time it is revisited, it becomes a companion. The third time it becomes a lens. Then every person is read through it, every event is filtered through it, and the man begins obeying bitterness as though it were his counselor. “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled” (Hebrews 12:15). There is the spread of it. Bitterness never stays private. It troubles you and then defiles many. That is what masters do. They do not simply live in the cellar. They change the

whole tone of the house. Christians need to stop flattering these sins with gentle euphemisms and start seeing them for what they become when obeyed, rival lords demanding service.

5. Repeated Submission Creates Practical Chains

Romans 6:16 is not talking about a single isolated motion in a vacuum. It is describing a principle of practical servitude. Every repeated act of submission creates deeper grooves in the soul. What a man yields to once, he is more likely to yield to again. The member becomes accustomed to the master. The conscience becomes less startled. The resistance weakens. The habit gains confidence. That is why chains often feel invisible at first. They are forged one link at a time. Nobody wakes up one morning and suddenly becomes a slave in a single moment without prior yielding. The slavery is built by repeated obediences.

That is why Scripture speaks the way it does about strongholds and bondage. “For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage” (2 Peter 2:19). There is the principle stated another way. Whatever overcomes a man brings him into bondage. Why? Because repeated surrender teaches the faculties to obey. A person can train himself into chains the same way a person trains himself into discipline. The body learns. The mind learns. The emotions learn. The schedule learns. The imagination learns. And once that pattern is established, it is not broken by sentimental speeches about trying harder next week. It is broken by repentance, reckoning, yielding to God, and deliberate refusal to hand the members back over to the old master.

This is why Paul uses bodily language in Romans 6. “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin” (Romans 6:13). The members matter because habits become embodied. The eyes learn where to go. The tongue learns what to say. The feet learn which paths to take. The hands learn what to touch. The stomach learns what to crave. The mind learns what to replay. And every time those members are yielded to unrighteousness, the servitude grows more practical. That is why modern Christians who keep excusing little compromises eventually find themselves carrying heavier chains than they ever intended to wear. They forgot that repeated obedience creates practical bondage, and by the time they feel the chain, they have already helped forge it.

6. Obedience to Righteousness Is the Path to Liberty, Not Bondage

The flesh hates the idea of obedience because it has been trained by the world to associate obedience with oppression and self-expression with freedom. But the Bible reverses that whole rotten setup. Paul says there are two servitudes in view, “whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness” (Romans 6:16). That means obedience to

righteousness is not a sad little alternative to “real freedom.” It is the actual path to liberty and holiness. The man who obeys God is not losing life. He is escaping tyranny. “I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts” (Psalm 119:45). There is Bible liberty. It is found in obedient alignment with truth.

That sounds backward to the carnal mind because the carnal mind thinks liberty means appetite without restraint. But appetite without restraint is exactly what creates chains. The drunkard calls it freedom until the bottle starts dictating the schedule. The fornicator calls it freedom until lust eats his peace and wrecks his conscience. The greedy man calls it freedom until money becomes the measuring rod for every decision. The bitter person calls it honest emotion until bitterness poisons every relationship. Sin advertises freedom and delivers control. Righteousness asks for obedience and delivers cleanliness, peace, usefulness, and spiritual strength.

Paul says in Romans 6:18, “Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” Notice the order. Freedom from sin does not mean freedom from all mastery. It means a transfer of mastery. The believer becomes the servant of righteousness. And that servitude is life-giving because righteousness does not enslave like sin. It orders, purifies, strengthens, and leads into fellowship with God. The obedience of faith is not bondage to a cruel tyrant. It is joyful submission to the One who made you, bought you, and knows better than your appetites what actually leads to life. Christians forgot that. They started treating obedience like a burden and compromise like a privilege, and the result has been a church full of dirty consciences calling themselves free.

7. Victory Begins When the Believer Chooses His Master at the Point of Yielding

The practical power of Romans 6:16 lies in this, the real battle is fought at the point of yielding. Victory does not begin when the chain is already cinched tight and the man is crying over the consequences. It begins earlier, in the moment a member is about to be placed at someone’s disposal. Will the believer yield the mind to lust or to truth? Will he yield the tongue to bitterness or to grace? Will he yield the body to indulgence or to holiness? Will he yield the heart to envy or to thanksgiving? That is where mastery is chosen. One yielding at a time. One surrender at a time. One act of obedience at a time.

That is why Paul follows doctrine with command. “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body” (Romans 6:12). “Neither yield ye your members” (Romans 6:13). Then, “yield yourselves unto God” (Romans 6:13). There is the practical strategy. Refuse one master, present yourself to the other. The Christian life is not just saying no to sin in the abstract. It is saying yes to God in concrete obedience. When temptation comes, the believer is not left helpless. He is called to remember whose servant he is and to refuse the old master’s

orders. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). Grace does not remove the battle. It gives the believer a new realm of power in which sin's dominion is no longer inevitable.

This is where daily Christian living gets real. The point of yielding is often small, quiet, ordinary, and unglamorous. It happens in the hidden moment. The private screen. The silent thought. The first inward reaction. The first sentence spoken. The first glance taken. The first fantasy welcomed. The first jealous comparison entertained. The first bitter rehearsal of an offense. The first proud defense of self. The first greedy compromise of conscience. That is where servitude begins and where liberty can also be preserved. A believer who remembers Romans 6:16 will stop treating those moments lightly. He will understand that practical mastery is chosen there. He will understand that every yielded member is voting for a lord.

Conclusion

Romans 6:16 stands like a guardrail on a mountain road, plain, immovable, and life-saving to anyone with enough sense to believe it. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey" (Romans 6:16). That truth cuts through a thousand excuses. It tells the believer that sin is not a toy, not a side habit, not a private weakness to be indulged and managed forever. It is a master seeking dominion. It also tells him that righteousness is not cold oppression. It is the path of liberty, holiness, and real peace. The issue is not whether a man serves. The issue is whom he serves by repeated acts of yielding.

This is one of the truths Christians forgot, and because they forgot it, many of them are in chains while still talking about grace. They yielded to lust and now lust barks orders. They yielded to bitterness and now bitterness colors every thought. They yielded to greed and now greed sits on the throne. They yielded to pride and now pride cannot be corrected. They yielded to envy and now envy rots every joy. They yielded to addiction and now habit mocks their good intentions. The servitude did not appear overnight, and it did not come without warning. It came because yielding was repeated until obedience became practical bondage. The chains were forged out of small permissions granted over time.

So the call here is urgent and simple. Stop flattering sin. Stop calling chains jewelry. Stop talking like grace makes compromise harmless. Choose your master at the point of yielding. Refuse the old tyrant. Present yourself unto God. Yield your members as instruments of righteousness. Obey from the heart that form of doctrine delivered unto you. And when the flesh starts talking about freedom, remind it of the graves and prisons it has already built. Real freedom is not found in indulging appetite. Real freedom is found in

obeying the Lord who bought you. Christians forgot that, but the Holy Ghost did not. That is why He asked the question, “Know ye not?”

6 of 15: Truths Christians Forgot - The Law Hath Dominion

Introduction

One of the biggest messes in modern Christianity is the confusion over the law. You have one crowd that acts like Moses is still standing over the Church with a clipboard, grading every believer’s standing before God by performance, diet, days, ceremonies, and religious rule-keeping. Then you have another crowd that hears the word grace and immediately turns into a spiritual slob, acting as if liberty in Christ means they can live any way they please and God is supposed to clap for it because they know the right doctrinal vocabulary. Both crowds are wrong, and both crowds prove they have forgotten what Paul actually said. Romans 7:1 opens with a plain statement: “Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?” (Romans 7:1). That verse is not a dusty theological footnote. It is a doorway into one of the most liberating and one of the most abused truths in the New Testament.

Paul is not writing this material to scholars in a library who want something to argue about over coffee. He is speaking to saved people who need to understand what changed when they were united to Jesus Christ. He has already dealt with identification in Romans 6. He has already said the believer is baptized into Christ’s death, that the old man is crucified with Him, and that the saint is not to let sin reign in the mortal body. Now he turns to the matter of the law and explains that death changes legal standing. That is the key. The law has dominion over a man as long as he liveth. That means the issue is not whether the law is bad. The issue is jurisdiction. The issue is standing. The issue is what happened to the believer in relation to Christ’s death. Until a man understands that, he will either try to earn what can only be received by grace, or he will abuse grace as if Christ died to make rebellion respectable.

That is why this essay matters so much. Christians forgot both sides of the truth. Some act as if the law is still the ladder by which they climb into favor with God. Others act as if being dead to the law means being free from righteousness, holiness, accountability, chastening, and obedience. One side produces self-righteous religion. The other side produces antinomian sloppiness dressed up as liberty. But the Bible destroys both. Death in Christ changes the believer’s legal standing before God, but it never excuses moral looseness. Grace frees the saint from the law as a condemning covenant, not from the holy character

of the God who saved him. The same apostle who said, “ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Romans 6:14) also said, “Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid” (Romans 6:15). There is the balance, and the Church had better recover it.

1. The Law Is Holy, but Its Dominion Is Real

Paul does not begin by insulting the law. He begins by stating a legal fact. “The law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth” (Romans 7:1). Dominion means authority. It means rightful claim. It means the law speaks with force over a living man under its jurisdiction. That is important because many of the people who abuse grace talk as if the problem was the law itself. But Paul never talks that way. A few verses later he asks, “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:12). There is no smear job on the law. The law came from God, reflects God’s righteousness, and speaks truth about man’s condition. The problem is not that the law is evil. The problem is that sinful flesh cannot satisfy its demands and cannot escape its condemnation.

That dominion is not theoretical. The law does not merely offer moral suggestions. It binds, accuses, exposes, and condemns. “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse” (Galatians 3:10). That is dominion. The law does not ask a sinner for his best effort and then hand out participation trophies. It demands perfection because it reflects the righteousness of God. “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Galatians 3:10). There is no room for boasting there. The law strips man naked. It tells him he is guilty, corrupt, law-breaking, and already condemned. That is why self-righteous religious people hate the true function of the law. They want a law soft enough to flatter them. God gave a law holy enough to expose them.

That is the first thing Christians forgot. They forgot that the law is not a toy for theological roleplay. It is a serious instrument of divine authority. When Paul says it has dominion over a man as long as he liveth, he is telling you that the law’s claim is real. It is binding. It is exacting. It is not sentimental. And if a man tries to stand before God on that ground, he is finished before he opens his mouth. That is why legalistic religion is so insane. It keeps sending sinners back to the very instrument that proves their guilt, as though the thing that condemns them can somehow become the thing that justifies them. It cannot. The law is holy, but its dominion is real, and under that dominion every man in Adam stands guilty.

2. Death Changes Legal Standing

Paul’s whole point in Romans 7 is that death changes jurisdiction. He uses the marriage illustration for exactly that reason. “For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the

law to her husband so long as he liveth” (Romans 7:2). Then he adds, “but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband” (Romans 7:2). That is not complicated. Death ends the legal bond. The law had rightful claim while the relationship under that law was still alive, but death changes the legal condition entirely. Paul is not giving marriage counseling there. He is showing how the believer’s union with Christ alters his standing in relation to the law.

Then he applies it directly. “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ” (Romans 7:4). There is the key phrase. Dead to the law. Not because the law changed. Not because God relaxed. Not because holiness stopped mattering. But because the believer was united with Christ in His death. Death changed the legal standing. The Christian is no longer before God as a living man in Adam trying to satisfy the law’s demands in his own person. He has died with Christ. Therefore the law, as a covenant of condemnation and legal claim against him, no longer stands over him in the same way it stood over him before conversion.

This is where liberty explodes into view. The believer is not trying to earn acceptance by works of the law because acceptance is already secured in Christ. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). That is not because God lowered the standard. It is because Christ fulfilled the righteousness of the law, bore its curse, and brought the believer into a new standing through His death and resurrection. Christians forgot that. They keep talking as if salvation is the start of a probation period where they must now maintain divine acceptance by law-performance. But Paul says the believer has become dead to the law by the body of Christ. If that does not break the back of legal bondage, nothing will.

3. Dead to the Law Does Not Mean Dead to Holiness

The flesh hears “dead to the law” and immediately starts writing excuses for sin. That is because the flesh is dishonest by nature. It is always looking for a loophole. But Paul never allows that twist. The same writer who explains the believer is dead to the law is the writer who says, “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid” (Romans 6:1-2). Again, “Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid” (Romans 6:15). That settles it. Freedom from the law as a covenant does not mean freedom to sin as a lifestyle. Dead to the law is not the same as dead to holiness. It is a change of legal standing, not a cancellation of moral seriousness.

What changed is the believer’s relationship to God’s righteousness. Under the law, righteousness was demanded from a sinful man who could not produce it. In Christ, righteousness is imputed by faith and then worked out in practical sanctification by the

Holy Ghost. That means the motive, power, and standing have changed, but the moral character of God has not changed. God is still holy. Sin is still evil. The flesh is still corrupt. Worldliness is still adultery against God. Lust is still filth. Pride is still rebellion. Bitterness is still poison. Grace did not repaint these things and call them acceptable. Grace gives a man a new standing and a new power to walk in a way that honors the God who saved him.

That is why Paul says in Romans 7:4 that believers are dead to the law “that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” Notice that. Fruit unto God. Not fruit unto self. Not fruit unto the flesh. Not fruit unto the world. The whole purpose of release from the law is not self-indulgence. It is union with Christ for fruitfulness. Any doctrine of grace that leads a man to feel relaxed about impurity, sloppiness, rebellion, or worldliness is not Pauline grace. It is fleshly corruption pretending to be theology. Christians forgot that dead to the law means alive unto God, not free to roll in the mud.

4. Legalism Cannot Produce What It Demands

One of the cruel ironies of legalistic religion is that it demands holiness while producing hypocrisy. It preaches standards without power, duties without life, and rules without union with Christ. The result is always the same. Either pride in the outwardly disciplined, or despair in the honest, or hypocrisy in the crowd that pretends to be doing well while rotting inwardly. Paul says, “when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death” (Romans 7:5). There is the problem. The law reveals sin, stirs the rebellious flesh, and shows the sinner what he is, but it does not regenerate him. It can command, but it cannot empower.

That is why the law cannot produce the righteousness it requires. It can define righteousness. It can demand righteousness. It can condemn the absence of righteousness. But it cannot put life into a dead sinner. “For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law” (Galatians 3:21). There is the matter settled. No law ever given could impart life. So when religious people try to make the Christian life into a system of law-based acceptance, they are sending people back to an engine that has no fuel. They are trying to force fruit out of branches that are not abiding in the Vine.

This is why self-righteous religion is so ugly. It produces men who look stern, disciplined, and doctrinally serious while remaining strangers to grace, tenderness, joy, and real spiritual life. They know how to police appearances, but they do not know how to walk in the Spirit. They can quote rules, but they cannot bring forth fruit unto God because legalism has no resurrection power in it. It is all demand and no life. Christians forgot that. They

forgot that law can expose the flesh, but only Christ can replace its rule. They forgot that you cannot beat Adam into holiness with enough commandments. You have to die with Christ and live through Him.

5. Liberty in Christ Is Not Antinomian Sloppiness

As surely as legalism corrupts the gospel on one side, antinomian sloppiness corrupts it on the other. There are believers who know enough verses about grace to talk themselves into carnality. They boast that they are free from the law, and then proceed to live like the devil's interns all week, while assuring everyone this is liberty. But biblical liberty never looks like that. Paul says, "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held" (Romans 7:6). Then he explains the purpose, "that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6). Notice the word serve. Delivered from the law does not mean released into chaos. It means released into a new kind of service.

That newness of spirit is not looseness. It is spiritual obedience flowing from life in Christ and the indwelling Holy Ghost. The antinomian crowd talks as if rules are the only possible form of moral seriousness, so once they reject legalism they feel justified in becoming soft on sin. But Paul is not soft on sin anywhere. Read Romans 6, Romans 8, Galatians 5, Colossians 3, Ephesians 4 and 5, and then try telling me Paul thought grace was permission to be sloppy. He says, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth" (Colossians 3:5). He says, "put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication" (Colossians 3:8). He says, "walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). That is not antinomian ease. That is spiritual war.

Modern sloppiness often hides behind words like authentic, honest, and free. But freedom that leaves a man filthy is not biblical freedom. It is just less disciplined bondage. The believer is free from the law as a condemning legal covenant, but he is not free from the claims of Christ, the leading of the Spirit, the call to holiness, the necessity of obedience, or the reality of chastening. A child of God living loose, impure, worldly, and undisciplined is not showcasing grace. He is grieving the Spirit and dishonoring the blood that bought him. Christians forgot that liberty in Christ is liberty unto holy service, not liberty unto spiritual carelessness.

6. The Believer Serves from a New Position and a New Power

Romans 7:6 is one of the great transition verses in the New Testament. "But now we are delivered from the law" (Romans 7:6). Then, "that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6). That means the believer's service to God no longer rises from fear of condemnation or the desperate effort to earn standing. It rises

from a new position and a new power. He is in Christ. He is accepted in the Beloved. He is indwelt by the Holy Ghost. He serves not as a condemned slave trying to avoid judgment, but as a redeemed son seeking to glorify his Father.

That changes everything. The motive changes because love replaces dread. The power changes because the Spirit replaces fleshly striving. The standing changes because justification replaces uncertainty. The fruit changes because union with Christ replaces mere external pressure. This is why the Christian can obey with joy instead of terror. He is not trying to make himself accepted. He is obeying because he is accepted. He is not trying to keep God from becoming his enemy. He is walking with the God who reconciled him through Christ. That is why grace produces better obedience than legalism ever could. It gets down into the heart.

Paul says elsewhere, “For the love of Christ constraineth us” (2 Corinthians 5:14). There is the new engine. Not bare law on stone, but Christ’s love pressing a redeemed heart. Then he says Christ died “that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Corinthians 5:15). There is the new direction. The believer serves from grace, through the Spirit, unto Christ. Christians forgot that. They keep trying to borrow motivation either from legal fear or from fleshly freedom, while the New Testament points them to a better way, the obedience of a justified man walking in the Spirit from a new standing in Christ.

7. The Real Enemy Is Neither the Law Nor Grace, but the Flesh

Romans 7 is one of the clearest proofs that the deepest problem was never the law and is never grace. The problem is the flesh. Paul says, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing” (Romans 7:18). There is the culprit. Not the law. Not grace. Not the gospel. The flesh. The law exposes it. Grace does not improve it. Christ condemns it at the cross and gives the believer a new life beyond it. That is why both legalists and antinomians are wrong in different ways. The legalist trusts flesh to achieve righteousness under law. The antinomian indulges flesh under the cover of grace. Both forget that flesh is the problem in either setup.

Once that is understood, the whole matter becomes much clearer. The legalist says, I will discipline the flesh into acceptability. Paul says no good thing dwells in it. The antinomian says, I can safely indulge the flesh because I am under grace. Paul says the flesh still serves sin and still brings corruption. The biblical answer is not to trust the flesh or pamper the flesh, but to walk in the Spirit. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh” (Romans 8:3). There it is. The weakness was “through the flesh.” Then Paul says

God sent His own Son and condemned sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3). That is the answer. The flesh was condemned, not crowned.

