

The Old Man and the New Man
Two Natures in One Saved Sinner

Series 1-10

By Paul Tackett

VerseQuest Ministries



The
Old Man and the **New Man**

Two Natures in One Saved Sinner

VERSEQUEST MINISTRIES



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The Old Man and the New Man — Two Natures in One Saved Sinner: Complete Bible Study Chart

The Old Man and the New Man

Two Natures in One Saved Sinner

Introduction

One of the first shocks awaiting a newly saved sinner is discovering that salvation did not make the old sinner disappear. A man trusts Jesus Christ, believes the gospel, receives eternal life, rejoices that his sins are forgiven, opens his Bible with a hunger he never possessed before, and then discovers something rather disturbing: Adam came home with him. The same flesh still knows how to lust. The same temper can still flare. Pride can still rise like it owns the building. Old habits still remember the address. Temptation did not receive the news that the man got saved and politely move to another county. Then the believer begins wondering what happened. “If I am saved, why do I still struggle like this?” The answer is not that salvation failed. The answer is that salvation gave the man something he never had before. God did not convert his flesh into spirit. He gave him a new birth. Now there are two opposing principles operating inside one saved man, and what once was a one-man dictatorship has become a civil war.

Jesus established the distinction before Paul ever explained its practical warfare: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). That verse ought to save a Christian about twenty years of confusion if he will simply believe it. Flesh is flesh. It does not become spirit through church attendance, baptism, confirmation, Bible college, religious discipline, Christian service, emotional experiences, or enough years spent carrying a King James Bible. The first birth gave a man what came from Adam. The second birth gives him life from God. The mistake begins when religion assumes God is in the business of fixing the first birth. He is not. God never looked at Adam and said, “There is some fine material here if we can just polish it.” His verdict was considerably less flattering. “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing” (Romans 7:18). God does not renovate what He has already sentenced to the cross.

That is why the doctrine of the old man and the new man is not some obscure theological side road for people who enjoy drawing charts. It explains the Christian life where the tires actually meet the pavement. Why can a saved man genuinely love the Bible and still feel temptation toward sin? Why can he delight in the things of God and five minutes later discover an appetite pulling in the opposite direction? Why can he pray sincerely in the morning and need to confess a rotten attitude before lunch? Why can somebody serve Christ faithfully for decades and still wreck his testimony if he begins trusting his flesh? Paul gives the answer without psychological fog: “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other” (Galatians

5:17). Contrary does not mean mildly different. It means opposition. There is no peace conference scheduled between Adam and the Holy Ghost. One of them wants the throne, and the other will never approve the arrangement.

The old man is everything connected with that fallen Adamic nature. He is corrupt according to deceitful lusts (Ephesians 4:22). He does not merely possess a few unfortunate habits that require modification. His whole direction is wrong. He wants self first, appetite satisfied, pride fed, revenge justified, lust excused, covetousness admired, and obedience postponed until circumstances become more convenient. He is also religious when religion suits him. Never make the mistake of thinking flesh only shows up in bars, brothels, casinos, and back alleys. Flesh can preach. Flesh can sing hymns. Flesh can quote verses. Flesh can argue doctrine. Flesh can carry a Bible so large it requires its own parking space. The Pharisees proved long ago that Adam looks just as comfortable wearing religion as rebellion, provided he gets to remain in charge. Religious flesh is still flesh. Putting a necktie on Adam does not convert him into Jesus Christ.

The new man is something altogether different. Paul says, “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Ephesians says the new man “after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:24). Created. That word matters. The new man is not the old man after rehabilitation. He is not repaired Adam. He is not flesh after graduating from Sunday school. God gives spiritual life connected with Jesus Christ. This is why salvation is so much greater than moral improvement. A lost man can clean up his language, stop drinking, pay his bills, become faithful to his wife, and turn into a respectable neighbor without ever being born again. Society may become better because of those changes, but heaven is not fooled into calling self-reformation regeneration. God does not save a sinner by teaching the corpse better manners. He gives life. Christianity begins where human improvement reaches the graveyard and discovers there is nothing left to polish.

Once those two natures are understood, Romans 7 stops looking like a theological embarrassment and starts reading like somebody turned the lights on in the believer’s own house. Paul says, “when I would do good, evil is present with me” (Romans 7:21). He delights “in the law of God after the inward man,” yet sees “another law” in his members warring against the law of his mind (Romans 7:22–23). That is the battlefield. Paul does not deny it, excuse it, decorate it, or pretend he has outgrown it. He drags the whole miserable conflict into the daylight and says, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24). Notice the question is “who.” Not what seminar. Not what rulebook. Not what emotional breakthrough. Not what religious technique. “Who.” The answer comes immediately: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord”

(Romans 7:25). Adam is not defeated by discovering a stronger version of Adam. The Christian's answer is Christ.