This is why Christians must stop talking as if the whole argument is between rules and freedom. The real issue is whether the flesh is going to be trusted, excused, indulged, or mortified. The believer who understands Romans 7 does not go back under the law for acceptance, and he does not run into looseness under grace. He recognizes that the flesh is bankrupt in either case and that Christ is his righteousness, his life, and his power. Christians forgot that, and because they forgot it they keep bouncing between harsh legalism and careless liberty, while the Spirit of God is calling them to something better, union with Christ, service in newness of spirit, and fruit unto God.

Conclusion

Romans 7:1 is one of those verses that quietly opens an enormous doctrinal door. “Know ye not, brethren, ... how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?” (Romans 7:1). The law’s dominion is real, holy, and condemning toward the man who stands alive under its claim. But the believer’s union with Christ changes that legal standing. He has become dead to the law by the body of Christ. That means he is not trying to earn divine acceptance through legal performance. He is accepted in Christ, justified by faith, and brought into a new relationship in which he serves God in newness of spirit, not in the oldness of the letter.

But that liberty must never be twisted into permission for sloppiness. Dead to the law does not mean dead to holiness. Free from condemnation does not mean free to live dirty. Released from legal bondage does not mean released from the claims of Christ. The believer is married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that he should bring forth fruit unto God. The whole purpose of this deliverance is fruitfulness, not flesh. That truth destroys self-righteous religion on one side and antinomian carelessness on the other. Both are fleshly errors, and both must be rejected.

So the Christian must remember both sides of the truth. Do not crawl back under the law as if Christ’s death left you on probation. And do not crawl out into carnal looseness as if grace were a permission slip for impurity. Stand in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and use that liberty to serve God from a clean standing, a grateful heart, and the power of the Holy Ghost. That is the balance Paul teaches. That is the truth Christians forgot. And if the Church ever recovers it, it will stop producing proud Pharisees on one side and sloppy libertines on the other, and start producing saints who know what it means to be dead to the law and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

7 of 15: Truths Christians Forgot - A Little Leaven

Introduction

One of the most dangerous lies ever whispered into a church, a home, a ministry, or a believer's private life is the lie that a small corruption can be safely contained. That lie has ruined more people than open persecution ever did. It says a little compromise will not matter, a little doctrinal softness will not spread, a little tolerated sin will not infect the whole body, a little flirtation with the world will not alter the spirit of a church, and a little carnality can be managed as long as everybody keeps smiling and the machinery keeps moving. But the Holy Ghost blows that rotten lie apart in one sharp sentence from 1 Corinthians 5:6: "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (1 Corinthians 5:6). There is no softness in that verse. There is no room for the modern obsession with keeping peace by refusing to judge what God told you to judge. The Spirit of God is telling you that corruption spreads. It does not sit still. It does not remain little. It does not politely stay in the corner where you first tolerated it. It works through the whole lump.

That is exactly what made the Corinthian situation so shameful. Paul was not dealing merely with private weakness. He was dealing with a church that had become proud while open sin sat in the middle of the assembly like a parasite feeding on their cowardice. He says, "And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned" (1 Corinthians 5:2). That is the sickness of many churches right now. They have learned how to protect appearances while corruption spreads under the floorboards. They know how to keep the crowd comfortable, preserve the giving base, and avoid awkward conversations, but they do not know how to mourn over evil, confront it, and remove it before it poisons the whole body. In the name of kindness they ignore what should be judged. In the name of unity they protect what should be purged. In the name of peace they shelter what is at war with holiness. Then they act surprised when the thing they refused to deal with returns as a wider corruption.

That is why this truth belongs in this series. Christians forgot that little things become big things when left unjudged. They forgot that leaven works quietly, steadily, inwardly, and thoroughly. They forgot that false doctrine rarely arrives full grown, and that scandal usually begins as tolerated smallness. They forgot that worldliness enters by degrees, carnality spreads by permission, and compromise grows because somebody somewhere convinced himself that one tolerated exception would not matter. But God does not speak that way. He says a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. That applies to churches, homes, ministries, friendships, minds, habits, marriages, and private lives. It applies to moral evil, doctrinal dilution, spiritual laziness, and tolerated flesh. It applies wherever men choose

outward peace at the expense of inward purity. What is ignored in the name of kindness usually returns in the form of corruption, and by the time corruption becomes visible, the leaven has already been working for a long time.

1. Paul's Rebuke Shows That Tolerated Evil Is Never a Small Matter

When Paul asks, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (1 Corinthians 5:6), he is speaking in the middle of a church discipline crisis. A man in the assembly was involved in gross immorality, and the church had not dealt with it. They had not mourned. They had not purged. They had not trembled. They had apparently managed to become proud while the infection sat among them. That is why Paul's language is so forceful. He does not say, You may want to keep an eye on this. He does not say, Let us all be patient and hope things sort themselves out. He says, "Your glorying is not good" (1 Corinthians 5:6). The whole attitude of the church was wrong because they treated tolerated evil as if it were survivable without decisive action.

That is a lesson the church still refuses to learn. Men often think the real danger lies only in dramatic scandals, public collapses, and explosive crises. But Paul points to something subtler and more dangerous. He points to tolerated evil. The man's sin was evil, but the church's response was almost as revealing. They were content to let it remain. Once a church gets comfortable with what God calls corrupting, it is already in trouble even before the outward consequences spread further. The first corruption is not always the scandal itself. The first corruption is often the refusal to judge the scandal. The body learns by example what it will and will not tolerate. Once evil survives unchallenged, the standards shift. Once the standards shift, the spirit of the church changes.

That is why Paul speaks in terms of leaven. Leaven is not a dramatic explosion. It is a working influence. It operates inwardly and gradually. It changes the lump from the inside. That is precisely how tolerated sin behaves. It reshapes perception. It recalibrates what people find shocking. It lowers resistance. It teaches the younger believers that some things are manageable. It teaches the older believers that peace is more important than purity. It teaches leadership that image protection is more urgent than obedience. In other words, the little tolerated thing becomes a teaching ministry of corruption. Paul's rebuke shows that tolerated evil is never a small matter because the moment it is protected, it begins to preach.

2. Leaven Works Quietly Before It Works Publicly

One reason people underestimate leaven is because it does not always announce itself with sirens. It works quietly. It does its damage below the surface before the full effect becomes obvious. That is exactly why it is such a fitting picture for sin, false doctrine, and

compromise. A church does not usually wake up one Sunday and suddenly become apostate in one leap. A home does not usually collapse in one afternoon out of nowhere. A believer does not usually become spiritually hollow overnight without prior stages of tolerated weakness. The leaven works first in hidden places. It changes texture before it changes shape. It alters spirit before it alters reputation. It starts under the surface.

The Bible warns repeatedly about things that work this way. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines" (Song of Solomon 2:15). There is the same principle in another image. Not always the roaring lion in the street, but the little foxes in the vineyard. Not always the obvious catastrophe, but the quiet spoiler. In Galatians 5:9 Paul uses the same leaven statement in a doctrinal setting, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Galatians 5:9). False doctrine often begins the same way. It does not always show up with a pentagram and a pitchfork. It often arrives with one softened word, one shifted emphasis, one tolerated exception, one new phrase that flatters the flesh, and one slight lowering of the edge. Then it works through the minds of people until the whole doctrinal texture has changed.

That is why spiritually awake people deal with things early. They do not wait until the entire structure is visibly altered. They know the quiet stage is the dangerous stage because that is when people still have the illusion of control. The husband thinks his private compromise is contained. The pastor thinks the slight softening in doctrine is harmless. The parent thinks the little bit of worldliness allowed into the home can be fenced in. The believer thinks the secret indulgence has not affected anything because no one else can see it yet. But leaven does not need publicity to work. It only needs permission. By the time it works publicly, it has already been at work privately for longer than anyone wants to admit.

3. Outward Peace Bought at the Expense of Purity Is False Peace

One of the most destructive instincts in modern Christianity is the instinct to preserve outward calm at any cost. Men call it being gracious, being balanced, being wise, being loving, being pastoral, being patient, being mature. Sometimes those things are real virtues. But many times those words are used to hide a spineless unwillingness to deal with corruption. Jeremiah rebuked men who said, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14). That is the same spirit. Outward peace purchased at the expense of purity is not biblical peace. It is cosmetic quiet. It is a white sheet thrown over a corpse.

That is exactly what the Corinthians were doing. They were preserving a kind of church life while refusing to confront what should have brought them to mourning. Paul says they had "not rather mourned" (1 Corinthians 5:2). That means true spiritual response would have felt the gravity of the corruption. Mourning would have led to action. But instead they had

outward function without inward cleansing. Churches do that all the time now. They keep the schedule, the music, the branding, the social media presence, the outreach language, the polished smiles, while unjudged leaven is working through the body. Then if anyone raises the alarm, he is treated like the troublemaker because he disturbed the fake peace.

But God has never been impressed by peace that shelters corruption. Real peace and purity are friends. Fake peace and corruption are friends. You cannot protect both truth and tolerated evil. One will have to go. James says, “the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable” (James 3:17). Notice the order. First pure, then peaceable. Modern religion often reverses that and says first peaceable, maybe pure later if it does not upset the donor base or split the room. But God says purity first. The reason is simple. Peace without purity becomes a breeding ground for leaven. It lets the infection remain undisturbed long enough to spread everywhere.

4. A Little Leaven Applies to False Doctrine as Much as Moral Sin

Some believers read 1 Corinthians 5 and assume the lesson only applies to scandalous moral sin. But Paul uses the same leaven language in Galatians about doctrine, and that broadens the warning considerably. “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Galatians 5:9). In Galatians the issue was not a man sleeping in immorality in the assembly. The issue was doctrinal corruption concerning grace, law, and justification. Men were introducing legal additions to the gospel, and Paul treats that corruption with the same urgency. Why? Because false doctrine spreads the same way moral corruption does. It rarely arrives wearing a badge that says heresy. It comes in as a slight adjustment, a modest qualification, a supposedly harmless balance, a new angle that sounds spiritual enough to pass initial inspection.

That is why doctrinal leaven is so dangerous. Once men allow one corruption into the gospel, the whole tone of the message changes. Add works to justification, and grace is no longer grace. Add human merit to divine acceptance, and Christ is no longer sufficient. Soften hell, and the urgency of the gospel weakens. Blur Israel and the Church, and the whole structure of doctrine starts getting crooked. Replace repentance with positivity, and sinners are comforted without conversion. Replace holiness with authenticity, and worldliness becomes fashionable in the church. Doctrinal corruption does not need to deny everything at once. It only needs to alter the center enough that the rest starts shifting around it.

This is one reason doctrinal tolerance is so deadly. People think they are being broad-minded when they let false teaching stand beside truth as if both can safely coexist. They cannot. Light and darkness are not neutral neighbors. “A little leaven leaveneth the whole

lump” means what it says. The tolerated falsehood will not sit quietly beside truth forever. It will work on the lump. It will influence language, alter emphasis, reshape expectation, and eventually corrupt the whole atmosphere. Churches do not wake up liberal by accident. They leaven their way there through little tolerated departures nobody wanted to challenge early enough.

5. Worldliness Is Leaven When It Is Welcomed Instead of Resisted

The same principle applies to worldliness. Worldliness does not usually take over a believer, a home, or a church in one dramatic act. It enters gradually. One tolerated compromise in dress, in entertainment, in values, in speech, in priorities, in ambitions, in what is admired, in what is laughed at, in what is excused. Then the spirit of the world begins to work through the lump. James says, “Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” (James 4:4). That is not because the world system stands still. It is because it works on the heart. Once welcomed, it wants influence. Once given influence, it seeks loyalty.

This is why churches that once stood sharp can become soft without changing their doctrinal statement overnight. The statement stays on the website. The songs still mention Jesus. The people still use Christian terms. But the spirit has changed because worldliness has been tolerated in the name of relevance, accessibility, platform growth, image management, or not appearing old-fashioned. Soon the things once resisted are normalized. The lines once maintained are mocked. The world’s way of measuring success begins to shape ministry decisions. Entertainment starts replacing reverence. Sensuality begins to creep into what used to be holy. Flesh is flattered while holiness is made to feel awkward. That is leaven.

The same thing happens in homes and in personal lives. A little compromise in what the family watches. A little compromise in the music shaping the atmosphere. A little compromise in what is joked about. A little compromise in priorities. A little compromise in who is admired and envied. Soon the whole spirit of the house is altered. Parents wonder why the children have no spiritual appetite, but the answer often lies in the tolerated leaven that worked for years. Worldliness is not harmless because it is not passive. It catechizes. It trains affection. It disciplines the imagination. It slowly makes the things of God feel strange and the things of the world feel normal.

6. Tolerated Carnality in the Individual Life Becomes Inner Corruption

It is easy to talk about leaven in churches and ministries while ignoring the same principle in the individual believer’s life. But the same rule applies. A little tolerated carnality will work through the whole inward life if left unjudged. A little hidden lust. A little secret

bitterness. A little private envy. A little dishonest greed. A little selfish ambition. A little pride nursed instead of crucified. A little compromise in the thought life. These things do not remain isolated because the heart is not divided into sealed compartments. What is fed in one chamber affects the whole inner atmosphere.

David's collapse did not begin on the rooftop only. Something had already been tolerated in the inward man before the outward scandal bloomed. James writes, "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin" (James 1:14-15). There is the progression. Conceived, then brought forth. The little inward corruption is not static. It is generative. It produces. That is why spiritually serious believers deal with sins in seed form. They do not wait until the fruit is hanging publicly on the branch. They know that by then the root has already been alive for some time.

This is where many Christians deceive themselves. They think because the tolerated carnality is private, it has not spread. But it has. It may already be affecting prayer, joy, boldness, tenderness, receptivity to Scripture, love for holiness, and power in witness. The man still looks functional to others, but inwardly the lump has been altered. That is often why preaching that once stung now glances off. Leaven has changed the texture. The conscience once tender is now padded. The appetite once sharp is now dulled. The affections once warm are now thinned out. Tolerated carnality always spreads because the soul is an integrated thing. Corrupt one part long enough and the whole man feels it.

7. Purging Leaven Requires Judgment, Not Mere Regret

Paul does not merely diagnose the problem. He commands action. "Purge out therefore the old leaven" (1 Corinthians 5:7). That is decisive language. Purge out. Not admire the problem. Not study it endlessly. Not host a panel discussion about its complexity while it continues spreading. Purge it out. Leaven does not leave because people regret it in vague religious language. It has to be judged, confronted, removed, and denied room to keep working. In the Corinthian case that meant discipline. In other situations it means repentance, separation, correction, confession, removal, or a hard line drawn where compromise had been tolerated.

This is one reason so many people stay corrupted. They regret leaven but do not purge leaven. They feel bad about the consequences while still preserving the source. They cry over the poison while refusing to pour it out. They speak in general terms about needing change while protecting the exact habit, relationship, teaching, or atmosphere that keeps infecting the lump. That is not biblical cleansing. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out" (Matthew 5:29). The Lord's language is severe because sin is severe. "Make not provision

for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:14). There again is the principle. Stop feeding what you claim to hate.

Purging leaven takes spiritual courage because it often costs something outwardly. It may cost a relationship, a public appearance of calm, a comfortable pattern, a ministry alliance, a favorite indulgence, or a fake peace everybody had learned to protect. But what is the alternative? Leave the leaven in and let the whole lump be altered. God never called His people to maintain corruption politely. He called them to holiness. The reason modern Christianity often feels weak, blurry, and compromised is that it wants the blessings of purity without the pain of purging. But there is no route to a clean lump that avoids judgment. If the leaven is not confronted, it will continue working.

Conclusion

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (1 Corinthians 5:6) is one of those truths that explains a great deal of spiritual wreckage. Churches, homes, ministries, and lives are often not destroyed first by giant public explosions, but by small corruptions left unjudged until they spread through the structure. Tolerated moral sin teaches corruption. Softened doctrine teaches corruption. Welcomed worldliness teaches corruption. Hidden carnality teaches corruption. The little thing everyone wanted to ignore for the sake of peace becomes the working influence that alters the whole atmosphere. That is why Paul’s rebuke is so severe. The issue is never just the little tolerated thing. The issue is what that thing does when allowed to remain.

Modern Christianity is obsessed with outward peace at the expense of purity. It would rather look calm than be clean. It would rather avoid conflict than remove corruption. It would rather keep the machine running than stop and mourn over what is poisoning the body. But God does not measure health by outward smoothness. He measures it by truth, holiness, and obedience. What is ignored in the name of kindness usually returns in the form of corruption. What is protected in the name of unity usually spreads in the form of weakness. What is tolerated in the name of patience usually works inwardly until the whole lump is affected.

So the answer is not paranoia. The answer is spiritual seriousness. Judge small corruptions early. Deal with tolerated sin quickly. Resist doctrinal dilution immediately. Reject worldliness at the door. Refuse to pamper private carnality. Purge out the old leaven. That is not harshness. That is wisdom. A people who remember this truth will not be eager to protect appearances while corruption spreads beneath them. They will fear God more than awkwardness. They will value purity above cosmetic peace. And they will understand what too many Christians forgot, that a little leaven never stays little.

8 of 15: Truths Christians Forgot - We Shall Judge Angels

Introduction

There are some verses in the New Testament that ought to stop a saved man in his tracks and make him wonder why he ever wasted so much time crawling around in the dust over petty things. One of those verses is 1 Corinthians 6:3. Paul says, “Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” (1 Corinthians 6:3). That is one of the most staggering statements in the Pauline epistles, and the shame of it is that most Christians read right over it like it is a decorative phrase instead of a thunderclap from heaven. Paul is talking to a church full of envy, strife, lawsuits, immaturity, and fleshly nonsense, and instead of flattering them, he reminds them of their future calling. He lifts their eyes from the sandbox and points them toward the throne. He tells saints destined for future rule that they are acting like spoiled children bickering over scraps.

That is the condition of much of modern Christianity. People who have been saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, sealed by the Holy Ghost, made heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, spend their days pouting, grasping, competing, resenting, and collapsing under the weight of temporary irritations. They live as though the whole purpose of Christianity were to survive this week with a little comfort and a few encouraging words. They have forgotten what they were saved for. They know something about forgiveness, and maybe something about heaven, but they do not live with any sense of eternal calling, eternal administration, eternal responsibility, or eternal dignity. As a result, they conduct themselves like the world, argue like the world, panic like the world, and chase status like the world. Then they wonder why the church looks weak, why testimony is poor, and why so many believers seem spiritually small.

Paul’s remedy for that smallness is not sentimental. He does not tell the Corinthians to boost their self-esteem. He does not tell them to take a day off and practice self-care. He tells them the truth. “Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” (1 Corinthians 6:3). In other words, what in the world are you doing living like this? If God has appointed the saints to future participation in divine judgment and kingdom administration, then present conduct ought to reflect future destiny. Christians forgot not only what they were saved from, but what they were saved for. They forgot that the Church is not headed toward meaningless inactivity, but toward glory, service, rule, and participation with Jesus Christ in the age to come. That truth ought to put steel in a man’s spine, gravity in his choices, and holy contempt in his soul for the childish distractions of this passing world.

1. Paul Uses Future Glory to Rebuke Present Carnality

The first thing to notice in 1 Corinthians 6 is that Paul does not bring up this truth in a calm doctrinal lecture detached from practical life. He brings it up in the middle of a rebuke. The Corinthians were dragging disputes before the unjust and humiliating the church by showing that they could not handle ordinary conflicts among themselves. Paul says, “Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?” (1 Corinthians 6:1). Then he says, “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?” (1 Corinthians 6:2). And then he raises it even higher, “Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” (1 Corinthians 6:3). That means Paul is using future authority to shame present foolishness. He is saying, in effect, if you are going to sit with Christ in the future administration of righteousness, why are you behaving like this over trivial earthly matters?

That is a lesson the church needs desperately. Too many believers act as though their future in Christ has no bearing on how they handle problems now. They collapse over money disputes, personal slights, ministry misunderstandings, petty competition, hurt feelings, and all the other little scraps of this life, while forgetting that they belong to a coming kingdom under the Lord Jesus Christ. If the saints shall judge the world and judge angels, then they ought to be able to display some sanctified judgment in the little affairs of this life. Paul’s argument is not merely doctrinal. It is moral. Your destiny ought to shape your dignity. Your calling ought to affect your conduct.

That is where much of modern church life is embarrassing. Men who claim they are heaven-bound, Spirit-filled, Bible-believing saints can still act like carnal toddlers when money, honor, recognition, or preference enters the room. They pout, quarrel, gossip, divide, and posture. They sound more like shareholders in a collapsing company than members of the Body of Christ. Paul’s answer to that spirit is not to indulge it. He reminds them who they are going to be with Christ. He puts eternal responsibility in front of temporal nonsense. The saints who forget their future will always become easy prey for present pettiness.

2. The Saints Were Saved for More Than Escape

Many Christians know they were saved from hell, and thank God for that. But they have almost no grasp of what they were saved for. They know something about pardon, but very little about purpose. They know something about rescue, but almost nothing about reigning. Yet the Bible repeatedly ties the believer’s future to participation with Christ in glory and authority. “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him” (2 Timothy 2:12). “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne” (Revelation 3:21). “And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father” (Revelation 1:6). Those are not throwaway lines.

Those are defining truths. The believer was not merely saved to avoid the lake of fire. He was saved to belong to Christ in a kingdom that is coming.

That changes the whole picture of Christian life. A believer who only thinks in terms of escape will live small. He will think of salvation mainly as private relief. But a believer who understands calling will begin to see his present life as preparation. Faithfulness matters. Judgment seat matters. Reward matters. Responsibility matters. Growth matters. Discipline matters. Holiness matters. Why? Because God is not preparing a flock of pampered consumers to float on clouds. He is preparing a people to stand with His Son in manifested glory. That does not mean the Church earns its standing through works. It means grace does more than rescue. Grace appoints, trains, matures, and prepares.

This is one of the truths Christians forgot. They forgot that they are not only redeemed sinners, but future participants in Christ's triumph. The result is that they think too low, live too low, and aim too low. Their prayers get low. Their ambitions get low. Their standards get low. Their endurance gets low. The church becomes earthbound because its view of the future is reduced to comfort instead of calling. Paul lifts the curtain and says, "we shall judge angels" (1 Corinthians 6:3). That should blow the dust off a man's perspective. That should remind him that heaven is not inactivity. It is administration under Christ.

3. "We Shall Judge Angels" Reveals a Future Order Greater Than Most Christians Imagine

The phrase itself is astonishing. "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Corinthians 6:3). Paul does not pause to explain it in detail, probably because he expects the Corinthians to understand enough of the truth already. But the statement itself tells you something huge. The saints in Christ are appointed to a future place so elevated that they will participate in judgment involving angelic beings. At the very least, this includes a role in the righteous administration of Christ's kingdom and triumph over fallen spiritual powers. The exact mechanics may not all be laid out in one verse, but the reality is plain. The saints are headed for a position of authority under Christ that touches the unseen realm.

That puts the believer in a far more exalted future than most modern preaching ever suggests. Too much preaching leaves the Christian with a vague image of heaven as passive bliss, and that is about as far as it goes. But the New Testament points to active participation, reward, responsibility, crowns, thrones, service, priesthood, and reigning. "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:10). "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Corinthians 6:2). When those verses are taken together, the picture becomes clear. God's redeemed

people are not an afterthought in the kingdom. They are part of its manifested order under Christ.

That should affect the way a believer sees himself right now. Not in arrogance, but in holy seriousness. If God has destined the saints for that kind of glory under His Son, then Christian living cannot be reduced to surviving temptations and making it through bad news cycles. The believer is being shaped for something eternal. Present faithfulness is not meaningless. Present growth is not wasted. Present obedience is not small. The man who remembers that his destiny is bound up with Christ's kingdom will stop treating this life like a cheap carnival and start treating it like boot camp for glory.

4. Future Rule Should Produce Present Gravity

One of the great practical applications of this truth is that future rule should produce present gravity. A man who knows he is being prepared for future participation with Christ ought to carry himself differently now. Paul's whole point in 1 Corinthians 6 is that believers ought to display enough maturity and sobriety to handle ordinary life because of what is coming. The future is not an excuse for present carelessness. It is a reason for present seriousness. "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life" (2 Timothy 2:4). Why? Because he belongs to another order. He has another command structure. He is moving toward another end.

That is where much modern Christianity has become feather-light. It is too easily distracted, too easily offended, too easily entertained, too easily derailed. It has no gravity because it has forgotten glory. When believers lose sight of eternal calling, they start acting like this world is the center of the map. They become frantic over temporary inconveniences. They chase earthly applause. They nurse every slight. They grow childish over things that should not matter to a people bound for the kingdom of Christ. But when a man really believes he will stand with Christ in future administration, a lot of little nonsense starts to look like what it is, nonsense.

This is not about pretending earthly life has no real burdens. It does. There are genuine sorrows, genuine pressures, genuine injustices. But even in those, the saint is called to remember the larger framework. "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:17). Suffering now, glory later. Weakness now, reigning later. Trials now, reward later. That pattern runs all through the New Testament. Future rule should produce present gravity because the believer is not merely trying to get through life. He is being fitted for something beyond it.

5. Petty Living Contradicts a Royal Calling

Paul's rebuke of the Corinthians shows how humiliating petty behavior is in light of a royal calling. These people were saved, gifted, instructed, and destined for future authority, yet they were dragging one another before unjust courts over matters that should have been handled in the assembly. Paul says, "I speak to your shame" (1 Corinthians 6:5). That is exactly right. There are ways of living that should shame a believer not because he is trying to earn acceptance, but because his conduct is beneath his calling. A prince living like a pickpocket is a disgrace. A saint destined for glory living like a worldly brawler is no better.

This reaches far beyond lawsuits. Petty living includes jealousy over recognition, whining over inconvenience, manipulative rivalry in ministry, drama in the home, selfishness in service, and all the countless small-minded habits that turn believers into caricatures of the world. It is bad enough when the world behaves that way. It is shameful when the saints do it. Why? Because the saints know better, and because the saints are headed somewhere higher. "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27). There is the principle. There is conduct fitting for your identity, and there is conduct beneath it.

The modern church often treats pettiness as personality. It shrugs at it. It laughs at it. It excuses it. But Paul does not excuse it. He confronts it with future glory. In effect he says, if you are going to judge the world and judge angels, why are you acting like this now? That question ought to land hard on every believer. Why are you spending your strength on trifles? Why are you poisoning your own peace over scraps? Why are you carrying yourself like this world's approval is the great prize? Petty living contradicts a royal calling. The saint needs to remember who he belongs to and where he is going.

6. Eternal Perspective Destroys Present Smallness

One of the reasons Paul brings in the truth of future judgment and rule is because eternal perspective destroys present smallness. When a man sees only the immediate, he will become the prisoner of the immediate. Every inconvenience will loom large. Every offense will feel ultimate. Every material concern will dominate the emotional weather of the soul. But when a believer sees life in light of eternity, the scale changes. He does not become indifferent or careless. He becomes proportionate. He stops making mountains out of dust. He stops treating every earthly irritation as if the kingdom of God rises or falls on it.

The Bible constantly pushes believers toward that bigger frame. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17). Notice the contrast. Light affliction, eternal weight of glory. Present moment, eternal reality. Temporary pressure, everlasting outcome. Paul is not denying the affliction. He is putting it in scale. That is what future rule does for present life. It gives the

saint a kingdom scale instead of a flesh scale. The flesh magnifies every bruise. Faith magnifies Christ and the coming kingdom.

This is why believers need to think more often about the judgment seat of Christ, future reward, reigning with Christ, crowns cast at His feet, and the manifested glory of the age to come. Not as speculative hobby material, but as practical medicine against smallness of soul. A church that loses eternal perspective will become petty, political, fearful, and earthbound. A believer who loses eternal perspective will become touchy, shallow, and easily entangled. But eternal perspective lifts the head. It steadies the walk. It teaches the saint to endure. It reminds him that the little storms of this life are not the whole story.

7. Christians Must Remember They Are Being Prepared for the Kingdom

The final practical lesson is this, believers are not merely waiting for the kingdom, they are being prepared for it. Scripture does not present the Christian life as meaningless delay time until heaven arrives. It presents it as formative. “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him” (2 Timothy 2:12). “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10). “Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things” (Matthew 25:21). There is a consistent pattern. Faithfulness now is tied to responsibility later. Obedience now matters. Endurance now matters. Purity now matters. Stewardship now matters. The saint is being trained under grace for future usefulness under glory.

That truth gives dignity to ordinary obedience. The hidden choices matter. The self-denial matters. The refusal of bitterness matters. The discipline in Scripture matters. The prayer life matters. The patience in suffering matters. The quiet faithfulness matters. None of it is wasted. It is not all visible now, and the world will not applaud it, but heaven records it. The Judge sees it. The coming kingdom will reveal what grace was doing all along in the saints who stayed faithful when nobody was handing out medals on earth. Christians forgot that, and because they forgot it, they started treating Christian duty like drudgery instead of preparation.

That is why Paul’s statement about judging angels is so powerful. It shocks the saint out of his low view of life. It reminds him that he belongs to a vast redemptive plan that ends in Christ’s triumph and the saints’ participation under Him. You are not a random religious person trying to survive the week. You are a blood-bought member of the Body of Christ being prepared for manifested glory. That ought to clean up your thinking, your priorities, your disputes, your endurance, and your whole view of what this life is about. The kingdom is coming, and grace is training kingdom people right now.

Conclusion

“Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” (1 Corinthians 6:3). That is not a fringe verse for curiosity. It is a rebuke, a reminder, and a revelation. It rebukes present carnality by exposing how far beneath their calling believers often live. It reminds the saints that they were saved for more than escape. And it reveals a future so exalted that the Church should be ashamed to live like this world’s whining children. The saints are destined for participation with Christ in judgment, rule, and manifested glory. That truth ought to put holy dignity back into the Christian walk.

Too many believers have forgotten not only what they were saved from, but what they were saved for. They think too little of the kingdom, too little of Christ’s coming reign, too little of eternal responsibility, and too much of the petty disturbances of this passing age. As a result, they are tossed around by small things, weakened by little rivalries, and drawn down into earthly living that does not fit their future. Paul’s answer is to lift the eyes. Look beyond the courtroom. Look beyond the quarrel. Look beyond the temporary mess. Look to the coming kingdom and remember who you are in Christ.

So the practical call is simple. Stop living small. Stop acting like this world is all there is. Stop carrying yourself like a defeated civilian when God is preparing saints for glory under His Son. Handle present matters with the gravity of someone destined for future rule. Endure with the patience of someone headed toward the kingdom. Refuse pettiness like a man ashamed to waste himself on dust. And remember that the Lord did not save you merely to rescue you from wrath, but to fit you for glory. Christians forgot that. The church needs to remember it fast.

9 of 15: Truths Christians Forgot - The Unrighteous Shall Not Inherit

Introduction

There are some verses in the New Testament that modern Christianity would like to smother with a pillow because they do not cooperate with the soft, greasy, flattering religion of this age. One of those verses is 1 Corinthians 6:9. Paul says, “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?” (1 Corinthians 6:9). That verse does not stutter. It does not apologize. It does not bow to the spirit of the age. It does not stop to reassure every hypocrite in the room that God is perfectly comfortable with a profession that never changed a thing. It stands there like a sword, and it cuts through moral deception, church fraud, religious theater, and the filthy modern habit of using grace language to excuse lifestyles God condemned. The tragedy is not that the verse is unclear. The tragedy is that men hate how clear it is.

Paul wrote those words to a church, not a pagan tavern. That is the part that ought to shake people. He is not speaking to a crowd that had never heard the gospel. He is speaking to people who knew Christian truth, or at least were around it, and he warns them in direct language that “the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9). Then he says, “Be not deceived” (1 Corinthians 6:9). There is the issue. Deception. Not just open wickedness, but deception about wickedness. Not merely sin, but self-deception in the presence of sin. Not merely corruption, but corruption wrapped in excuses, rationalizations, theological jargon, and false assurance. That is the disease all over the place now. Men and women living in open contradiction to the word of God while hiding behind a testimony, a church background, a past decision, a raised hand, a baptism certificate, or a vague vocabulary of grace that has been twisted so badly it no longer resembles the grace taught by the Holy Ghost.

This essay must be hard because the subject is hard. It deals with spiritual fraud. It deals with false professions. It deals with people who have learned to talk Christian while living unrighteous. It deals with people who have no repentance, no brokenness, no fear of God, no hunger for holiness, no evidence of new life, and yet still insist they are safe because they know how to say the right words. That is not the faith once delivered unto the saints. Salvation is by grace through faith, without works, and any man who adds works to justification corrupts the gospel. That truth must be defended. But the same Bible that teaches justification by faith also warns that unrighteousness reveals rebellion, and that a Christianity with no change, no conviction, and no war against sin is a counterfeit. We are not saved by righteous living, but nobody gets saved and remains peacefully married to unrighteousness. That is the issue, and it needs to be said plainly.

1. “Be Not Deceived” Means This Is a Common Spiritual Trap

Paul does not merely state the truth and move on. He surrounds it with a warning. “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived” (1 Corinthians 6:9). That phrase “Be not deceived” tells you immediately that this is a common trap, not a rare one. Men deceive themselves in this area all the time. They imagine that because they have some form of religion, some kind of church attachment, some doctrinal vocabulary, or some emotional experience in the past, the open contradiction of their present life no longer matters. But the Holy Ghost says, “Be not deceived.” In other words, do not lie to yourself here. Do not let somebody else lie to you here. Do not dress up rebellion and call it liberty. Do not paint over corruption and call it grace.

That warning is desperately needed because religious deception is one of the easiest kinds of deception to live with. A lost drunk in a bar may know he is wicked, but a church member

with a polished smile and a false assurance can sit under preaching for years while never facing the truth about his own condition. The Pharisees were experts at this kind of deception. They had religion, language, garments, ritual, status, and public respectability, but the Lord called them “whited sepulchres” that “indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness” (Matthew 23:27). There is religious deception. The outside is white. The inside is death. Modern Christianity manufactures that by the truckload.

That is why this warning is not cruel. It is merciful. Better a man be shaken now than damned later under a false confidence. Better the lie be ripped open while there is still breath in his lungs than for him to hear “I never knew you” at the judgment and discover too late that religious language is not the same thing as regeneration. The Holy Ghost says, “Be not deceived” because deception in this matter is fatal. He is not interested in preserving your self-image if your soul is in danger. He is not interested in helping you maintain a respectable fraud. He is interested in truth. The man who will not let Scripture search him is already halfway in the trap.

2. Salvation Is by Grace Through Faith, but Grace Never Makes Peace With Unrighteousness

This subject must be handled with a clear gospel foundation because there are always legalists waiting in the corner to misuse warning passages as if men are saved by moral reform. They are not. “For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works” (Ephesians 2:8-9). “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:28). “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us” (Titus 3:5). That must be stated plainly and without hesitation. If a man trusts his works, his reform, his behavior, his church record, or his law-keeping to justify him before God, he is not trusting Christ alone.

But that same grace that saves also teaches. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly” (Titus 2:11-12). There is the balance. Grace does not save a man and then become indifferent to unrighteousness. Grace does not shrug at corruption. Grace does not baptize filth and call it authenticity. Grace teaches denial of ungodliness. Grace teaches sober living. Grace teaches righteousness. So when a man uses grace language to defend a lifestyle God condemns, he is not defending grace. He is abusing it. He is using the vocabulary of heaven to protect the habits of hell.

That is where the confusion has to be cut in half. We are not saved because we became righteous enough. We are saved because Christ died for the ungodly and justifies the sinner who believes. But when that salvation is real, it does not leave a man at peace with unrighteousness. It does not leave him comfortable in rebellion. It does not leave him untouched by conviction. It does not leave him proudly defending the very things God says exclude men from the kingdom. Grace does not produce sinless perfection in this life, but it does produce a new relationship to sin. The saved man may fall, but he cannot live in cheerful agreement with the fall. He may stumble, but he cannot make a throne out of the mud and call it liberty.

3. Paul's List Is Meant to Strip Away Excuses

Paul does something in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 that modern preachers often avoid because they are scared of sounding negative. He gets specific. "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). He names sins. He identifies patterns. He does not hide behind vague abstractions. He does not merely say, "bad people." He gives categories of unrighteousness because the Holy Ghost knows how badly the human heart wants to stay general. General language lets men evade the light. Specific truth corners them.

Notice how broad the list is. It includes sexual sin, false worship, social corruption, speech corruption, appetite corruption, greed corruption, and exploitative corruption. In other words, no class gets to feel safe merely because their sins are respectable in church culture. A fornicator cannot hide behind emotional sincerity. An idolater cannot hide behind spirituality. A drunkard cannot hide behind honesty. A reviler cannot hide behind boldness. A covetous man cannot hide behind ambition. An extortioner cannot hide behind business success. The list strips away the fancy labels and shows the moral ugliness underneath. God is not impressed by the polished packaging men put around their rebellion.

This is one reason preaching must sometimes get painfully plain. Men are experts at baptizing their sins with flattering names. They do not commit fornication, they say they are exploring connection. They are not covetous, they say they are driven. They are not revilers, they say they just tell it like it is. They are not drunkards, they say they are unwinding. They are not idolaters, they say they are passionate. They are not extortioners, they say they are successful. The Bible cuts through all that perfume and says what the thing is. The church needs that. The flesh hates that. But without that clarity, self-deception thrives and repentance never gets off the ground.