That does not mean the believer is permitted to shrug at sin and say, "Well, that is just my old nature." Paul never uses two natures as an alibi. Romans 6 says, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body" (Romans 6:12). Sin may be present, but it has no rightful crown. The Christian is told to reckon himself "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11). Reckoning is faith agreeing with what God already said. It means the old man does not get another trial every time temptation appears. God already passed sentence. The flesh is an excellent defense attorney when it is defending itself. Give Adam enough time and lust becomes love, pride becomes self-respect, covetousness becomes ambition, bitterness becomes discernment, rebellion becomes independence, and gossip becomes prayer concern. Romans 6 closes the courtroom before the defendant can rearrange the evidence. God spoke. Faith agrees. Obedience carries out the verdict.

The flesh also never gets better with age. That lesson becomes especially important for Christians who have served God for years. A young believer may know he is vulnerable because he has not yet accumulated enough victories to become impressed with himself. The dangerous point sometimes comes later, when Bible knowledge, ministry, experience, and yesterday's victories begin whispering, "You have matured beyond certain temptations." No, you have not. Flesh did not get saved when you did, and it has not been attending sanctification classes while you slept. David killed Goliath long before he committed adultery. Peter walked on water before he denied Christ. Paul still said, "in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" after years of apostolic ministry. Spiritual maturity is not reaching the place where the flesh becomes trustworthy. It is reaching the place where you finally believe God when He tells you it never will.

The practical Christian life therefore becomes a matter of feeding one direction while starving the other. Galatians says, "he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Galatians 6:8). That is spiritual agriculture, and a man does not need three degrees to understand it. Plant corn, get corn. Plant weeds, get weeds. Feed lust, resentment, envy, vanity, filthy entertainment, worldly thinking, pride, and selfish ambition, and do not act surprised when the old man comes to supper wearing a larger belt. Christians sometimes pray for God to weaken temptations they have been feeding breakfast, lunch, dinner, and dessert. Then they read fifteen hurried verses and wonder why apostolic spirituality did not break out before bedtime. God is not mocked. The field remembers what was planted in it.

The positive command is just as plain: “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). There is the secret that is not really a secret because God printed it in black and white. Walk. Not perform. Not pretend. Not produce religious theater. Not wait for mystical voices and goosebumps. Walk in the Spirit. Yield to Scripture. Obey revealed truth. Pray. Give thanks. Set the affection above. Refuse provision for the flesh. Let the word of Christ dwell richly. Serve somebody besides yourself. Keep Christ in the center where Adam desperately wants his own portrait hung. The Holy Ghost who inspired the Book never leads contrary to the Book He inspired. When somebody claims the Spirit led him to violate Scripture, the Spirit did not become confused; the man did.

Then Paul gets sanctification down into the closet and says, in effect, change clothes. “Put off concerning the former conversation the old man” and “put on the new man” (Ephesians 4:22, 24). Biblical holiness is not vague religious perfume sprayed over bad conduct. It reaches lying, stealing, anger, speech, bitterness, grudges, money, work, forgiveness, marriage, relationships, thoughts, and private conduct. Lying comes off; truth goes on. Theft comes off; honest labor and giving go on. Rotten speech comes off; edifying words go on. Bitterness and malice come off; kindness and forgiveness go on. Christianity is not an empty closet where God merely tells you what not to wear. Grace supplies conduct suitable to the new man. God does not save a man so he can spend the rest of his life proudly modeling Adam’s dirty clothes.

And then comes the great ending that gives the whole battle perspective: this war is temporary. The Christian will not carry the old nature through eternity. Romans 8 says we are waiting for “the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:23). First Corinthians 15 says, “We shall all be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51). This corruptible will put on incorruption. This mortal will put on immortality. The vile body will be fashioned like unto Christ’s glorious body (Philippians 3:21). The believer presently carries two opposing natures in one mortal body, but only one has an eternal future. Adam’s lease expires at the grave or the trumpet. Christ goes all the way into glory. One day there will be no flesh whispering from the basement, no lust demanding attention, no pride pushing for the throne, no bitterness asking to be reheated, no temptation requiring resistance, and no Romans 7 cry of frustration.

Until then, the orders are clear. Do not improve Adam; reckon him dead. Do not trust the flesh; keep it under. Do not feed what God told you to mortify. Do not confuse temptation with ownership. Do not mistake religious flesh for spirituality simply because it learned Christian vocabulary. Feed the new man. Walk in the Spirit. Put off the old garments. Put on the new. Keep the Bible open and Adam off the throne. The conflict may be real, but Christ has already settled who owns the house, and the trumpet will eventually settle who stays in

it. The old man and the new man are presently locked in war inside one saved sinner, but the outcome is not in doubt. One came from Adam and ends with mortality. The other is life in Christ and ends in glory.

1 of 10 — The Old Man and the New Man — The Civil War Inside Every Saved Sinner

Key Passage: “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” (Galatians 5:17)

The first surprise awaiting many newly saved sinners is that the old sinner showed up for breakfast the morning after salvation. They believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, received eternal life, rejoiced that their sins were forgiven, and then discovered that the flesh still knew every old address in town. That discovery has frightened Christians who were never taught what happened when they were born again. Salvation did not give Adam a religious tune-up. God did not take the old nature into a heavenly repair shop, change the oil, polish the pride, straighten the lust, and send it back with a church sticker on the bumper. Jesus said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). God did something infinitely greater than improving the old birth: He gave the believer another birth. The result is not one improved nature but a battlefield inside one redeemed man.

Galatians 5:17 was written to believers, not to lost men trying to become Christians by winning an internal wrestling match. Paul addresses the churches of Galatia, men who had received the Spirit by faith and were being troubled by teachers attempting to drag them back beneath the law. In that Church Age setting Paul states the matter without theological perfume: “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” Those two are not merely different opinions sitting politely across a conference table. The verse says they “are contrary the one to the other.” Contrary means war. The flesh does not merely misunderstand the Spirit; it opposes Him. The Spirit does not negotiate a peace treaty with the flesh; He opposes its desires. A saved sinner therefore contains a conflict that did not exist in the same manner before salvation. A new occupant has entered the house, and Adam has discovered that he no longer owns the deed.

Failure to understand this doctrine creates two opposite kinds of Christian misery. One believer sins, feels the conflict, and concludes that he must never have been saved because a saved person surely would not struggle like this. Another believer sins, learns to ignore conviction, and decides that grace means the struggle does not matter. Both have

missed the Book. The conflict is not permission to sin, and the conflict is not proof that salvation failed. It is evidence that two opposing principles are now present. Paul could say, “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man” while also confessing, “I see another law in my members” (Romans 7:22–23). Before salvation, Adam had the house to himself. After salvation, somebody moved in who loves what Adam hates. That is why the Christian life sometimes sounds less like a monastery garden and more like artillery at dawn.

1. Salvation Does Not Renovate Adam

The Bible’s verdict upon the flesh is considerably less flattering than modern religion’s opinion of human potential. Paul wrote, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing” (Romans 7:18). Notice that he did not say very little good, insufficient good, poorly developed good, or good needing encouragement. He said “no good thing.” That sentence ruins an impressive amount of religious merchandise. The flesh can become educated, cultured, disciplined, respectable, charitable, eloquent, and extremely religious, but none of those things changes its nature. A pig wearing a silk necktie may improve the atmosphere at the county fair, but the necktie has not changed the pig. Likewise, Adam can learn church manners without receiving spiritual life. God does not save the sinner by cultivating the best possibilities of fallen humanity. He saves him by joining him to Jesus Christ and imparting a life that natural birth never could produce.

This is why Scripture speaks of the “old man” in language associated with death, putting off, and crucifixion rather than rehabilitation. “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed” (Romans 6:6). God did not send the old man to finishing school; He put him on a cross. Ephesians says believers are to “put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Ephesians 4:22). Corrupt things do not need polishing. You do not put fresh paint on gangrene and call the patient healed. Yet religion continually attempts exactly that with the flesh. Give Adam some ceremonies, teach him religious vocabulary, put him on a committee, make him feel important, and everybody pretends the corpse has improved. The Bible is less sentimental. God has already rendered His verdict: the old man belongs in the place of death.

That truth explains why Christian maturity never gives a believer permission to trust his flesh. A man may have been saved forty years, memorized half the New Testament, preached thousands of sermons, endured trials faithfully, and won souls to Christ, yet his flesh remains flesh. Paul did not say, “In my flesh used to dwell no good thing before I became an apostle.” He spoke in the present tense. The old nature may be denied food, kept under subjection, and refused the throne, but it never receives a diploma announcing that Adam has finally graduated into Christ. A rattlesnake in a locked cage is still a

rattlesnake. The cage is useful, but nobody with biblical sense pets the thing because it behaved yesterday. The wise Christian learns the same lesson about himself. Spiritual growth does not mean discovering how trustworthy the flesh has become. It means finally believing God's testimony concerning how utterly untrustworthy it always was.