4. Religious Profession Without Repentance Is Spiritual Fraud

One of the ugliest products of modern religion is the false profession that has no repentance attached to it. A man says he believes in Jesus, but there is no brokenness over sin, no fear of God, no turning in the heart, no conviction, no war against unrighteousness, and no desire to be free from what nailed the Savior to the cross. Instead there is only a profession, a slogan, a memory of a moment, and a life that continues under the cheerful rule of the flesh. That is spiritual fraud. It is not saving faith. Saving faith receives Christ as He is, and the Christ received is not a mascot for the old life. He is Lord, Savior, Redeemer, and Master.

Repentance does not mean sinless perfection, and it does not mean a man earns salvation by cleaning himself up first. But it does mean that when the grace of God visits a soul, the soul is not left boasting in the very things God condemns. “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of” (2 Corinthians 7:10). There is a sorrow that turns. There is a sorrow that faces the ugliness of sin. There is a sorrow that does not merely regret consequences but bows before God and says the thing itself is evil. The counterfeit professor does not have that. He may regret embarrassment. He may regret exposure. He may regret pain. But he does not come to terms with the sin itself as rebellion against God.

That is why religious hypocrisy is so dangerous. It can mimic the language of Christianity while lacking the brokenness that accompanies real conversion. Judas had religious proximity, but not saving faith. Simon Magus professed and was baptized, yet Peter told him, “thy heart is not right in the sight of God” (Acts 8:21). The Lord Himself warned that many would say, “Lord, Lord,” only to hear, “I never knew you” (Matthew 7:22-23). That should scare every false professor stiff. The issue is not whether you can repeat Christian phrases. The issue is whether grace has brought you to the end of yourself and made sin bitter in your mouth. A faith with no repentance is not apostolic faith. It is churchy fraud.

5. The Unrighteous Shall Not Inherit Means Ongoing Character, Not Isolated Failure

This is where careful distinction matters. Paul is not teaching that a justified believer loses his salvation every time he commits a sin. If that were the doctrine, nobody would stand. Scripture says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves” (1 John 1:8). Believers still battle the flesh. Believers still fail. Believers still need confession, cleansing, chastening, and growth. But 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 is not describing a saint at war with sin who falls and gets up again by grace. It is describing the unrighteous as a class, men characterized by these things, men at home in them, men defined by them, men not broken

over them, men not turned from them, men not fighting them, but practicing them as the obvious shape of life.

That is why Scripture elsewhere uses language of pattern and practice. “He that committeth sin is of the devil” (1 John 3:8). “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin” (1 John 3:9). Those verses do not teach that a saved man never sins even once. They teach that the born-again man is not characterized by peaceful continuance in sin as the pattern of life. Something in him wars against it because there is a new nature present. There is conviction. There is chastening. There is conflict. “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh” (Galatians 5:17). That war is part of the evidence that grace has actually entered the man.

So when Paul says “the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9), he is not teaching salvation by works. He is teaching that unrighteousness as the defining and defended pattern of life reveals a man outside the kingdom. The issue is not whether a Christian may stumble into sin. The issue is whether a man can live under the comfortable dominion of unrighteousness and still claim the name of Christ with heaven’s approval. The Holy Ghost says no. And that needs to be said with force because many now want to turn grace into an endorsement of the exact things grace came to save men from.

6. “And Such Were Some of You” Is the Glory of Real Conversion

After giving that hard list, Paul writes one of the most beautiful sentences in the chapter. “And such were some of you” (1 Corinthians 6:11). There it is. Were. Past tense. Not because those Corinthians had been sinlessly perfected, but because they had been genuinely changed by the grace of God. “But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus” (1 Corinthians 6:11). That verse is a thunderclap against both legalism and spiritual fraud. Legalism hates it because it says the change came through Christ’s name and God’s grace, not through human merit. Fraud hates it because it says those old identities are not supposed to remain the unchallenged present tense of a converted life.

That is one of the glories of the gospel. The gospel does not merely forgive the record. It begins changing the rebel. It brings a man out of darkness. It breaks old dominions. It cleanses the conscience. It sanctifies the life. It justifies the sinner. Paul does not say, “And such are some of you, and that is perfectly fine, because grace means nothing changes.” No. He says, “such were some of you” (1 Corinthians 6:11). The gospel did something. It moved. It intervened. It altered direction. It put a new reality in place. The modern church needs to recover that kind of preaching. Not perfectionism, but transformation. Not legal bondage, but actual conversion.

This is why testimonies that glorify the old life more than the grace that delivered from it are spiritually sick. The point of conversion is not that you get a new religious vocabulary while dragging your old chains proudly behind you. The point is that Christ saves. He washes. He sanctifies. He justifies. He changes relationship, standing, and direction. When a church forgets that, it becomes a safe haven for false assurance. It starts telling people that because God loves them, He has no quarrel with their bondage. That is a lie. God's love sent His Son to save men from bondage, not to bless them in it. "And such were some of you" is the gospel's banner over every real convert.

7. A Christianity With No Fear of God Is Not the Faith Once Delivered

One of the clearest signs of counterfeit Christianity is the disappearance of the fear of God. The modern religious fraud can talk endlessly about love, grace, belonging, acceptance, and authenticity, while showing no trembling at God's word, no horror over sin, no sobriety about judgment, and no fear of standing before a holy God. But the Bible says, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil" (Proverbs 8:13). A man who does not hate evil has a fear-of-God problem, no matter how polished his testimony sounds. "By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil" (Proverbs 16:6). There is the practical mark. Fear of God does not make sin attractive. It makes sin hateful.

That fear is not the same as legal terror in a believer's standing before God. The child of God is justified, accepted, and secure in Christ. But the child of God still fears God in the biblical sense, reveres Him, trembles before His holiness, hates grieving Him, and recoils at the thought of living contrary to His word. The counterfeit professor has none of that. He may fear being judged by people. He may fear losing reputation. He may fear consequences. But he does not fear God enough to turn. That is why he can hear verses like 1 Corinthians 6:9 and still go right back to defending himself. He is religious, but he is not broken.

The faith once delivered to the saints is not a faith that flatters rebellion. It is not a faith that lets men remain untouched by God's holiness. It is not a faith that removes fear and leaves only sentimental affirmations. The faith once delivered exalts grace and humbles man. It glorifies Christ and strips sin of its excuses. It comforts the contrite and terrifies the hypocrite. It saves freely, but it never makes peace with unrighteousness. A Christianity with no repentance, no brokenness, no fear of God, and no change is not apostolic Christianity. It is a counterfeit gospel marketed to people who want heaven without holiness.

Conclusion

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?” (1 Corinthians 6:9). That verse is a hammer blow against moral deception, false profession, and religious hypocrisy. It does not teach salvation by works, but it absolutely destroys the wicked fantasy that a man can be saved by grace and remain peacefully at home in the dominion of unrighteousness. Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. That truth stands firm. But the same grace that saves also teaches, cleanses, sanctifies, and begins changing the relationship a man has with sin. Where there is no repentance, no brokenness, no fear of God, no conflict with unrighteousness, and no evidence that grace ever disturbed the old life, there is no biblical reason for comfort.

This is one of the harder truths Christians forgot. They forgot that deception often wears church clothes. They forgot that false assurance can thrive in a religious atmosphere. They forgot that grace can be abused in words while denied in reality. They forgot that unrighteousness defended and cherished is not a minor issue. It is a kingdom issue. The church has spent too much time soothing people who need to be shaken and too little time preaching with enough clarity to separate the broken sinner from the proud fraud. Paul did not hesitate. He gave the warning, named the sins, and then pointed to the miracle of real conversion, “and such were some of you” (1 Corinthians 6:11).

So the final call is plain. Do not hide behind religious language while living in rebellion. Do not wave grace around like a permit for unrighteousness. Do not confuse a profession with a new birth. Do not mistake a memory for a conversion. Let the word of God search you. Let 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 stand over you as heaven intended it to stand. If Christ has saved you, He has begun changing you. If He has not, no amount of church vocabulary will save you at the judgment. The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived.

10 of 15: Truths Christians Forgot - Members of Christ

Introduction

There are some verses in the New Testament that ought to make a saved man stop breathing for a second when he reads them. One of them is 1 Corinthians 6:15. Paul says, “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?” (1 Corinthians 6:15). That is not a poetic line for a greeting card. That is not a sentimental thought to stir a youth camp for five minutes. That is a doctrinal bomb dropped right in the middle of a filthy age and a carnal church. Paul is not merely saying that Jesus loves your soul while your body can wander around doing whatever the flesh wants. He is saying the body of the believer has a direct relation to Jesus Christ Himself. It is not detached from redemption. It is not outside

the claims of holiness. It is not a private zone where Christ politely waits outside while the flesh goes in and makes its choices. Your body is a member of Christ.

That is the truth modern Christianity has tried to bury under soft preaching, vague spirituality, and cowardly silence. People now act as if bodily conduct is some secondary matter, some private issue, some personal expression that has nothing to do with spiritual standing. They talk as if a man can carry Christ's name publicly and then use Christ's members privately in the service of lust, impurity, sensuality, and fleshly indulgence without contradiction. But the Holy Ghost does not speak that way. Paul asks, "shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid" (1 Corinthians 6:15). There is the answer. God forbid. Not maybe. Not if the context is complicated. Not if the culture has shifted. Not if the counseling language sounds more nuanced. God forbid. The body matters because it is joined to Christ in redemptive union.

That is why this essay has to strike hard. We are living in a generation that has tried to divorce the body from holiness, sex from sanctity, privacy from accountability, and flesh from consequence. The world says the body is your own, your desires are sovereign, and your private behavior is nobody's business so long as you feel justified in it. But the Bible says, "ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). The Christian does not have the right to drag Christ's members through the sewer and then come back talking about grace as if heaven is smiling on the contradiction. A believer's body is not morally disconnected from his spiritual standing. What he does in the body matters deeply because that body belongs to the One who bought him with blood. Until the church remembers that, it will keep trying to fight moral filth with weak language and worldly psychology instead of the plain words of God.

1. Paul Grounds Bodily Holiness in Union With Christ

Paul does not begin his argument in 1 Corinthians 6 with social consequences, emotional damage, or public scandal, though all those things may be involved. He begins with Christ. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 6:15). That is where modern preaching often goes wrong. It starts too low. It talks about reputation, heartbreak, trauma, consequences, or self-respect, and those things may have their place. But Paul starts with the highest possible truth. The believer's body is a member of Christ. That means the issue is not merely that sin damages a person. The issue is that sin profanes a union. It drags something joined to Christ into what dishonors Christ.

That changes the whole discussion. If my body were merely my own natural possession, then the moral argument would already be strong enough because God still commands holiness. But Paul goes further and says the body itself stands in relation to Christ. The

hands, the eyes, the tongue, the body, these are not neutral instruments available for random use. They are members of Christ. This is why bodily sin in the believer carries such a weighty contradiction. A Christian is not just a man with better beliefs. He is united to Jesus Christ. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Ephesians 5:30). That is covenant language, union language, redemptive language. The believer's body has been claimed by heaven.

This is why Christian holiness cannot be reduced to private spirituality while the body is left to appetite. A man cannot say, My heart belongs to Jesus but my body is my own. Paul destroys that lie in one verse. Your body is a member of Christ. Therefore the body belongs under Christ's lordship as surely as the soul belongs under Christ's salvation. Christians forgot that. They turned faith into a mental profession, devotion into an emotional feeling, and holiness into a private opinion, while the body was treated like a side issue. But Paul ties the body directly to Christ, and once that is understood, casual impurity becomes not just a weakness but a contradiction against redemption itself.

2. The Body Is Not a Separate Department Outside of Redemption

Modern man loves compartments. He wants religion in one room, business in another, entertainment in another, sexuality in another, private fantasy in another, and bodily conduct in another, all with locked doors and separate rules. But the Bible tears that arrangement to pieces. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 6:15). The body is not a separate department outside of redemption. It has been purchased, claimed, and brought under the ownership of Jesus Christ. Paul says later in the same passage, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 6:19). That means the body is not spiritually irrelevant. It is spiritually occupied.

That truth destroys the modern excuse that private bodily conduct is disconnected from public Christian identity. Men want to say, What I do in private is personal. But if your body belongs to Christ, there is no private zone where Christ's claims stop. You do not get to use the members of Christ for lust in the dark and then pretend your public worship remains untouched by that contradiction. You do not get to bow your head in church on Sunday after bowing your body to uncleanness on Saturday and act like the Lord of glory sees no connection. The body is not detached from redemption. It is part of the area redemption laid claim to.

That is one reason bodily sins are so spiritually destructive. They are not only acts against morality in the abstract. They are acts against the truth of what the believer's body now is. "Ye are not your own" (1 Corinthians 6:19). There it is again. Ownership has changed. That

means the Christian life cannot be practiced merely at the level of words, thoughts, or songs while bodily conduct runs on fleshly impulse. The gospel reaches the body. The body is destined for resurrection. The body belongs to Christ. The body houses the Holy Ghost. The body is not outside the boundaries of sanctification. Christians forgot that, and because they forgot it, they started talking like bodily sins were private stumbles instead of direct contradictions against the claims of Christ.

3. Sexual Immorality Is Not a Casual Sin but a Profaning of Christ's Members

Paul makes his most direct application in the area of fornication because that is one of the clearest ways men try to separate body from holiness. He says, "shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid" (1 Corinthians 6:15). There is no softness there. There is no therapist's cushion around it. There is holy recoil. Paul does not ask whether the person felt lonely, whether the timing was complicated, whether the emotional bond seemed meaningful, or whether the culture has updated its standards. He looks at the act in light of Christ and says, God forbid. That is the right tone when redemption is being dragged into filth.

Sexual immorality is not casual because sexuality itself is not casual in God's design. It is covenantal, bodily, sacred, and deeply meaningful. "For two, saith he, shall be one flesh" (1 Corinthians 6:16). That one flesh union was never meant to be a recreational toy for the flesh. It was designed by God with order, sanctity, and covenant significance. So when a believer gives his body to sexual impurity, he is not just making a bad personal decision. He is taking what belongs to Christ and joining it to what dishonors Christ. That is why the apostle's language is so strong. He is not overreacting. He is speaking in proportion to the truth involved.

This is exactly what modern Christianity keeps trying to soften. It wants to talk about sexual sin as though it were a manageable flaw, a growth issue, a phase, a common struggle, anything but a violation of what the believer's body now is. But Paul will not let the church speak that way. He ties sexual immorality directly to the members of Christ. That means the church must stop sounding embarrassed by God's plain warnings. A man cannot carry Christ's name while using Christ's members for the service of lust and expect heaven to smile on the contradiction. Heaven does not smile on it. Heaven condemns it, warns against it, and calls the believer to flee it.

4. "God Forbid" Is Heaven's Answer to Moral Contradiction

One of the strongest phrases in all of Paul's writings is that short thunderclap, "God forbid" (1 Corinthians 6:15). It appears whenever some hideous conclusion is suggested by a false line of thinking. Here the false line is this, that a believer's body can be joined to Christ in

redemption and then handed over to impurity without spiritual absurdity. Paul will not even entertain it. He says, “God forbid.” That is not an overstatement. It is heaven’s verdict on the contradiction. The modern church needs more of that phrase and less nervous tiptoeing around obvious evil.

There are certain things a Christian ought not merely to avoid, but to recoil from. The age has trained people to treat moral boundaries as harsh, absolute language as unloving, and plain rebukes as outdated. But the Holy Ghost still says, “God forbid.” There are ideas so perverse, so contradictory to redemption, so contrary to holiness, that the only proper answer is rejection without apology. Shall the members of Christ be made the members of an harlot? God forbid. Shall grace become an excuse for sin? God forbid. Shall liberty be turned into looseness? God forbid. Shall Christ be used as a cover for fleshly indulgence? God forbid.

That phrase restores moral sanity. It reminds the believer that some things are not to be negotiated with. They are to be denied. Some things are not to be managed delicately while retaining their place. They are to be rejected. This does not mean there is no mercy for the fallen. There is mercy at the cross for every repentant sinner. But mercy does not change God’s verdict on the contradiction. The contradiction remains what it is. The church must recover the courage to say “God forbid” where the Holy Ghost said “God forbid,” or it will keep raising generations of weak believers who think every line is debatable and every lust is discussable until holiness has no edge left.

5. The One Flesh Principle Shows Why Bodily Sin Is So Serious

Paul strengthens the argument in verse 16. “What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh” (1 Corinthians 6:16). He reaches all the way back to God’s design in creation and shows that bodily union is not superficial. It is not just contact. It is not just appetite. It is one flesh. That is why sexual sin is so serious. It takes something God invested with covenantal significance and drags it into corruption. It violates created order and redemptive identity at the same time. That is a terrible combination.

This is one reason the world’s cheapening of sexuality is so satanic. It strips the act of all covenant meaning, all sanctity, all reverence, and all fear. It turns one flesh into amusement, chemistry, entertainment, or experimentation. But Paul says the one flesh reality remains whether men honor it or not. The act means what God made it to mean, even when men abuse it. So when a believer enters sexual impurity, he is not merely involved in a physical event. He is stepping into a God-defined union outside of God’s

order, and he is doing so with a body that belongs to Christ. No wonder Paul says, “Flee fornication” (1 Corinthians 6:18). He does not say manage it. He says flee it.

The church has to recover that seriousness. Modern people are so soaked in sexual corruption that they often no longer feel the weight of what Paul is saying. But the apostle is not discussing minor etiquette. He is defending the created and redeemed meaning of the body. One flesh is not a throwaway phrase. It reveals that bodily sin cuts deep. It marks, binds, corrupts, and confuses in ways men often do not fully grasp until much later. That is why Scripture warns as sharply as it does. It is not because God is trying to deprive people. It is because God knows the body, the meaning of one flesh, and the contradiction involved when Christ’s members are joined to what dishonors Christ.

6. The Christian Cannot Divide Private Conduct From Public Identity

One of the oldest tricks of hypocrisy is to divide private conduct from public identity. A man says he belongs to Christ in public, but privately uses the body in ways that contradict that claim. He wants the comfort of Christian identity without the bodily holiness that identity requires. But 1 Corinthians 6 will not allow that split. If your body is the member of Christ, then private bodily conduct is directly tied to public Christian identity. There is no wall between them. The man who says otherwise is lying to himself.

That is why hidden impurity is so deadly. It creates a double life. It teaches a man to sing one thing and serve another. It teaches him to use Christian language while secretly giving Christ’s members to the flesh. Over time that contradiction hardens the conscience, drains the soul, and turns religion into theater. The face still smiles. The words still come out right. The public image may even look intact. But the man knows, and God knows, that the body is being used in a way that denies the public confession. That is one reason so much modern Christianity feels powerless. Too many people are trying to publicly represent Christ while privately violating what belongs to Christ.

The answer is not better image management. It is repentance and cleansing. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). God does not call believers to maintain the split more skillfully. He calls them to come clean. The Christian cannot divide private bodily conduct from public identity because Christ Himself is involved in the matter. The body bears His claims. The body houses His Spirit. The body belongs to Him. Until the church feels that again, it will keep fighting impurity at the level of optics instead of at the level of redemptive truth.

7. The Right Response Is Flight, Consecration, and Holy Fear

Paul's practical conclusion is not mysterious. "Flee fornication" (1 Corinthians 6:18). That is the command. Flee. Not flirt. Not manage. Not analyze endlessly while standing in the doorway. Flee. The reason is obvious. The body belongs to Christ. The body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. The members belong to the Lord. Therefore impurity is not to be played with. It is to be escaped. There are temptations that are not beaten by swagger but by running. Joseph did not stay in the room to hold a seminar on resisting Potiphar's wife. He "left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out" (Genesis 39:12). That is the pattern.

But flight is not enough if the body is not also positively consecrated. Paul says, "glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20). There is the positive side. The body is not merely to be withheld from sin. It is to be yielded to God. Eyes for righteousness. Hands for righteousness. Speech for righteousness. Conduct for righteousness. The Christian life cannot be sustained only by saying no. It must also say yes to holy use. Otherwise men end up trying to empty the house without filling it rightly, and the old things come creeping back in.

This requires holy fear, and holy fear is badly missing. The fear of God is not terror of losing sonship. It is reverent awareness that what belongs to Christ must not be handled lightly. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1). There is the right response. Cleanse, perfect holiness, fear God. The believer who remembers his body is the member of Christ will not treat impurity like a joke, lust like a hobby, or private filth like a manageable side issue. He will fear the contradiction and flee it.

Conclusion

"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 6:15). That verse ought to put the fear of God back into every careless believer who has started talking as though bodily conduct were morally disconnected from spiritual standing. The body matters because the body belongs to Christ. The body is not a private possession outside the reach of redemption. It is joined to Christ in redemptive union, occupied by the Holy Ghost, destined for resurrection, and claimed by the One who bought it with blood. Therefore what a Christian does in the body matters deeply. Heaven does not shrug at bodily impurity. Heaven names it, condemns it, warns against it, and calls the believer to glorify God in the body.

This truth is especially needed in a generation drunk on sexual confusion, sensual indulgence, and the worship of private autonomy. Men want Christ in their public identity

and lust in their private habits. They want the name of Jesus on their lips and the service of impurity in their members. They want grace without holiness, comfort without consecration, and forgiveness without flight from sin. But Paul says, “God forbid” (1 Corinthians 6:15). A man cannot carry Christ’s name while using Christ’s members for the service of lust and expect heaven to smile on the contradiction. Heaven does not smile. Heaven calls him to repentance, cleansing, and holy fear.

So the final call is plain. Stop talking like the body is a side issue. Stop acting as if private impurity leaves public Christianity untouched. Stop dividing what God joined. Remember that your body is the member of Christ. Flee fornication. Confess uncleanness. Yield the body back to the Lord who purchased it. Glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s (1 Corinthians 6:20). Christians forgot that truth, and the result has been a weak, compromised, embarrassed church that blushes at holiness more than it blushes at sin. That has to end.

11 of 15: Truths Christians Forgot - One Flesh

Introduction

There are some truths in the Bible that this rotten generation has not merely neglected, it has openly mocked, commercialized, twisted, and dragged through the mud until whole societies can no longer tell the difference between what is holy and what is filthy. One of those truths is the one-flesh principle. Paul says, “What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh” (1 Corinthians 6:16). That is not the language of a therapist, a talk show host, a social trend analyst, or a politician trying not to offend anybody. That is the language of the Holy Ghost. It is plain, sharp, and morally loaded. Paul is telling the Corinthians that sexual union is not a casual recreational act with no spiritual meaning attached to it. It is one flesh. It means something. It always meant something. God designed it to mean something. And when men use it outside of God’s order, they are not merely making a private mistake. They are violating divine order, covenant meaning, and bodily sanctity.

That is why the modern world’s treatment of intimacy is so devilish. The world has not merely corrupted sex. It has desacralized it. It has stripped it of order, holiness, covenant, reverence, and meaning, and then sold the empty shell of it back to people as freedom. It tells them that what God made profound is casual, what God made holy is common, what God framed in covenant is just appetite, and what God designed to picture a sacred union is just a temporary arrangement for pleasure, experimentation, therapy, or self-expression.

Then the same world wonders why consciences are seared, marriages are collapsing, children are confused, identities are fractured, and whole cultures are soaked in shame, addiction, and relational wreckage. The reason is not complicated. Men have taken one flesh, which God designed as holy, and turned it into a market, a joke, a commodity, and a playground.

The shame of the church is that it has absorbed far too much of that corruption. Christians forgot what God said about the body and the flesh. They forgot that sexual sin is not just another category of moral failure sitting politely beside all the others. They forgot that fornication joins bodies outside of God's order and drags one-flesh meaning into uncleanness. They forgot that marriage is honorable, that purity is not repression, and that intimacy detached from covenant is not freedom but profanation. That forgetfulness has cost the church dearly. It has made believers timid where they should be bold, confused where they should be clear, embarrassed where they should be reverent, and casual where they should be trembling. So this essay must restore what the Bible says without apology. One flesh is sacred. Fornication is serious. Marriage is honorable. Purity is beautiful. And the church had better recover those truths before another generation is handed over to the lies of hell with a Bible verse taped over them.

1. The One-Flesh Principle Begins in Creation, Not Culture

Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 6:16 reaches all the way back to Genesis because the one-flesh principle did not begin with Corinth, Rome, America, psychology, sociology, or cultural trends. It began with God. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). There is the foundation. God established it. Man did not invent it. The state did not create it. Society did not evolve it. The Creator designed it from the beginning. One flesh was not a human experiment. It was a divine ordinance woven into creation before sin ever entered the world. That means its meaning is not negotiable. What God defined at the beginning cannot be redefined later by a polluted age that hates His authority.

That matters because modern people constantly act as if the meaning of sex and marriage can be updated by the spirit of the age. But the Bible always returns to Genesis. The Lord Jesus Christ did the same thing. "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female" (Matthew 19:4). Then He quotes Genesis and says, "they twain shall be one flesh" (Matthew 19:5). The Lord did not treat the one-flesh union as a social construct. He treated it as a creational reality and a divine joining. "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6). That is not flexible language. It is fixed because it is rooted in creation itself.

This is exactly why the world's counterfeit systems always fail. They are trying to rewrite what was built into the structure of human life by the Creator. One flesh means more than shared space, legal paperwork, or mutual attraction. It means an embodied union designed by God to function within covenantal marriage. Once that is understood, all the modern attempts to cheapen it become exposed for what they are, rebellion against created order. Christians forgot that one flesh is not a cultural idea. It is a creational fact with divine authorship, and that fact does not bend because the age is morally diseased.

2. One Flesh Means Sexual Union Is Never Casual

Paul says, "he which is joined to an harlot is one body" and then quotes the creation principle, "for two, saith he, shall be one flesh" (1 Corinthians 6:16). That means sexual union is never morally neutral, never spiritually empty, and never merely physical. It is one flesh whether men acknowledge the sacred design behind it or not. That is one reason fornication is so serious. The act means what God made it to mean even when men abuse it. The world may call it casual, no-strings-attached, private, harmless, or consensual, but God still says one flesh. His definition stands over the act whether the participants fear Him or not.

That truth shatters the cheap modern lie that bodily intimacy is just a form of personal recreation. It is not. It binds. It marks. It involves the body in a way that touches personhood, meaning, and created order. This is why sexual sin leaves such deep wreckage behind it. Men are not using the act contrary to a blank template. They are misusing something God gave weight, structure, and covenant significance to. The reason the damage is often so severe is because the sin is not only breaking a rule. It is abusing a holy design. A man can lie to himself about that for a while, but the soul usually pays the bill sooner or later.

That is why Scripture speaks with such sobriety about sexual matters. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). Notice both sides. Marriage bed undefiled. Whoremongers and adulterers judged. There is no flattening of the categories. God does not talk as if all sexual expression is basically the same thing with a few cultural labels attached to it. He distinguishes between holy covenantal one flesh and polluted rebellion against that order. The church must recover that distinction or it will keep sounding as confused as the culture it is supposed to confront.

3. Fornication Is a Violation of Divine Order, Not Merely a Private Slip

One of the great lies of our age is that fornication is basically a private matter between consenting adults. But Paul does not speak that way. He does not treat fornication as an

isolated personal slip disconnected from larger realities. He roots it in the one-flesh principle and thereby shows that fornication is a violation of divine order. It takes what God established for covenant and drags it into uncleanness. It takes the language of one flesh and speaks it outside the grammar of holiness. That is why Scripture never treats fornication lightly. “Flee fornication” (1 Corinthians 6:18) is not an overreaction. It is the sane response to a real spiritual danger.

The privacy argument is one of the devil’s favorite tools because it allows men to hide moral rebellion behind the language of personal boundaries. But sin against divine order is never merely private because God is involved in the order being violated. If one flesh is His design, then fornication is not only self-harm. It is defiance. It is rebellion in the realm of the body. It says to God, I will use your design outside your boundaries and expect no real moral meaning to attach to it. That is madness. Heaven does not recognize the privacy excuse because heaven is the offended witness.

This is why the church must stop parroting the world’s categories. The issue is not whether the people involved felt sincerely attached, emotionally understood, or temporarily fulfilled. The issue is whether the act stands inside God’s design. If it does not, then it is unrighteous regardless of how warmly the participants speak about it. Christians forgot that. They let the emotional language of the culture displace the moral language of Scripture, and once that happened, fornication started sounding like a complicated relationship issue instead of what the Bible says it is, sin against God’s order in the body.

4. The World Has Mocked, Commercialized, and Polluted What God Made Holy

One of the ugliest features of modern culture is that it has not merely tolerated sexual corruption, it has commercialized it. It sells it, streams it, markets it, jokes about it, weaponizes it, and builds entire industries around the desecration of what God made holy. Things that should produce shame are used to generate profit. Things that should be covered in reverence are displayed for appetite. Things meant for covenant are sold to strangers. That is not progress. That is profanation. It is Babylon in a digital suit. The world has taken one flesh and turned it into currency.

And the effect of that pollution is not merely external. It teaches. It catechizes. It trains the imagination. It lowers resistance. It turns what should be shocking into what feels normal. Men who consume this world’s sexual corruption do not remain untouched by it. Their consciences are dulled, their imaginations are fed filth, and their ability to see marriage and purity as beautiful is weakened. “Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure” (Titus 1:15). A defiled imagination cannot look at the holy things of God without dragging some of the world’s sewage into the room.

This is one reason the church is often so weak on these matters. It has breathed too much of the world's atmosphere. It has let media, entertainment, social trends, and digital lust shape the instincts of believers more than Scripture has. So when the Bible speaks plainly, people react as though God is severe when in reality they have simply grown used to sewage. The church must recover disgust for what the world calls normal. It must stop being impressed by sophistication that is really just sanctified filth in expensive packaging. God made one flesh holy. The world made it merchandise. The church must stop borrowing the world's tone about it.

5. Christians Forgot That Purity Is Beautiful and Marriage Is Honorable

When a culture becomes corrupt enough, it not only makes sin look attractive, it makes purity look strange and marriage look boring. That is one of Satan's oldest tricks. He cannot create a better design, so he tries to make God's design look lifeless while making rebellion look exciting. But the Bible speaks differently. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled" (Hebrews 13:4). That is not a grudging concession. That is an honor statement. Marriage is honorable. The marriage bed is undefiled. God does not blush at the holy use of one flesh. He blesses it. He framed it. He sanctified it. He intended it to be good.

Purity is beautiful for the same reason. It is not mere restraint for restraint's sake. It is alignment with divine order. It is strength under the fear of God. It is the refusal to take what is sacred and drag it into the mud. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). Purity is not a relic from a more innocent age. It is a living mark of spiritual sanity. It is a declaration that one flesh still means what God says it means and that the body is not to be handed over to appetites as though appetite were lord. The pure man is not weak. He is strong enough to say no to a world drunk on lust.

The church desperately needs to restore honor to marriage and purity because the world's cheapening of intimacy has infected Christian instincts. Believers have been trained to think in terms of deprivation instead of dignity. But biblical purity is not deprivation. It is protection, reverence, and order. Biblical marriage is not drudgery. It is honorable union under God. Once believers recover that, they stop sounding like embarrassed moralists and start sounding like witnesses to a better design. Christians forgot that purity is not ugly and marriage is not second best. They forgot that holiness in these matters is something to defend joyfully, not apologize for nervously.

6. The Body and the Flesh Must Be Understood Biblically, Not Emotionally

Much of the confusion in our age comes from the fact that people interpret the body through emotion instead of through Scripture. If a desire feels strong, they treat it as self-authenticating. If an attachment feels intense, they assume it must be morally justified. If

bodily longing is present, they act as though desire itself creates legitimacy. But the Bible never treats desire that way. The flesh is not a trustworthy moral guide. “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing” (Romans 7:18). There is the verdict. The flesh is not a moral compass. It is fallen. It desires against God unless brought under His rule.

That is why the body must be understood within redemption and creation, not within emotional immediacy. One flesh is not defined by what feels intense at the moment. It is defined by what God joined in marriage. The body does not become righteous because it feels strongly. It becomes rightly ordered when it is used according to the will of God. Modern people are trained to reverse that. They start with feeling and then try to build morality around it. The Bible starts with God and judges feeling accordingly. That is one reason the world hates Scripture. Scripture does not let appetite sit on the throne.

Christians forgot that too. They began interpreting the body through the same emotional lens as the culture. So when strong desire appeared, instead of asking what God said, they asked how they felt, how attached they were, how lonely they were, or how difficult abstinence seemed. But the issue is not how intense the pull is. The issue is what God said. “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication” (1 Thessalonians 4:3). There is the command. That settles the matter. The body must be governed by the word of God, not by the emotional weather of the fallen flesh.

7. Restoring Honor to One Flesh Requires Repentance, Reverence, and Recovery of Fear

If the church is going to recover this truth, it will not happen through vague moral concern. It will require repentance, reverence, and the recovery of the fear of God. Repentance, because believers and churches alike have absorbed the world’s cheapened view of intimacy and often handled holy things with casual minds. Reverence, because one flesh must again be seen as sacred and marriage as honorable. Fear, because the church has gotten too comfortable discussing impurity without trembling over it. “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil” (Proverbs 8:13). If believers do not hate what perverts one flesh, they are not walking closely enough to the fear of God.

Repentance means more than feeling bad about consequences. It means agreeing with God that fornication, impurity, pornography, casual sensuality, adultery, and all forms of sexual uncleanness are not just unfortunate habits. They are profanations of what He made holy. Reverence means speaking of marriage with honor, teaching purity with clarity, and refusing the world’s mocking tone. Fear means understanding that God does not treat these matters lightly and neither should His people. “Whoremongers and adulterers God

will judge” (Hebrews 13:4). That should put some steel back in preaching and some sobriety back in Christian thinking.

Recovery also means teaching the next generation better than this one was taught. Young people need to hear not only that sexual sin is wrong, but why. They need to hear what one flesh means, why marriage is honorable, why purity matters, why the body belongs to God, and why the world’s counterfeit freedoms are really forms of bondage. The church cannot compete with the world’s lies merely by saying no more loudly. It must say yes to God’s design more clearly. When one flesh is understood biblically, the ugliness of fornication and the beauty of purity both become clearer. That is what has to be restored.

Conclusion

“What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh” (1 Corinthians 6:16). That verse cuts straight through the lies of a culture that has mocked, commercialized, and polluted what God designed as holy. One flesh is not casual. It is not disposable. It is not recreational. It is not morally empty. It is a God-defined bodily union rooted in creation and intended for covenantal marriage. Therefore sexual sin is not merely a private mistake or an emotional complication. It is a violation of divine order, covenant meaning, and bodily sanctity.

The world’s cheapening of intimacy has infected the church because the church forgot what God said about the body and the flesh. It forgot that marriage is honorable. It forgot that purity is beautiful. It forgot that the flesh is not a moral guide. It forgot that private bodily conduct is not disconnected from spiritual reality. As a result, believers started sounding confused where they should have sounded clear, embarrassed where they should have sounded reverent, and tolerant where they should have trembled. That has to end. The church has no business echoing the language of a world that profits from desecration.

So the final call is plain. Honor what God honors. Fear what God condemns. Restore reverence to the one-flesh principle. Teach marriage as honorable and purity as strength. Reject fornication not merely because it causes pain, but because it profanes what God made sacred. And remember that the age may laugh at holiness now, but heaven will not laugh forever. Christians forgot the meaning of one flesh. They had better recover it before the next generation is handed over to the same old lies in newer packaging.

Introduction

One of the great tragedies in modern Christianity is that multitudes of believers no longer think of the Christian life as something to be run, fought, endured, pursued, and finished. They think of it as something to attend, sample, decorate, and survive. They have been taught a version of Christianity so soft, so padded, and so stripped of urgency that they act like getting saved was the finish line instead of the starting gun. But Paul did not speak that way. In 1 Corinthians 9:24 he says, “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain” (1 Corinthians 9:24). That is not the language of a man lounging in a hammock waiting on heaven. That is the language of a man straining toward a goal, driving his body, ordering his life, and fixing his eye on something beyond the present moment. That verse alone is enough to condemn a whole generation of lazy churchianity.

The Christian life is not a recliner. It is a race. It is not drifting. It is running. It is not passive attendance at weekly religious events while the soul grows soft and the flesh takes over the operation. It is a deliberate, disciplined, serious life lived under the reality that there is a Lord to please, a judgment seat ahead, a crown to gain or lose, and a course to finish. Paul says later in the same chapter, “I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air” (1 Corinthians 9:26). There is purpose. There is direction. There is intentionality. There is spiritual violence against laziness, flesh, vagueness, and wasted motion. The apostle is not coasting. He is pressing. He is not browsing spirituality. He is pursuing it. He is not floating toward heaven on a cloud of clichés. He is running as a man who knows he will answer to Jesus Christ.

That is exactly what many Christians forgot. They forgot there are rewards to gain and losses to suffer. They forgot that salvation is free, but reward is tied to faithfulness. They forgot that there is a difference between being saved and running well. They forgot that a man can be heaven-bound and still waste his race. They forgot that Christianity is not merely about not going to hell. It is about pleasing Christ, obtaining the prize, finishing the course, and hearing, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21). So this essay is going to take a hammer to spiritual laziness, passive church attendance, and that greasy easy-believism mentality that treats the Christian life as if a man can get saved, sit down, play with the world, feed the flesh, and still expect full reward for a race he barely ran. Paul did not preach that kind of religion, and the Holy Ghost did not inspire it.

1. The Christian Life Is Not a Spectator Sport

Paul begins with an image everybody in Corinth would have understood. “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?” (1 Corinthians 9:24). That

means the Christian life is not a gallery where men sit in the stands and comment on the runners. It is the track itself. You are in it. You are not a spectator watching somebody else carry the burden of obedience, discipline, study, prayer, witness, holiness, and endurance. Every believer is in the race. The problem is that many do not live like they know it. They attend church like a crowd attends a game, cheering a little, criticizing a little, observing a little, but never really entering the race with any seriousness.