2. The New Birth Introduces a New Man

If salvation only forgave the sinner's record without imparting new life, Galatians 5:17 would have no battlefield to describe. But Jesus told Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). That second birth is not metaphorical decoration attached to church membership. The believer becomes "a new creature" in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Ephesians describes "the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24). There is the other side of the doctrine. The old man is corrupt; the new man is created after God. The old birth comes through Adam; the new life comes through Christ. The old nature gravitates toward sin because sin belongs to its family history. The new man delights in God because his life is connected with the One who is righteous. Salvation therefore produces something religion can never manufacture: a man possessing spiritual life where before there was spiritual death.

The new man is not merely the believer's improved attitude toward religion. Paul could say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Romans 7:22). Something within him now loved what his flesh resisted. That is more than turning over a new leaf; Adam has enough dead leaves already. The believer receives new desires, new appetites, new affections, and a new relationship to God because the Holy Ghost indwells him. Scripture that once seemed dull begins to feed him. Sin that once passed without protest now troubles his conscience. Christ, once merely a religious name, becomes precious. Prayer ceases to be ceremonial speech thrown toward the ceiling and becomes communion with a Father. None of that means the believer immediately becomes mature, knowledgeable, or victorious in every area. A newborn baby possesses real human life without possessing adult strength. New life is genuine before growth is complete.

This distinction also protects the believer from measuring his eternal standing by the daily temperature of his emotions. Some mornings he may feel ready to charge hell with a water pistol; by supper he can barely charge his telephone. Neither condition changes his position in Christ. The new man is not created by spiritual excitement and destroyed by discouragement. Eternal life is called eternal because God apparently understands the meaning of the word better than religious systems that redefine it every Sunday. "He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5:12). The Christian's assurance rests upon Christ and God's promise, not upon whether Adam behaved himself before lunch. Practical fellowship can be damaged. Joy can disappear. Chastening can come. Service can suffer terribly. But the

believer's new birth is not repeatedly issued and revoked according to the old nature's latest performance. God did not give probationary life. He gave eternal life.

3. Two Opposing Laws Meet in One Body

Romans 7 gives the believer an inspired view of the battle from inside the trenches. Paul says, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me" (Romans 7:21). Those words are devastating to anyone selling sinless perfection in a bottle. Paul wanted to do good, yet evil was present. He delighted in God's law after the inward man, yet saw "another law" in his members "warring against the law" of his mind (Romans 7:22-23). There is military vocabulary again. The Christian does not merely experience competing hobbies. There is war in his members. One principle says, obey God. Another says, please self. One says, forgive. The other keeps an accountant's ledger of every insult since 1987. One says, pray. The other suddenly remembers seventeen chores that absolutely must be done the instant the Bible opens. Adam becomes remarkably productive whenever spiritual business begins.

Paul's language must not be twisted into an excuse for sin. He says, "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Romans 7:17), but he is distinguishing the inward man from indwelling sin, not passing responsibility to an imaginary roommate. The same apostle commanded believers not to let sin reign in their mortal body (Romans 6:12). The distinction identifies the enemy so the Christian can fight intelligently. If a soldier cannot tell his own uniform from the enemy's, the battle becomes confusion with ammunition. Scripture tells the believer exactly what belongs to Adam and what belongs to Christ. Lust, pride, wrath, covetousness, deceit, bitterness, uncleanness, and selfishness are not mysterious personality traits needing admiration. They belong to the flesh. Truth, righteousness, charity, humility, forgiveness, purity, and obedience are consistent with the life God has given in Christ. Call the enemy by his biblical name.

The lost man certainly possesses conscience, moral awareness, and the ability to perform outwardly decent acts, but he does not possess the regenerated inward man created through the new birth. That distinction matters. Human society can restrain evil without regenerating sinners. A lost man may be loyal to his wife, generous to neighbors, brave in danger, and honest in business, and Christians should not deny obvious facts merely to sound doctrinal. But natural virtue is not spiritual birth. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:8). The fundamental relationship remains unchanged until the sinner is born again. When salvation occurs, the battle takes on an entirely different character because there is now spiritual life opposing the sinful nature. Before salvation, Adam may argue with conscience. After salvation, Adam has another problem altogether:

the Holy Ghost has moved into the premises, and He did not come to serve as Adam's chaplain.

4. The Flesh and the Spirit Want Opposite Things

Galatians 5:17 states that "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." The word "lusteth" deals with desire, and the verse shows opposing desires pulling in contrary directions. The flesh wants satisfaction without submission. It wants appetite without restraint, pleasure without holiness, recognition without humility, possessions without contentment, authority without service, and religion without a cross. The Spirit leads in the opposite direction. He magnifies Christ, produces holiness, opens the understanding to Scripture, and directs the believer away from self-rule. This is why the Christian often knows exactly what God says while simultaneously feeling resistance toward doing it. The problem is not that Scripture needs another translation, a seminar, and twelve experts around a round table. Often the flesh understood the command perfectly the first time. It simply voted no. Adam's favorite Bible difficulty is the verse that interferes with what Adam already planned to do.