That spectator mentality has infected churches everywhere. Men come to hear sermons the way they come to consume content. Women collect devotionals the way people collect decor. Families schedule God somewhere between entertainment and convenience. Everybody wants to be around Christianity, but fewer and fewer seem interested in actually running it. They will discuss doctrine, admire boldness, repost verses, praise preaching, and nod at truth, but the real race, prayer, self-denial, holiness, witness, endurance, is being run by fewer than ought to be running it. The church has too many bleacher saints and not enough runners. Too many observers, not enough strivers. Too many critics, not enough laborers.

Paul's language blows that spirit apart. "So run, that ye may obtain" (1 Corinthians 9:24). He does not say watch, admire, applaud, or maintain appearances. He says run. The Christian life does not hand out prizes for spectating. You do not get a crown for having opinions about other people's races. You do not get reward for warming a pew while your soul grows cold and your life remains spiritually flabby. The command is run. And the believer who forgets that ends up treating church like a spiritual theater instead of a training ground for men and women headed toward the judgment seat of Christ.

2. Salvation Is Free, but Reward Must Be Pursued

One of the reasons this truth gets neglected is because people confuse the free gift of salvation with the prize of faithful living. Salvation is not earned. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:5). "For by grace are ye saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8). That truth stands unshaken. But once that is established, the New Testament speaks again and again about reward, crowns, inheritance in the sense of reward, reigning, stewardship, and the judgment seat of Christ. Paul is not talking about earning eternal life in 1 Corinthians 9:24. He is talking about running to obtain the prize. That is reward language, not justification language.

This is where easy-believism often rots the soul. It hears that salvation is free and then quietly assumes everything else is automatic. A man gets saved and then imagines all crowns, all reward, all approval, all fruitfulness, all usefulness, and all faithfulness will somehow be his by default, regardless of how he runs. But Paul does not talk that way. He

says, “Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things” (1 Corinthians 9:25). There is striving. There is mastery. There is discipline. There is effort. Not effort to become saved, but effort because one is saved and now lives under the claims of Christ with reward in view.

This is why spiritual seriousness matters. A man can be truly saved and still suffer loss at the judgment seat. “If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved” (1 Corinthians 3:15). There it is. Saved, yet suffering loss. That one verse should wake up a thousand complacent believers. The race is not imaginary. The rewards are not imaginary. The losses are not imaginary. The Christian who forgets that begins to live carelessly, as though eternity will sort everything out in his favor just because he once believed the right gospel. But Paul says run to obtain. The free gift of salvation does not cancel the necessity of faithful pursuit in the race.

3. Paul Ran With Purpose, Not Vagueness

Paul says, “I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air” (1 Corinthians 9:26). That sentence rebukes half of modern Christianity by itself. Paul did not live vaguely. He did not drift through years with a foggy, sentimental religious haze, hoping that somehow effort would not be needed because grace was available. He ran with purpose. He fought with aim. He lived like a man who knew where he was going, what he was doing, and why he was doing it. There was nothing soft or random about the apostle’s spiritual life. He was not shadowboxing. He was not exercising in theory. He was not spiritually busy while accomplishing nothing. He ran with intention.

That stands in sharp contrast to many believers now. They are not exactly abandoning Christianity, but they are not exactly pursuing it either. They are spiritually vague. They mean well in a general sense. They admire godliness. They respect the truth. They think they should probably pray more, read more, witness more, mortify more, and care more, but the thing remains misty and undefined. They are not running uncertainly because they want to be precise. They are running uncertainly because they are barely running at all. No target, no discipline, no structure, no holy ambition, no serious pressing toward the mark. Just a soft cloud of religious intention that never hardens into obedience.

Paul’s life rebukes that spirit. He says in Philippians 3:14, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” There is pressure. There is motion. There is mark. There is prize. There is no haze. The believer who wants to run well has to recover that kind of purpose. Not fleshly ambition, but sanctified direction. Not chaos, but aim. Not random religious motion, but intentional obedience. The Christian life cannot be run well by men who are spiritually vague. If you do not know you are in a race, you will not train. If

you do not care about the prize, you will not press. If you do not aim, you will spend your strength beating the air.

4. Discipline Is Not Legalism - It Is Race Sense

Paul says, “Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things” (1 Corinthians 9:25). Then he adds, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection” (1 Corinthians 9:27). That is discipline. That is self-government under the fear of God. That is a man telling his body, appetites, schedule, and impulses that they are not in charge. Modern Christianity hears that kind of language and often gets nervous because it has been taught to equate any serious discipline with legalism. But Paul is not talking about legalistic self-righteousness. He is talking about race sense. A runner who wants to obtain does not hand the training plan over to appetite.

This is one of the biggest practical failures in the church right now. Believers want spiritual power without discipline, growth without structure, fruit without labor, discernment without study, victory without self-denial, and crowns without cross-bearing. But the Bible never teaches that. The athlete image teaches the exact opposite. Temperance matters. Self-control matters. Bodily discipline matters. Time management matters. The tongue must be governed. The eyes must be governed. The appetites must be governed. The flesh must be told no. A man who cannot say no to himself will not run well for Christ.

The reason this matters so much is because the body and the flesh do not naturally cooperate with holiness. Left to itself, the flesh will always vote for comfort, distraction, indulgence, delay, and compromise. Paul knew that. That is why he did not pamper his body like it was a delicate king. He kept it under. He brought it into subjection. He did not let the flesh decide how much race he was going to run. That is not legalism. That is sanity for a man who knows he is in a race and that prizes are at stake. The church needs more disciplined saints and fewer soft Christians who think every appetite deserves a hearing.

5. There Is a Crown to Gain and Loss to Suffer

Paul says of the runners, “Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible” (1 Corinthians 9:25). That is one of the great motivators in the Christian life, there is an incorruptible crown in view. The world runs hard for medals that rust, applause that fades, records that get broken, and reputations that vanish. The saint is called to run for something incorruptible. That means the Christian life is not meaningless motion. It is not pointless effort. It is not grim duty with no eternal significance. There is a crown in view. There is reward. There is Christ’s approval. There is the joy of having run well.

At the same time, there is the reality of loss. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:15, “he shall suffer loss.” That loss is not loss of salvation, but it is real loss. Wasted opportunity. Burned work.

Missed reward. Shame at the judgment seat. The New Testament is not shy about this. “And now, little children, abide in him that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming” (1 John 2:28). There it is. Confidence or shame. Reward or loss. Crown or no crown. The Christian life is not all one flat outcome regardless of how the race was run.

That truth is badly needed because many believers live as if faithfulness and carelessness will be rewarded exactly the same. They will not say it out loud, but they live like they believe it. They waste years, feed the flesh, neglect prayer, avoid witness, shrug at holiness, and still assume eternity will make no distinction between a faithful runner and a spiritual loafer. But Paul says there is a prize. He says there is a crown. He says run to obtain. He says strive for the mastery. A man who believes those verses will not treat his race casually. He will understand that what he does with his time, body, mind, gifts, and obedience matters eternally.

6. Easy-Believism Has Taught Many People to Coast Instead of Press

There is a form of religious teaching that gets the gospel right enough to avoid outright heresy on salvation, but then leaves people with the impression that the rest of the Christian life is basically optional. You got saved, now just hang on till heaven, try not to do anything too embarrassing, and if you can fit church in around your hobbies and appetites then good for you. That spirit has infected countless believers. They are not denying Christ exactly, but neither are they pressing. They are coasting. They have mistaken security in Christ for permission to become spiritually passive.

Paul’s life stands like a rebuke against that whole attitude. “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before” (Philippians 3:13). There is no coasting in that verse. There is reaching forth. There is pressing. There is refusal to settle into complacency. Paul was more secure in Christ than any easy-believism preacher, and yet he did not use that security as an excuse for laziness. He used it as fuel for pursuit. Security in Christ should make a man bold in service, not lazy in the race.

This is why the church must distinguish between resting in Christ for salvation and resting on one’s hands in the Christian life. The first is biblical. The second is disobedience. Yes, we rest in Christ’s finished work for justification. But no, we do not rest from running. “Let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1). There is the command. Run with patience. Not sit with patience. Not drift with patience. Run. Easy-believism has produced too many couch Christians who think that because Christ did all the saving,

there is nothing serious left to pursue. Paul knew better. The Holy Ghost taught better. The church had better recover that truth.

7. The Christian Who Runs Well Lives With the Judgment Seat in View

At the bottom of Paul's race mentality is the certainty that his life will be reviewed by the Lord. He says, "lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Corinthians 9:27). He is not talking about losing salvation. He is talking about disqualification in the sense of failing to obtain what a faithful runner ought to obtain. Paul was not frightened that Christ's blood would fail him. He was serious that a life can be wasted even by a saved man if discipline, obedience, and race-consciousness are abandoned. The judgment seat of Christ was real to him, and that reality gave weight to daily decisions.

The New Testament teaches this repeatedly. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:10). Not some of us. All. "That every one may receive the things done in his body" (2 Corinthians 5:10). There it is again, body, deeds, review, recompense. A man who believes that will not live loosely. He may still battle weakness, but he will not make peace with laziness. He may still have days of weariness, but he will not laugh off stewardship. He may still feel the drag of the flesh, but he will not call the race imaginary. The judgment seat puts urgency into the run.

That is one of the things Christians forgot. They forgot that they are not merely headed to heaven, they are headed to an evaluation. Their works, motives, service, endurance, and use of life will be tried. "Every man's work shall be made manifest" (1 Corinthians 3:13). That should steady a man. It should sober him. It should keep him from wasting his years on trivialities. The Christian who runs well is not paranoid. He is purposeful. He knows who he will stand before. He knows what matters. He knows the race is real. He knows the prize is worth obtaining. So he runs accordingly.

Conclusion

"So run, that ye may obtain" (1 Corinthians 9:24). That is one of the great forgotten commands in the modern church. The Christian life is a race, not a recliner. It is a striving, not a drifting. It is a disciplined pursuit, not a vague religious atmosphere. Paul did not speak like a man lounging around waiting for glory. He spoke like a runner, a fighter, a laborer, and a steward. He knew there was a prize, an incorruptible crown, a judgment seat, and a race to finish. He knew salvation was free, but he also knew reward must be pursued, discipline must be embraced, and the body must be brought into subjection.

That truth needs to be recovered because spiritual laziness has become respectable in many places. Passive church attendance, soft Christianity, easy-believism coasting, and a

total lack of race consciousness have produced believers who barely seem aware that there is a course to run. They have forgotten the prize. They have forgotten the crown. They have forgotten the possibility of loss. They have forgotten that what they do with their lives after conversion matters to Christ. The result is a weak church full of people who are saved, perhaps, but hardly striving, hardly pressing, hardly running, and hardly expecting much at the judgment seat except mercy they have confused with reward.

So the call is plain. Wake up. Get off the bleachers. Stop coasting. Stop mistaking security for passivity. Stop feeding the body like it is master and then wondering why the race feels impossible. Remember there is an incorruptible crown. Remember there is a prize. Remember there is a judgment seat. Remember the apostle said run. Then run with discipline, purpose, endurance, and reward in view. The race is real, the prize is real, and too many Christians have forgotten they are even in it.

13 of 15: Truths Christians Forgot - Examine Yourselves

Introduction

One of the most neglected commands in all of practical Christianity is not a command about preaching, witnessing, fasting, tithing, or church attendance. It is a command about turning the light inward. Paul says, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves...?" (2 Corinthians 13:5). That is one of the most searching verses in the New Testament because it drags religion out of the public theater and locks it in a room alone with God. It does not ask what your friends think of you. It does not ask what your pastor assumes about you. It does not ask how long you have attended church, how many verses you can quote, how many debates you have won, or how polished your testimony sounds in front of a crowd. It asks whether you have examined yourself. Not your brother. Not your wife. Not your pastor. Not the liberals, the Calvinists, the hypocrites, the backsliders, the compromisers, or the apostates. Yourself.

That is exactly what superficial religion hates. Superficial religion loves comparison because comparison lets a man stay comfortable. It loves inspecting other people because the flesh feels righteous when it spots faults in somebody else. It loves doctrinal arguments, social media rebukes, exposing error in public, and cataloging the failures of entire movements while never once dragging its own private world under the light of God. That is why so many people can talk boldly about truth and still remain strangers to brokenness. They have trained themselves to become religious detectives of everybody else's condition while carefully avoiding their own. But the Holy Ghost will not let a man do

that forever without confrontation. “Examine yourselves” (2 Corinthians 13:5). In other words, stop managing appearances and start proving your own self before the Lord.

This is where real Christianity parts company with religious acting. Real Christianity is not afraid of honest testing because truth never needs darkness to survive. False assurance does. Hidden sin does. Pride does. Secret lust does. Religious hypocrisy does. Empty talk does. That is why the unexamined life becomes such fertile ground for spiritual fraud. A man who never examines himself can live for years in a haze of assumption, habit, inherited language, public routine, and private contradiction without ever being brought to terms with what he actually is before God. But the command still stands. “Prove your own selves” (2 Corinthians 13:5). That means put yourself on trial before the word of God. Put your motives under the light. Put your profession under the Book. Put your habits under heaven’s scrutiny. A Christianity that cannot survive honest examination is not Christianity worth keeping.

1. Self-Examination Is a Command, Not an Optional Exercise

Paul does not offer self-examination as a hobby for introspective believers with spare time. He commands it. “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves” (2 Corinthians 13:5). That means self-examination is not optional equipment for an unusually serious Christian. It is a duty laid on every believer, and especially on anyone who claims the name of Christ with confidence. The Holy Ghost does not merely permit a man to test himself. He requires it. That alone should tell you how badly the modern church has drifted, because there are plenty of people who would rather do almost anything than get quiet before God and let Him search them honestly.

There is a reason for that resistance. Examination is uncomfortable because it strips away secondhand assumptions. It will not let a man hide behind the fact that he grew up around church, came from a Christian family, had a religious experience as a child, got baptized, joined a ministry, or learned how to speak evangelical language. Examination asks more direct questions than that. Is Christ in you? Are you in the faith? Are you real before God or merely rehearsed before men? Do you know the Lord, or do you know how to sound like someone who does? Those questions are dangerous to every false refuge the flesh likes to build. That is why the flesh avoids them.

But the command remains because God is merciful enough to tell men to test themselves before the final judgment makes all tests public. “Let a man examine himself” (1 Corinthians 11:28). That is the same principle in another setting. God would rather have a man deal honestly with himself now than preserve a flattering illusion until it shatters too late. Self-examination is not cruelty. It is mercy. It is not unhealthy morbidity. It is

spiritual honesty. The church needs far more of it, because a generation that refuses to examine itself will soon become a generation unable to recognize its own spiritual disease.

2. Superficial Religion Prefers Inspecting Others

One of the easiest things in the world is to inspect somebody else. A carnal man can do that all day long. He can spot hypocrisy across the aisle, compromise across town, doctrinal weakness in another denomination, and moral inconsistency in another family while remaining blind as a cave bat to his own pride. That is why the Lord Jesus said, “Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” (Matthew 7:3). There is the problem. Men are eager to behold the mote. They are reluctant to consider the beam. Public inspection is far more attractive to the flesh than private examination because public inspection flatters ego.

This is why so many religious people become experts in discernment language while remaining spiritual children in the inward life. They know how to identify errors. They know how to expose compromise. They know how to criticize leadership, churches, trends, and movements. But ask them to sit before Psalm 139 and pray, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts” (Psalm 139:23), and suddenly they are nowhere to be found. That is because exposing someone else costs less than exposing yourself. The flesh enjoys the first and fears the second. But Christianity without the second becomes a breeding ground for hypocrisy.

Paul’s command cuts across that disease. “Examine yourselves” (2 Corinthians 13:5). He does not deny there is a place for discernment about others. There is. Scripture commands believers to judge righteous judgment, to mark them that cause divisions and offenses contrary to sound doctrine, and to try the spirits whether they are of God. But a man who uses discernment outwardly while refusing examination inwardly becomes a religious fraud with a Bible in his hand. He may tell the truth about other people and still be lying to himself. That is why the command is so necessary. Before you spend your life inspecting others, examine yourself.

3. Real Christianity Is Not Afraid of Honest Testing

Truth does not fear investigation. Counterfeit things do. If a thing is real, it can stand in the light. Gold can be tested. Genuine faith can be tested. Real conversion can be tested. A man who belongs to Christ may find things in himself that need rebuke, cleansing, confession, and correction, but he does not need darkness to survive. False religion does. Religious acting does. Empty talk does. That is why Paul says, “prove your own selves” (2 Corinthians 13:5). He is not asking them to play games with self-perception. He is telling them to put the thing to the test.

This is one of the marks of real Christianity. It welcomes the light because it knows the Lord is true. “For every one that doeth evil hateth the light” (John 3:20). There is the opposite spirit. Evil hates the light. The man living in secret contradiction wants dimness, vague language, flattering assumptions, and a religion that never asks too many questions. But the believer who genuinely wants God is willing to be searched. He may tremble under that light, but he will not despise it. He understands that better a wounded conscience now than a deceived soul later. Better to be humbled before God than exposed before men or judged in eternity.

The church must recover that attitude. Too many believers hear searching preaching as though the preacher were the enemy, when in fact the enemy is the darkness they are trying to preserve. The word of God is “quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword” and is “a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). That is not a design flaw in the Bible. That is part of its glory. Real Christianity is not afraid of honest testing because it would rather be cut by the word than comforted in a lie. That spirit needs to return.

4. False Assurance Thrives in the Unexamined Heart

One of the gravest dangers in all religion is false assurance, the settled confidence of a man who believes himself safe while remaining outside of Christ. And false assurance does not usually grow in a heart that regularly comes under the searching light of Scripture. It grows in an unexamined heart. It grows where people assume rather than prove, imitate rather than know, and manage appearances rather than face truth. Paul’s question is blunt because false assurance is deadly. “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith” (2 Corinthians 13:5). That means it is possible for people around the faith, near the faith, talking like the faith, and even active in religious life to need to face whether they are actually in it.

The Lord Himself warned about this. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 7:21). Notice that. They had the language. They had the address. They had even done religious works in His name. But language and activity are not regeneration. The terrifying part is that they seemed confident. They did not appear to be trembling agnostics about their condition. They expected acceptance. That is false assurance. It is one thing to be lost and know you are lost. It is another to be lost and convinced you are safe because your religion was never honestly tested.

That is why self-examination carries such pastoral weight. It is not designed to make every true believer live in constant uncertainty. It is designed to flush out the counterfeit and deepen the confidence of the real. A man who has never been brought to terms with his

need, never repented, never bowed before Christ, never known the convicting and converting work of God, and yet feels perfectly safe because he once repeated a prayer or joined a church is in terrible danger. The church has no business helping him preserve that illusion. He needs 2 Corinthians 13:5, not soothing slogans. False assurance thrives in the unexamined heart because lies love darkness.

5. Hidden Sin, Pride, and Religious Acting Flourish Where No Testing Occurs

Even in the life of a real believer, the refusal of self-examination creates room for dangerous inward growths. Hidden sin, pride, bitterness, lust, envy, performance religion, and empty talk all flourish where no testing occurs. Men do not become hypocrites in one dramatic leap. They become hypocrites gradually, by learning how to manage the outside while neglecting the inside. They become skilled in public behavior and increasingly careless in private reality. But the command to examine oneself disrupts that whole arrangement. It refuses to let a man live forever off of what other people assume.

Pride especially hates examination because pride survives by comparison and appearance. If a man can keep looking around at others, he can usually find someone messier than himself. That lets pride breathe. But if he is dragged alone before the holiness of God, the comparison game collapses. Isaiah did not say, Woe is my neighbor, when he saw the Lord. He said, “Woe is me! for I am undone” (Isaiah 6:5). That is the effect of honest confrontation with God. It strips the soul of its rehearsed superiority. It takes the air out of religious performance. That is why self-examination is a killer of pride when done biblically.

Religious acting depends on the absence of this kind of testing. The actor can hold the role together as long as the stage lights are all pointed outward. But if the word of God starts cutting down into motives, loves, secret habits, private imaginations, grudges, and hidden compromises, the role gets harder to maintain. That is a mercy. Better the acting be shattered now than become a lifelong fraud. “All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:13). The believer who remembers that will stop living as though the hidden life were hidden. The one who forgets it may become a good actor, but never a whole man.

6. “Know Ye Not Your Own Selves?” Means a Man Ought to Face Reality

Paul says, “Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Corinthians 13:5). That phrase “know ye not your own selves” is striking. It means a man ought not be a total stranger to his own spiritual condition. He ought not live in such a haze of religious routine that the basic reality of whether Christ is truly in him remains untouched and untested. Christianity is not meant to be a theater where a man becomes so occupied with external performance that he never honestly faces the question

of what is true inwardly. Paul assumes that a sober man can and should come to terms with reality under the light of God.

That does not mean the human heart is naturally transparent to itself. Jeremiah says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9). That is why self-examination must be done under Scripture and before God. Left to itself, the heart lies. But under the word, with the Spirit of God pressing truth into the conscience, a man is summoned to face himself honestly. He is not excused from that duty because the heart is deceitful. He is called to it because the heart is deceitful. The deception is precisely why the proving must take place.

This is where many Christians need to grow up. They live in emotional weather, reacting to moods, opinions, and public impressions, but never really facing spiritual facts. Paul says, in effect, know your own selves. Stop living in fog. Stop letting the crowd define your peace. Stop borrowing assurance from public activity while the private man remains neglected. Come under the Book. Come under the Lord. Face the facts. Either Christ is in you, or your religion is a shell. Either you are real before God, or you are not. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Romans 8:9). Those are not the kind of words that support vague churchy sentimentality. They call a man to face reality.

7. The Goal of Examination Is Not Despair but Truth, Cleansing, and Reality

There is a wrong kind of introspection that turns a man inward endlessly until he becomes spiritually paralyzed. That is not what Paul is commanding. He is not calling believers to live in neurotic self-obsession. He is calling them to honest proof. The goal of examination is not despair for its own sake. It is truth. If the man is false, the goal is exposure and, by God’s mercy, real conversion. If the man is true but dirty, the goal is cleansing. If the man is drifting, the goal is correction. If the man is sincere, the goal is deeper reality. Examination is meant to bring a soul into the light where grace, truth, confession, and cleansing can do their work.

That is why the Bible couples searching with mercy. “Search me, O God, and know my heart... and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23-24). David did not ask to be searched just so he could sit in despair. He asked to be searched so he could be led. First John says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). There is the hope. Honest examination is not the enemy of joy. It is the pathway to real joy because only the truth can be healed. A lie can only be maintained or shattered. It cannot be healed.

This is why the church must stop treating probing truth as if it were unloving. It is unloving to let men rot under false assurance. It is unloving to flatter hidden sin. It is unloving to

preserve religious acting for the sake of comfort. The loving thing is to tell men to examine themselves, to prove their own selves, to stop managing appearances, and to face God honestly. That may hurt, but truth often hurts before it heals. Better that pain now than the final horror of a man who spent years performing Christianity only to discover he had never dealt honestly with God at all.

Conclusion

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves” (2 Corinthians 13:5). That is not a soft suggestion. It is a divine command, and it is one of the truths Christians forgot. They forgot that real religion must survive personal testing. They forgot that false assurance, hidden sin, pride, religious acting, and empty talk all thrive in hearts that are never dragged under the light of God. They forgot that it is easier to inspect everybody else than to face one’s own soul honestly. They forgot that Christianity is not maintained by managing appearances, but by walking in truth before the Lord.

The result has been a great deal of shallow religion. People who can talk, perform, argue, attend, and present while remaining unexamined inwardly. People who have opinions on everything except the state of their own hearts. People who can identify beams in every church in town while never considering the one in their own eye. That is a disaster waiting to happen. The church does not need less self-examination. It needs more, done biblically, soberly, and under the word of God. Better a man be humbled now than damned later. Better hidden sin be exposed now than preserved under religious makeup until it grows harder and darker.

So the call is simple and severe. Stop managing appearances. Stop borrowing confidence from your past, your family, your church culture, your public image, or your theological vocabulary. Get alone with God and prove your own self. Ask Him to search you. Let Scripture try you. Let truth expose what needs exposing. If Christ is in you, the light will only make the reality sweeter and the cleansing deeper. If He is not, then no amount of religious acting can save you. Either way, the command stands. Examine yourselves.

14 of 15: Truths Christians Forgot - Friendship with the World

Introduction

There are few verses in the New Testament that hit the modern church more directly than James 4:4. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” (James 4:4). That is not the kind of sentence you put on a pastel banner

over a coffee station in a lobby built to impress carnal people. That is not the kind of verse a flesh-pleasing age wants thundered from the pulpit. But there it stands in the Book, hard as a rock and sharp as a sword. James does not say the friendship of the world is unfortunate. He does not say it is unwise. He does not say it is spiritually immature but understandable. He says it is enmity with God. That means the thing is not morally neutral. It is hostile. It is antagonistic. It is a declaration of divided loyalty in a realm where divided loyalty is spiritual adultery.

That is exactly why this subject is so necessary in the present age. Modern Christianity has spent years trying to prove to the world that it is harmless, relatable, relevant, approachable, stylish, culturally fluent, emotionally safe, and not too serious about separation. It has treated the world like an important client whose approval must be won at all costs. So it has borrowed the world's methods, softened the world's offenses, admired the world's celebrities, copied the world's entertainment, echoed the world's priorities, chased the world's applause, and then wondered why its holiness has thinned out like watered soup. But the reason is not difficult. A church that courts the world will eventually start thinking like the world. A Christian who seeks the smile of the world will eventually fear the frown of God less than he fears the ridicule of men. James did not say friendship with the world makes discipleship a little harder. He said it makes a man the enemy of God in practical alignment.

The tragedy is that many believers no longer even know what "the world" means in the biblical sense. They hear that word and think of mountains, oceans, trees, food, cities, work, ordinary life, or lawful enjoyment of God's creation. But Scripture is not condemning dirt, bread, family, or daily labor. It is condemning an organized rebellious system built on lust, pride, vanity, self-glory, and opposition to God. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father" (1 John 2:16). There is the definition. The world is a spiritual order energized by fallen desire and hostile to the authority of God. Once that is understood, James 4:4 stops sounding exaggerated and starts sounding exact. This essay must strike hard because the church is not being destroyed mainly by lions outside the gate. It is being weakened by lovers of the world inside the gate who still want to talk about Jesus while courting the very system that crucified Him.

1. James Calls It Adultery Because Divided Love Is Treachery

James opens with one of the strongest rebukes in the New Testament. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses" (James 4:4). He is not speaking first of literal sexual adultery in that verse, though Scripture condemns that elsewhere with unmistakable force. He is using adultery as the picture of spiritual unfaithfulness. That is exactly the right image because friendship

with the world is not merely poor judgment. It is treacherous affection. It is the soul turning from its rightful loyalty to flirt with another lover. God has always spoken that way when His people tried to join His name to worldly allegiance. Israel was condemned for spiritual whoredom. The church is warned against spiritual adultery. The reason is simple. The issue is covenant loyalty. You cannot belong to the Lord and then make peace with His enemy without moral treason being involved.

This is why the language is so offensive to soft religion. Soft religion wants worldliness described as a preference issue, a style issue, a generational issue, a personality issue, a strategy issue, anything but adultery. But James calls it what it is. Adultery is not a scheduling conflict. It is treachery of affection. It is the betrayal of rightful love. So when a believer claims Christ while craving the world's praise, the world's methods, the world's flavor, the world's atmosphere, and the world's validation, he is not merely showing poor discernment. He is showing divided love. That is why the rebuke has such heat in it. God is not dealing with a harmless hobby. He is dealing with covenant disloyalty.

The modern church needs to hear that again because it has become comfortable with divided affection. It wants enough of Christ to keep a testimony and enough of the world to keep social approval. It wants enough truth to sound biblical and enough compromise to remain attractive to carnal people. It wants enough reverence to say it is worshiping and enough entertainment to keep the flesh engaged. That is adultery in principle. The church is trying to make two lovers dwell in one bed, and James says the thing is spiritual fornication. Once a believer sees worldliness in those terms, he stops treating it like an innocent style preference and starts seeing it as a betrayal of his Lord.

2. The World Is a System, Not God's Creation

One of the first deceptions that shows up whenever this subject is preached is the attempt to redefine "the world" in a way that makes the warning meaningless. But Scripture defines it very clearly. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father" (1 John 2:16). The world, in the biblical sense, is not the earth itself, not flowers, trees, lawful work, family meals, sunlight, rivers, architecture, or the ordinary structures of creaturely life. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (Psalm 24:1). God made creation good. He gives richly all things to enjoy in their lawful place. The problem is not creation. The problem is the fallen system that organizes life in rebellion against the Creator.

That system has a spirit to it. It is driven by lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life. It magnifies self, appetite, display, vanity, achievement, status, image, sensuality, rebellion, and the fear of man. It may wear different clothes in different ages, but the engine

stays the same. In one century it may roar through imperial pomp. In another it may speak through digital obsession and celebrity culture. In one generation it may call itself sophistication. In another it may call itself authenticity. But underneath the packaging it still runs on the same fuel, desire unruléd by God and pride unbowed before God.

That distinction matters because Christians must not turn separation into some superstitious rejection of ordinary life. The issue is not whether a man lives in a city, works a job, eats food, enjoys beauty, or carries out lawful duties. The issue is whether he is thinking, desiring, choosing, valuing, and arranging life according to a rebellious system or according to the will of God. The world is a system. It is a spirit. It is an organized atmosphere of opposition to God. And once a Christian understands that, he can stop playing games with superficial definitions and start facing the real question, whose values are governing me?

3. Friendship Means More Than Contact, It Means Affection and Alliance

James does not say contact with the world is enmity with God. If that were the case, no believer could function in society at all. Paul says believers must live, work, witness, and interact in the world. The Lord Jesus Himself ate with publicans and sinners without ever becoming like them. The issue in James 4:4 is not contact. It is friendship. Friendship implies affection, comfort, alignment, sympathy, and fellowship of spirit. A Christian may contact the world without loving it. He may witness to the world without becoming its friend. He may serve among the lost without adopting the lost world's values. But friendship means his heart has started leaning toward that system with affection instead of resistance.

That is where many believers deceive themselves. They say, I am just trying to reach people. I am just trying to stay relevant. I am just trying to understand the culture. Those things can be lawful in the right sense. But if in the process the heart begins to admire what God condemns, excuse what God rebukes, imitate what God separates from, and seek approval from those who hate His authority, then what started as contact has become friendship. The line is crossed not merely when the body is present in worldly settings, but when the affections and sympathies begin to harmonize with the spirit of the world.

That is why friendship with the world is so spiritually dangerous. Affection precedes imitation. Alliance precedes conformity. A man becomes like what he admires. If he keeps the world at the level of contact while maintaining biblical separation of affection, he can still stand. But once he starts wanting the world's smile, fearing its disapproval, and borrowing its tastes, the infection has already begun. Friendship is not a casual word. It

means the heart has moved closer than God permits. And when the heart moves first, the life will follow.

4. The World Always Weakens Holiness Before It Silences Testimony

The danger of friendship with the world is not always immediate public collapse. Sometimes the first thing it does is soften edges. It weakens disgust for sin. It lowers standards of speech, dress, humor, entertainment, ambition, and aspiration. It makes the believer less shocked by what once would have grieved him. It trains him to laugh at what heaven condemns and admire what heaven rebukes. Holiness begins to feel severe. Separation begins to feel awkward. Reverence begins to feel outdated. That is the first stage. The world weakens holiness before it silences testimony.

This is why many churches still use Christian words while sounding spiritually weak. They have not openly denied the faith, but their sharpness is gone. Their tone is shaped more by the age than by the Book. Their ministries are arranged around attraction rather than truth. Their leaders fear offending the culture more than offending God. Their people are increasingly unable to tell the difference between what is spiritually healthy and what is spiritually slick. The testimony is not silenced in one dramatic instant. It is softened first. Once holiness weakens, boldness weakens. Once boldness weakens, witness weakens. Once witness weakens, the church starts existing mainly to preserve itself rather than proclaim Christ.

A believer can watch this happen in his own life as well. The first sign is often not that he denies Christ. It is that Christ becomes less central in his practical thinking. Scripture loses edge. Prayer loses urgency. Sin becomes easier to excuse. Worldly admiration becomes easier to justify. The conscience still speaks, but more faintly. The testimony is not yet fully gone, but it is becoming hard to speak plainly because the heart has already started sympathizing with the world's way of seeing things. That is how the silencing happens. The world does not always tape your mouth shut first. It often captures your admiration first.

5. The Approval of the World Is a Poisoned Prize

The flesh loves approval. It always has. It wants to be liked, admired, accepted, celebrated, reposted, platformed, and treated as reasonable by people who despise the authority of God. But the approval of the world is a poisoned prize because the world does not smile on truth without asking truth to compromise first. Jesus said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18). Then He said, "because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19). That means the normal relationship between faithful believers and the world system is not warm mutual admiration. It is tension.

That does not mean every lost person will hate every Christian instantly, nor does it mean believers should be rude for the sake of being offensive. But it does mean that when a Christian becomes obsessed with winning the approval of the world system, something is already wrong. “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you” (Luke 6:26). There is a warning many modern ministries should hang on their office wall. If the world always speaks well of you, perhaps you have learned how to hide the things that would have made it angry. The world does not naturally celebrate holiness, separation, repentance, the exclusivity of Christ, the authority of Scripture, and the judgment of God. If it applauds, it is usually because those notes have been muted.

The church has got to recover enough backbone to treat worldly approval with suspicion rather than hunger. The issue is not whether believers may ever be respected in certain settings for honest conduct. The issue is whether the church begins tailoring itself to remain beloved by a God-hating age. That is poison. The minute a man starts needing the world’s applause to feel successful, he is already compromised. He has put the wrong audience in the judge’s chair. A faithful servant of Christ can live without worldly approval. He cannot live long with it if it came at the price of truth.

6. Borrowed Worldly Methods Bring Worldly Spirit With Them

A great many churches have tried to justify friendship with the world by saying they are only borrowing methods, not values. But methods are rarely neutral for long because methods carry assumptions, atmosphere, tone, and priorities. When the church borrows the world’s methods for attracting, entertaining, branding, marketing, measuring success, and keeping attention, it almost always borrows some of the world’s spirit with them. That spirit does not stay outside the door politely. It comes in with the furniture and starts rearranging the house.

You can see it in the way ministries begin to talk once they have drunk deeply from worldly methods. The tone shifts from reverence to performance. The people are treated less like saints to be edified and more like consumers to be retained. Preaching gets trimmed to fit attention spans shaped by amusement. Music begins serving atmosphere more than truth. Image becomes strategic. Offense becomes a branding problem rather than a biblical inevitability. Scripture is still quoted, but the center of gravity moves. That is what happens when worldly methods are treated as harmless tools. The tools train the hand that uses them.

The Bible warns, “Be not conformed to this world” (Romans 12:2). Conformity does not happen only in morals. It happens in mind, pattern, structure, and measure. Once the church adopts worldly means as its operating instinct, it soon finds itself thinking worldly

thoughts about what success is. Numbers start trumping holiness. Smoothness starts trumping truth. Influence starts trumping faithfulness. Christians forgot that methods are not sterile. They shape the user. Borrow the world's methods long enough, and the world's spirit comes with them.

7. Separation Is Not Isolation, It Is Loyalty to Christ

Whenever biblical separation is preached, somebody always acts as if the alternative must be total social withdrawal, bitterness toward all unbelievers, or monastic isolation from ordinary life. But biblical separation is not that. Separation is loyalty to Christ. It is the refusal to let the world's values, loves, and spirit govern the believer's heart. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (1 John 2:15). That does not command hatred of lost people. It commands refusal of worldly love. The believer is called to love sinners enough to tell them the truth, not love the world system enough to imitate it.

Paul says, "come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Corinthians 6:17). That verse is not a call to disappear from society. It is a call to distinctness. The believer is in the world but not of it. He works in it, witnesses in it, serves among people in it, but he does not take his color from it. He does not use it as his moral compass. He does not crave its approval. He does not treat its standards as normal. Separation means his loyalty is visible. It means Christ's claims are weightier to him than the world's expectations.

This is why separation is actually liberating. It frees the believer from the miserable scramble to keep Jesus and the world equally pleased. That scramble is impossible anyway. "No man can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24). Separation settles the question of ultimate allegiance. It says Christ is Lord, the world is passing away, and the believer will not sell his conscience for relevance. Far from making life smaller, that kind of loyalty makes it clearer. It tells a man who he is, whom he belongs to, and what he must refuse no matter how loudly the age mocks him for it.

Conclusion

"Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" (James 4:4). That is one of the most direct and needed warnings in all of Scripture for this age. It defines worldliness as spiritual adultery and exposes the lie that a believer can court both Christ and the world system without moral contradiction. The world, in the biblical sense, is not creation itself but an organized rebellious order fueled by lust, pride, vanity, and opposition to God. Friendship with that system is not a harmless strategy. It is practical hostility to the Lord whose name the believer claims to love.

Many Christians forgot that. They forgot that seeking the approval, methods, values, and spirit of the world always weakens holiness first and silences the church second. They

forgot that the world's smile is poisoned. They forgot that borrowed methods carry borrowed spirits. They forgot that the church does not become stronger by becoming more like the thing it is called to stand apart from. As a result, many ministries now sound timid, many believers now think like the culture, and many churches now fear offending the age more than grieving the Spirit of God. That is not wisdom. That is adultery dressed up as strategy.