The surrounding context makes the contrast unmistakable. Paul names "the works of the flesh" in Galatians 5:19–21: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. Then comes "the fruit of the Spirit": love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Galatians 5:22–23). God apparently did not receive the modern memo explaining that sin becomes harmless once somebody attaches a clinical label to it. Hatred is hatred. Wrath is wrath. Drunkenness is drunkenness. The Book does not pet the flesh and ask about its childhood before identifying its works. Neither does Scripture merely condemn; it shows what the Spirit produces when the believer yields to God. The difference between the two lists is the difference between Adam running loose and the Spirit governing the life.

This explains why Christian liberty can never mean liberty for the flesh. Paul tells these same Galatians, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh" (Galatians 5:13). Grace releases the believer from the law as a system of justification; it does not hand Adam a hall pass. The flesh loves to turn liberty into license because the flesh can corrupt anything placed in its hands. Give it legalism and it becomes proud of rules. Give it grace and it becomes proud of breaking them. Adam can make a racket out of either side of the street. Biblical liberty means freedom to serve God without attempting to earn a salvation Christ already purchased. The new man does not ask, "How much sin can I commit and remain saved?" He asks why a redeemed man would volunteer to carry the chains from which Christ set him free.

5. The Battle Is Not Evidence That Salvation Failed

Many sincere Christians have been tormented because nobody taught them that spiritual warfare within is expected. They imagined that real salvation would remove every sinful impulse, and therefore every temptation became evidence against their conversion. Scripture teaches the opposite. Galatians 5:17 is addressed to people who have the Spirit; the conflict exists precisely because the Spirit is present. A corpse does not fight the undertaker. Where there is new life, there is resistance to what once ruled without challenge. The believer who hates his sin, grieves over failure, longs to obey God, and experiences the inward conflict should not conclude that the existence of the old nature disproves the new birth. The war does not save him, and feelings do not certify salvation, but the doctrine explains why saved people experience conflict. The Christian is not surprised that enemy fire continues simply because the flag over headquarters has changed.

Neither should the doctrine be abused to create endless introspection. Some Christians spend so much time examining themselves that they eventually become spiritual pathologists conducting an autopsy on a man who is still breathing. Assurance comes from believing God's testimony concerning His Son. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). The object of saving faith is Christ, not the believer's ability to produce a satisfactory report about himself every evening. Certainly Scripture commands self-examination in its proper contexts, and sin must be confessed and forsaken in the believer's walk. But salvation rests on the finished work of Jesus Christ. The flesh would love nothing better than to move the Christian's eyes from Christ to himself, even if the excuse is spirituality. Pride says, "Look how good I am." Despair says, "Look how bad I am." Faith says, "Look unto Jesus."

The doctrine also destroys the counterfeit promise of sinless perfection. John wrote to believers, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 John 1:8). That is unusually clear language, which means somebody will naturally build a religious system explaining why it cannot possibly mean what it says. The presence of sin is not an excuse to tolerate sin; John immediately discusses confession and cleansing. But claiming the old nature has disappeared is self-deception. A man can reach a stage where he has redefined his sins so skillfully that he no longer recognizes them. Pride becomes conviction. Harshness becomes boldness. Envy becomes concern. Bitterness becomes discernment. The flesh enjoys changing labels on poison bottles. The mature believer does not proclaim that the enemy has ceased to exist. He learns the enemy's tactics, keeps his powder dry, and refuses to confuse temporary victory with permanent disarmament.

6. Victory Comes by Yielding, Not by Improving the Flesh

Romans 6 gives the believer practical instructions for dealing with the old nature: “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11). Reckoning means taking God’s declared position seriously. The Christian does not wait until the flesh feels dead. Dead men are notoriously poor emotional witnesses anyway. He believes what God says concerning his identification with Christ and refuses to grant sin the right to reign. Paul continues, “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God” (Romans 6:13). There is the practical issue: yielding. The same hands can serve sin or serve God. The same tongue can bless or corrupt. The same mind can dwell on filth or Scripture. The believer is not commanded to make Adam spiritual. He is commanded to stop handing Adam the keys.

Galatians gives the corresponding command: “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). Notice what the verse does not say. It does not say eliminate the flesh and then walk in the Spirit. It does not say spend all day staring at the flesh until it becomes discouraged and leaves. The positive command governs the negative result. Walk in the Spirit, and the lust of the flesh is not fulfilled. A man walking north is necessarily moving away from south. The Christian occupied with Christ, filled with Scripture, prayerful, obedient, thankful, serving, and responsive to conviction is not becoming sinless; he is walking in a direction contrary to the flesh. Too many believers attempt to fight darkness with a flyswatter when God told them to turn on the light. The answer to Adam is not fascination with Adam. It is yielded occupation with Christ.