So the call is clear. Stop flirting with the world system. Stop begging for its applause. Stop borrowing its spirit and pretending Christ will bless the contradiction. Love sinners, yes. Witness to the lost, yes. Live faithfully among men, yes. But do not call friendship what God calls enmity. Come out from among them and be separate. Love not the world. Set your affection on things above. And remember that a church that wins the world by becoming like it has not won the world at all. It has only lost itself.

15 of 15: Truths Christians Forgot - Things Most Surely Believed

Introduction

One of the clearest signs that a church, a home, a ministry, or a believer is headed for collapse is not always some dramatic public scandal at the beginning. More often than not, the collapse starts quietly, with forgetting. Men do not usually wake up one morning and decide to become heretics, moral wrecks, compromisers, cowards, and spiritual drifters all in one move. They get there by degrees. They let go of what they once knew. They stop trembling at what God plainly said. They stop returning to the old truths that grounded them. They grow bored with the familiar, restless for the novel, impressed by the trendy, and vulnerable to whatever glittering thing floats past their eyes next. Then, before long, they are standing in a ditch they once preached against, wondering how they got there. Scripture has already answered the question. They forgot.

That is why the Christian life is not built on novelty, trends, emotional excitement, or spiritual entertainment. It is built on truths that must be firmly known, remembered, guarded, and lived. Luke wrote of "those things which are most surely believed among us" (Luke 1:1). Paul told Timothy, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of" (2 Timothy 3:14). Peter said, "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them" (2 Peter 1:12). Jude said believers were to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). The whole drift of Scripture pushes in the same direction. Return. Recall. Continue. Hold fast. Be mindful. Remember. Stand. The church does not need a new center. It needs to recover the old one. It does not need a fashionable spirit. It needs rootedness in truth.

This closing essay stands as the final trumpet blast of the whole series. We have walked through truths Christians forgot, truths about identity, holiness, the body, obedience, the law, leaven, judgment, self-examination, separation, reward, and eternal calling. But this last essay widens the lens and says the problem underneath all those failures is the same, forgetting what Scripture plainly said. Churches collapse when they forget. Homes unravel when they forget. Doctrine decays when men forget. Testimony weakens when saints forget. Courage dies when truth is no longer held in living remembrance. So this final charge is not merely to admire these truths or archive them in the mind. It is to go back to the old paths with conviction, courage, and holy remembrance, and to stay there when a wandering, novelty-addicted generation keeps trying to lure you off them.

1. Christianity Is Built on Things Most Surely Believed

Luke opens his Gospel by referring to “those things which are most surely believed among us” (Luke 1:1). That is a striking phrase. It means Christianity was never designed to be a fog bank of vague spirituality where men float around on impressions, preferences, and whatever happens to feel moving on a given day. It is built on definite truths, surely believed truths, anchored truths, truths not merely admired but settled. The faith did not begin as a loose spiritual atmosphere. It came with content. It came with doctrine. It came with truths preached, received, and held. The apostles were not running around the Roman Empire inviting men into a mystical mood. They were declaring truth and calling men to believe it.

That is exactly what the modern age cannot stand. This age loves spirituality without certainty, religion without authority, emotion without doctrine, and inspiration without conviction. It wants a Christianity fluid enough to move with culture, soft enough to avoid offense, and empty enough to be reshaped every decade by whatever trend happens to be roaring through the public square. But Luke did not write that way. Paul did not preach that way. Peter did not pastor that way. They dealt in things most surely believed. That means there are matters in Christianity that are not up for reinvention every generation. They are to be received, known, and held fast.

This is one reason so many believers are weak now. They have never really settled enough truth to stand on it when the winds blow. They have heard a hundred sermons, sampled a thousand opinions, and consumed endless religious content, but the number of things they “most surely believe” is frighteningly small. That leaves a man unstable. He cannot stand in testing if he has no settled center. He cannot resist falsehood if he has no fixed convictions. He cannot be bold if he is still negotiating in his own mind whether the old truths are truly worth holding. Christianity is built on things most surely believed, and a man who does not know what those things are is already halfway out the door.

2. God Commands Remembrance Because Forgetfulness Is a Real Danger

Peter says, “I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them” (2 Peter 1:12). That sentence ought to clear up a lot of nonsense in one stroke. The apostle knew they already knew the truths, and he still considered it his duty to remind them. Why? Because knowing a truth once is not the same as living in continual remembrance of it. The human heart leaks. The flesh drifts. The mind gets clouded by pressure, routine, lust, discouragement, worldly influence, and simple neglect. God commands remembrance because forgetfulness is not a minor inconvenience. It is a spiritual hazard.

That is one reason preaching must repeat itself on the great foundations of the faith. Men today often get restless with repetition. They want the new angle, the fresh insight, the hidden connection, the thing they never heard before. But the apostles were not driven by the lust for novelty. They were driven by the necessity of remembrance. Peter says again, “to stir you up by putting you in remembrance” (2 Peter 1:13). There is the purpose. Stir you up. Holy memory stirs the soul. It wakes it up. It keeps truths from sinking into the background like old wallpaper nobody notices anymore.

This is why forgetting is so serious. A believer does not usually leap into worldliness, compromise, doctrinal error, or practical defeat while actively trembling at the right truths. He falls because those truths moved from the front of the conscience to the back room. He forgot the fear of God. He forgot the body belongs to Christ. He forgot the race is real. He forgot the world is passing away. He forgot the judgment seat. He forgot the old man was crucified. He forgot that a little leaven spreads. Forgetting is never passive. It creates room for substitutes. And the second truth fades in practical memory, some counterfeit is ready to take its place.

3. Holding Fast Is Not Fanaticism but Survival

The New Testament repeatedly commands believers to hold fast because loose hands make easy prey. “Hold fast the form of sound words” (2 Timothy 1:13). “Hold fast that which thou hast” (Revelation 3:11). “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering” (Hebrews 10:23). That language is not accidental. Christianity is not a casual hobby where men can be relaxed about what they hold and still expect to stand. There is pressure in this world, doctrinal pressure, moral pressure, cultural pressure, emotional pressure, social pressure, and spiritual pressure. If a man does not hold fast, he will let go. And if he lets go of truth, he will not float upward. He will drift downward.

Modern people often hear strong language about holding fast and treat it like some kind of narrow fanaticism. But the Bible treats it like survival. The issue is not whether a believer

should be mean, quarrelsome, or self-righteous. The issue is whether he is going to cling to the truth when everything around him is trying to pry his fingers loose. A sailor in a storm does not apologize for holding the mast. A soldier in combat does not apologize for gripping his weapon. A saint in a collapsing age ought not apologize for holding fast the word of life. That is not fanaticism. That is sanity.

This is where many churches have failed their people. They trained them to appreciate truth but not to hold fast to it. They taught doctrine like interesting information rather than like the load-bearing framework of the Christian life. So when pressure came, the people had admiration without grip. They liked the truth, but they had not held it tightly enough to keep it when the age pulled hard. Holding fast must be restored as a Christian instinct. Not because God is insecure, but because men are weak and the age is seductive. Loose hands are dangerous hands.

4. Continuing in the Truth Is the Mark of Spiritual Seriousness

Paul tells Timothy, “Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of” (2 Timothy 3:14). There is a command for every generation. Continue. Not sample for a while and then move on. Not use truth as a launchpad into something more fashionable. Not flirt with the old paths until a trendier route appears. Continue.

Christianity is not proven by a burst of early excitement that fades into compromise. It is proven by abiding, enduring, remaining, and continuing in the truth over time. The man who continues has seriousness. The man who is always reinventing himself spiritually is often just unstable.

This is especially important in an age addicted to novelty. People now are trained to be bored quickly. They need constant stimulation, constant updates, constant fresh packaging, constant emotional movement. So they bring that same spirit into Christianity. They quickly grow restless with foundational truth, and once that restlessness sets in, they become vulnerable to every shiny theological gimmick, every trendy movement, every emotional fad, every new celebrity teacher, and every strange angle that promises to feel fresh. But Paul says continue. That means rootedness matters more than novelty. Depth matters more than excitement. Faithfulness matters more than freshness.

This is one reason older faithful saints are such a blessing when they are truly grounded in the Book. They are proof that continuation is possible. They show that a man can stay in the same truth for decades without becoming stale because truth itself is not stale. The flesh gets bored. Truth does not expire. The Christian who continues in what he has learned and been assured of becomes stable, usable, discerning, and dangerous to the kingdom of

darkness. Christians forgot that. They started treating consistency like lifelessness and novelty like life. But the New Testament puts honor on continuation.

5. Collapse Begins When Plain Truth Is Neglected

Most collapses do not begin when the building finally hits the ground. They begin when foundational things are neglected. That is true in bridges, homes, bodies, and churches. A roof cave-in gets attention, but the real trouble often began years earlier with quiet neglect. The same is true spiritually. Churches do not usually collapse first because they were too committed to plain truth. They collapse because they slowly neglected what Scripture plainly said. Homes do not usually unravel because everybody feared God too much. They unravel because truth was assumed, then sidelined, then forgotten. Testimony does not die because holiness was taken too seriously. It dies because little compromises were tolerated until the whole thing got weak.

That pattern runs all through Scripture. Israel forgot God and drifted into corruption. “My people hath forgotten me days without number” (Jeremiah 2:32). Ephesus left its first love before the candlestick was threatened. The Galatians moved from grace toward legal corruption because they were not holding the center. Corinth tolerated leaven because they stopped treating holiness seriously. Individuals do the same. A man begins to fall long before anyone sees the public crash. He first neglects prayer, then the word, then self-examination, then holy fear, then separation, then discipline, and by the time the outer collapse appears, the inner structure has already been weakening for a long time.

That is why plain truth must be kept near the center of life. Not admired in the abstract, but applied. Not quoted only when convenient, but obeyed. Not assumed merely because we once believed it, but remembered, rehearsed, and lived. The collapse of churches, homes, doctrine, and testimony usually begins when believers forget what Scripture plainly said. Not when they discover a more compelling truth, but when they neglect the one they already had. That is why this series matters. It is not merely a catalog of topics. It is a warning flare against the quiet beginnings of spiritual ruin.

6. The Old Paths Are Not Outdated, They Are the Safe Way Home

Jeremiah said, “Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein” (Jeremiah 6:16). That verse gets mocked now by people who think old automatically means obsolete. But the Bible does not speak that way. The old paths are not old because they are dead. They are old because they were laid down by God long before modern fools came along imagining they had invented a better route. Truth does not become weak because it has age. It becomes more proven. The old path is the tested path. The old path is the road saints have walked, martyrs have bled on, preachers have

thundered down, and faithful believers have followed safely through generations of madness.

The church desperately needs to recover love for the old paths because the present age is intoxicated with innovation. It thinks new is self-validating. It thinks age is a defect. But novelty has wrecked more churches than old-fashioned biblical faithfulness ever did. The old paths include reverence for Scripture, prayer, holiness, gospel preaching, doctrinal clarity, fear of God, separation from the world, discipline of body and mind, love of truth, and expectation of Christ's return. Those are not museum pieces. They are the good way. They are still the way home.

This does not mean Christians are chained to every human tradition that ever attached itself to religion. The old paths are not nostalgia. They are biblical rootedness. They are not a preference for old furniture or old technology. They are a refusal to abandon what God said for the sake of fashion. The old paths still protect the soul because God has not changed, sin has not changed, the devil has not changed, and the human heart has not changed. Christians forgot that. They grew embarrassed by the old paths and excited by the untested road. But most spiritual wrecks happen on roads God never told anybody to take.

7. Holy Remembrance Produces Conviction, Courage, and Stability

The point of all this remembering, holding fast, continuing, and returning is not mere mental storage. It is transformation in how a believer lives. Holy remembrance produces conviction because a remembered truth presses on the conscience in a way a forgotten truth cannot. It produces courage because a man standing on old certainties can endure the madness of an age that despises them. And it produces stability because memory anchored in the word keeps the soul from being tossed around by every spiritual gust that blows through town. "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14). There is the opposite of holy remembrance, spiritual childishness.

Conviction is what happens when truth is not merely stored but kept burning. Courage is what happens when that truth is loved more than man's approval. Stability is what happens when life is built on remembered truth rather than passing emotion. A church with holy remembrance will not need constant novelty to stay alive. A home with holy remembrance will not collapse the first time pressure rises. A believer with holy remembrance will not be easy prey for trends, false teachers, sensuality, worldly flattery, or spiritual laziness. He may still battle weakness, but he will have roots. Roots matter.

This is exactly what the church needs in a shaking age, not more amusement, not more branding, not more foggy spirituality, but conviction, courage, and stability born of holy

remembrance. The saints must remember what God said, hold it, continue in it, and live by it. That is how men stand when others drift. That is how churches stay clean when others rot. That is how families endure when the world around them is disintegrating. That is how testimony survives. Not by chasing the latest thing, but by remembering the old truths well enough to stake life on them.

Conclusion

The Christian life is not built on novelty, trends, emotional movement, or spiritual entertainment. It is built on things most surely believed, truths to be remembered, held fast, continued in, and obeyed. Scripture keeps pressing that burden because God knows what happens when men forget. Collapse begins quietly. Truth is neglected. Conscience dulls. Conviction weakens. Courage fades. And by the time the visible ruin appears, the inward forgetting has already been at work for a long while. That is why the apostles kept putting believers in remembrance. That is why Scripture says hold fast. That is why Paul told Timothy to continue.

This whole series has been one long alarm bell about truths Christians forgot. They forgot who they are in Christ. They forgot what happened at the cross. They forgot that sin enslaves, that leaven spreads, that the body belongs to Christ, that the world is enmity with God, that the race must be run, that self must be examined, that one flesh is sacred, that rewards are real, and that future calling should shape present conduct. But underneath all those particular failures lies one deeper issue, forgetting plain Scripture. That is where the rot begins. That is where the drift starts. That is where Satan gets a foothold, not always by introducing a dramatic lie immediately, but by encouraging neglect of a known truth.

So the final charge is this, go back to the old paths. Return to the Book. Let remembrance become holy discipline. Refuse the addiction to novelty. Hold fast what you know God said. Continue in the things you have learned and been assured of. Build your home there, your ministry there, your private life there, your convictions there, your courage there. The age may laugh, trends may shift, and compromise may get applause, but the old truths of God still stand. And the saints who remember them, live them, and refuse to let them go will still be standing when the noise of this present madness burns itself out.

Conclusion to the Series: Truths Christians Forgot

As we come to the end of *Truths Christians Forgot*, the great lesson standing over the whole series is painfully simple. The church does not usually fall apart because God stopped

speaking. It falls apart because men stop trembling at what He already said. The collapse of conviction, holiness, courage, doctrine, and testimony rarely begins with some dramatic denial shouted from the rooftop. More often it begins quietly, with neglect, with looseness, with boredom toward plain truth, with the slow drift of a heart that no longer keeps the word of God near the center of its life. That is how men lose their edge. That is how churches lose their power. That is how homes lose their order. That is how believers who once knew better begin living beneath what they profess to believe.

That is why the repeated biblical rebuke, “Know ye not?” carries such force. It is not merely a question. It is a divine exposure. It reveals that the problem is often not lack of access to truth, but failure to remember, believe, and obey truth already revealed. Paul was not dealing with total pagans in those passages. He was dealing with people who had heard enough to know better and still managed to live carnally, compromise morally, think loosely, tolerate corruption, and forget who they were in Christ. That is what makes the whole burden of this series so searching. It is not only asking whether Christians have Bibles. It is asking whether the Bible they claim to believe is actually governing their bodies, minds, habits, affections, priorities, and fears.

We have walked through truths about identity, holiness, discipline, reward, judgment, one flesh, the body belonging to Christ, separation from the world, self-examination, the spread of tolerated leaven, and the danger of false assurance. We have seen again that the believer is not his own, that the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, that sin enslaves what it is repeatedly obeyed, that the Christian life is a race to be run and not a recliner to sleep in, that worldliness is spiritual adultery, and that grace does not excuse unrighteousness but teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. We have seen that what is forgotten in doctrine eventually shows up in conduct, and what is neglected in truth eventually appears in weakness, compromise, and shame. The truths are all connected because truth is a structure, not a pile of disconnected stones.

If there is one central warning running through this entire series, it is this: nothing good comes from forgetting plain Scripture. The flesh always benefits when biblical memory weakens. The devil always gains ground when holy remembrance fades. The world always becomes more attractive when God’s warnings are no longer alive in the conscience. Men do not hold fast what they no longer value, and they do not value what they have allowed to become familiar without remaining precious. That is why so many churches are spiritually thin. They have not necessarily denied everything on paper, but they have forgotten things in practice. They have forgotten the fear of God, the seriousness of sin, the danger of compromise, the sacredness of the body, the reality of reward, and the necessity of standing separate from a Christ-hating world system.

But this conclusion is not meant to leave the reader in mere lamentation. It is meant to call him back. The whole point of remembrance in Scripture is recovery. God puts His people in remembrance because He is merciful. He commands them to hold fast because He knows drift is real. He tells them to continue in the things they have learned because He knows novelty is seductive and the old paths are easily despised by proud hearts. So the answer is not to sit around mourning the age while doing nothing. The answer is to return. Return to the Book. Return to the truths most surely believed. Return to holy fear. Return to self-examination. Return to disciplined obedience. Return to reverence for the body and the temple of God. Return to separation from the world. Return to the race with reward in view. Return to the old paths with enough conviction to stay there even when the age mocks you for it.

The church does not need more spiritual entertainment. It does not need more trend-chasing. It does not need more softened preaching designed to keep everyone comfortable while the leaven spreads. It needs men and women who remember. It needs believers who can no longer be satisfied with managing appearances while neglecting reality. It needs saints who know what they believe, why they believe it, and what those truths require in actual living. It needs Christians who do not merely admire holiness, but pursue it, not merely discuss separation, but practice it, not merely talk about reward, but run for it, not merely criticize the world, but refuse its friendship, and not merely quote Scripture, but let Scripture judge them first.

That is my burden in ending this series. I do not want these essays to sit as a collection of strong words that stirred the mind for a while and then faded into the background. I want them to remain as a call to holy remembrance. I want them to press on the conscience long after the reading is done. I want them to serve as a standing rebuke against laziness, compromise, false comfort, and religious acting. And I want them to remind every serious believer that Christianity is not a performance for men. It is a life lived before God under the claims of truth. The Lord is not impressed with how well we can talk around truth. He is looking at whether we remember it enough to obey it.

So let this be the final charge of *Truths Christians Forgot*: do not let plain truth slip into the background of your life. Do not grow casual with what God has made weighty. Do not let the old paths become boring simply because you have heard them often. Hold fast what you know God said. Continue in the things you have learned and been assured of. Stir up your mind by way of remembrance. And when this generation is running mad after every new thing, every compromise, every softening, every worldly imitation, and every flesh-pleasing substitute, be content to stand with the old truths of God and let them govern you. Because

when everything temporary is burned away, those truths will still be standing, and the saints who remembered them will be standing too.