That walking must remain biblical rather than mystical. The Holy Spirit never leads contrary to the words He inspired. Being “led of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:18) does not mean receiving private commandments that conveniently agree with every desire already sitting in the heart. The Spirit does not tell a Christian to violate Scripture and then stamp divine approval on the rebellion. He is the Spirit of truth. He magnifies Christ and produces fruit consistent with holiness. A believer claiming spiritual leadership while ignoring plain biblical commands is not operating on a higher plane; he is simply giving the flesh a religious microphone. Adam loves supernatural-sounding excuses because “God told me” can end a conversation faster than “I wanted to.” Test spiritual claims by the Book. The Spirit who authored Scripture has no identity crisis. He will not contradict Himself merely to make somebody’s personal preference feel prophetic.

7. The Christian Must Know Which Man He Is Feeding

Although the new man possesses divine life, Christian growth is not automatic. Scripture repeatedly commands believers concerning what they set before their minds, what they put off, what they put on, where they walk, and whom they yield to. Galatians says,

“whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7). “He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption” (Galatians 6:8). The principle is painfully simple. Feed the flesh and do not act astonished when it grows noisy. A believer cannot spend hours drinking the world’s filth through his eyes, feeding resentment through his thoughts, indulging covetousness, entertaining lust, and cultivating pride, then wonder why ten hurried minutes in Scripture do not transform him into the apostle Paul before breakfast. Spiritual agriculture still works. You harvest from the field where you planted the seed, not from the field you admired through the fence.

Feeding the new man means giving priority to what accords with the life of Christ: Scripture, prayer, sound doctrine, thanksgiving, obedience, fellowship, service, purity, and thoughts brought under biblical authority. Colossians tells believers to “set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2). It later commands, “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man” (Colossians 3:9–10). Doctrine enters shoe leather. If the old man lies, speak truth. If the old man steals, work and give. If the old man hates, forgive. If the old man inflames lust, flee youthful lusts. Christianity is not merely agreeing with a chart concerning two natures. The doctrine becomes valuable when the believer recognizes whose fingerprints are on the temptation and refuses to let the old thief back into the safe.

This daily warfare requires vigilance precisely because yesterday’s victory does not guarantee today’s conduct. David defeated Goliath and later committed adultery. Peter confessed Christ magnificently and later denied Him miserably. Biblical records do not exist so Christians can sneer at fallen men from padded pews; they warn every believer what flesh can do when given opportunity. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12). Confidence in Christ is strength. Confidence in flesh is leaving the front door unlocked because the burglar promised to behave. The safest Christian is not the man boasting that certain sins could never touch him. It is the man who believes God’s estimate of the flesh and keeps close to Christ. Adam does not retire. He waits. Give him a crack in the door and he will arrive carrying luggage.

Conclusion

The civil war inside the saved sinner is therefore neither a theological curiosity nor a convenient excuse for bad behavior. It is a basic fact of Christian experience explained by Scripture. The believer has an old man identified with fallen Adam and a new man created in righteousness and true holiness. The flesh and the Spirit are contrary one to the other. Romans 7 describes the conflict; Romans 6 explains the believer’s identification with Christ; Galatians 5 commands the walk that refuses the flesh its dominion; Ephesians and Colossians describe putting off the old man and putting on the new. Once these passages

are allowed to say what they say, much religious confusion evaporates. God never promised to make Adam cooperative. He provided something better: new life in Christ. The Christian's assignment is not to negotiate peace between the two sides. God has already announced which side belongs on the throne.

This truth brings both humility and hope. Humility comes from knowing that no amount of Christian experience makes the flesh worthy of trust. Hope comes from knowing that the believer is not condemned to fight in his own strength or secure his own eternal standing. He belongs to Christ. The Holy Ghost indwells him. The word of God instructs him. Grace teaches him. He can reckon himself dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ. When he falls, the answer is not to baptize the failure in psychological vocabulary, pretend the sin was harmless, or conclude that Christ's blood suddenly lost its value. The answer is to agree with God about the sin, confess it, receive the cleansing God provides for fellowship, get back on his feet, and walk in the Spirit. Grace does not teach a Christian how to excuse Adam. Grace teaches him why Adam has no business ruling anymore.

One day this war will end, but it will not end because the old man finally signs a surrender agreement. The believer awaits the redemption of the body. "We shall all be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51). Until then, flesh remains flesh, the Spirit remains contrary to it, and the Christian must keep the biblical lines clear. Do not make peace with what God told you to mortify. Do not trust what God told you was corrupt. Do not feed what God told you would reap corruption. And do not despair merely because you hear gunfire from the battlefield. The presence of conflict does not mean Christ abandoned the fort. It means the old occupant has not yet stopped resisting the new government. Feed the new man. Starve the old. Yield to God. Walk in the Spirit. Keep your eyes on Christ. Adam may still rattle the doorknob, but he no longer owns the house.

2 of 10 — The Old Man and the New Man — God Never Tried to Improve the Old Man

Key Passage: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Romans 6:6)

Religion has spent centuries working on a project God never authorized: the improvement of Adam. Men have baptized him, educated him, confirmed him, dressed him in robes, put him behind pulpits, sent him to seminaries, taught him liturgies, enrolled him in accountability groups, and handed him enough religious vocabulary to make him sound like he was raised in the third heaven. After all that labor, Adam is still Adam. Jesus settled the matter in one sentence: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6). Flesh does

not gradually become spirit because it attended enough services. The first birth produces flesh, and the second birth produces spiritual life. God knows the difference even when religion does not. Salvation is not heaven teaching the old nature better manners. Salvation is God imparting a new life because the old one was beyond improvement. God never sent Jesus Christ to Calvary to give Adam a personality adjustment. He sent Him there because death was the only proper verdict.

Romans 6:6 makes God's opinion of the old man unmistakable: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him." There is no rehabilitation program in that verse. There is a cross. God did not announce that the old man needed encouragement, deeper self-understanding, improved circumstances, or a better support structure. He crucified him with Christ. The cross is not a cosmetic procedure. Nobody hangs a man on a cross because he needs improvement. Crucifixion is God's declaration that the thing occupying that cross has no rightful future. The believer's old man is judicially identified with Christ's death so "that henceforth we should not serve sin." That does not mean the flesh has vanished from the believer's mortal body; Romans 6 itself commands the Christian not to let sin reign. It means God has broken sin's claim to mastery. Adam may still shout orders from the basement, but Calvary cancelled his authority to own the house.

The great practical mistake begins when a Christian starts hoping his flesh will eventually become dependable. He imagines that enough Bible reading, church attendance, prayer, discipline, fasting, service, and years of Christian experience will somehow convert the old nature into a respectable assistant. Those things are valuable when the believer walks in the Spirit, but none of them changes what flesh is. Paul wrote as a mature apostle, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18). He had not discovered an immature patch in an otherwise promising nature. He had discovered God's verdict. The flesh may learn to quote Romans 7 while still acting like Romans 1. It may carry a King James Bible under one arm while carrying pride under the other. The old man can become religious without becoming righteous. That is precisely why God did not try to improve him. God crucified him.

1. God's Verdict on Adam Was Death

The trouble began with Adam, and Scripture never treats the Adamic nature as a damaged treasure waiting to be restored. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Romans 5:12). Adam did not merely introduce a few unfortunate habits into human civilization. Sin entered, and death followed it. Every natural descendant of Adam enters the world connected with a fallen head. That is why 1 Corinthians 15:22 says, "For as in Adam all die." Modern man flatters himself with talk about human progress, but God traces the family tree back to a sinner hiding among trees because he had just disobeyed

his Creator. That is not an encouraging pedigree. Civilization can build skyscrapers, split atoms, operate machines, and communicate around the planet in seconds, yet Adam still lies, lusts, envies, murders, steals, boasts, and rebels. Technology improved. The sinner operating it did not.

When God looks at fallen flesh, He does not discover a dormant spiritual potential needing cultivation. Romans 8:7 says, “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God.” Not merely ignorant of God. Not simply confused about God. “Enmity against God.” The next verse adds, “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:8). That is stronger language than modern religion prefers because modern religion makes a living convincing Adam that he is almost acceptable already. Give him a little polishing, a few inspirational sayings, a charitable project, and perhaps a bumper sticker, and surely heaven will be impressed. Scripture takes the opposite route. The natural man does not need spiritual decoration; he needs life from God. A coffin covered in flowers remains a coffin. Religion can make death look presentable enough for a funeral, but only God can give life.

That explains why the cross stands at the center of Christianity rather than a classroom devoted to human improvement. Christ died for sinners because sin required judgment. Romans 6 then teaches that the believer is identified with Christ in that death: “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death” (Romans 6:4). The context is not teaching that water improves Adam. The passage concerns the believer’s spiritual identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. The old man is crucified; the believer is to walk “in newness of life.” God did not drag Adam through Calvary and then tell Christians to spend the rest of their lives polishing the corpse. The very structure of the passage moves from death to new life. Christianity is not Adam reaching his highest potential. Christianity is Christ becoming the believer’s life after God has already pronounced judgment upon what belonged to Adam.

2. Flesh Cannot Be Educated Into Holiness

Education can teach the flesh facts, manners, vocabulary, trades, sciences, music, history, and theology, but education cannot change its nature. An educated sinner may commit more sophisticated sins, but sophistication is not sanctification. Paul warned that “knowledge puffeth up” (1 Corinthians 8:1). Knowledge is useful, but Adam can turn Bible knowledge itself into fertilizer for pride. A man can explain dispensations accurately and still be unbearable at home. He can define justification while refusing to forgive somebody. He can win an argument about grace while displaying none. He can know the order of the books in the Bible and still have his priorities in the wrong order. Information placed into the flesh does not sanctify the flesh. A thief who learns mathematics may simply become

better at counting what he stole. Education enlarges ability; it does not regenerate nature. Only the new birth makes a man spiritually alive.

Discipline cannot transform the old man either. Paul certainly practiced discipline, saying, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection” (1 Corinthians 9:27). Notice his language. He did not say that he improved his body until it became a spiritual partner. He kept it under. He brought it into subjection. That is the language of government, not rehabilitation. Discipline is valuable precisely because the flesh remains dangerous. A fence around a bull does not convert the bull into a lamb; it keeps the bull where he belongs. Christian discipline functions similarly. The believer may regulate his eating, sleep, entertainment, schedule, speech, finances, and habits, and he should. But the moment he concludes that discipline has made his flesh trustworthy, pride has already picked the lock. A chained dog may look peaceful, but only a fool confuses the chain with a change of nature.

Neither can fear permanently sanctify the flesh. A man may alter his conduct because he fears consequences, embarrassment, illness, financial loss, exposure, punishment, or public disgrace. Restraint can be useful, but restraint is not regeneration. Israel repeatedly demonstrated how quickly fear evaporates when the immediate pressure disappears. Pharaoh cried for relief during the plagues and hardened his heart when relief came. Human nature has not improved since Egypt. Many men become deeply spiritual when consequences are knocking on the front door and amazingly independent when the danger passes. The flesh can promise reform while thunder is overhead and forget the promise under blue skies. God therefore does not base salvation on frightening Adam into permanent obedience. “The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance” (Romans 2:4), and salvation brings a new birth. Fear may make Adam duck. Only God can make a sinner alive.

3. Calvary Was a Crucifixion, Not a Renovation Project

Romans 6:6 deliberately uses the word “crucified.” That word should control the doctrine. When Christ went to Calvary, God dealt judicially with sin in a way that leaves no room for sentimental notions about repairing fallen nature. Galatians 2:20 says, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” The Christian life begins with a death sentence already carried out in his identification with Christ. Paul does not present Christianity as the old “I” receiving moral improvements until it resembles Jesus. He says, “Christ liveth in me.” That is the great exchange of Christian experience: not Adam becoming admirable, but Christ becoming central. The flesh would rather receive a medal for improvement than accept a cross, because flesh enjoys religion as long as religion leaves flesh on the throne. Calvary does not leave it there.

Galatians 5:24 states, “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” Again the biblical answer is not to improve the lusts until they become respectable desires. The flesh and its affections belong in the place of denial and death. Colossians uses similarly severe language: “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth” (Colossians 3:5). Mortify means put to death. Scripture sounds remarkably untherapeutic at this point because God is not confused about the enemy. The Bible does not tell the believer to enter negotiations with fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness. It does not schedule mediation. It says mortify. Sin is not a misunderstood tenant needing better communication skills. It is an intruder that must not be permitted to rule. God’s treatment of the old nature is severe because sin is severe.

The cross therefore becomes the place where Christian pride loses its bragging rights. If the old man could be improved enough to satisfy God, Calvary was unnecessary. If education, religion, morality, law, ceremony, or human determination could turn Adam into what God required, then Christ died for a problem mankind could solve with enough effort. Paul rejects that conclusion when he says, “for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” (Galatians 2:21). The cross announces that human merit reached bankruptcy. Man’s righteousness cannot save him, and man’s flesh cannot sanctify itself. Calvary is God closing the account on Adam and opening the believer’s life in Christ. The flesh hates that arrangement because there is nothing left to boast about. God designed salvation that way intentionally. At the foot of the cross, every trophy Adam brought with him becomes scrap metal.

4. Religious Flesh Is Still Flesh

The most deceptive form of flesh is religious flesh because it has learned how to behave in the sanctuary. Ordinary flesh curses, drinks, boasts, lusts, and fights, so everybody recognizes it. Religious flesh carries a Bible, lowers its voice, says “brother,” and may know when to shout “Amen.” It has simply exchanged camouflage. Jesus confronted men who appeared outwardly righteous while inwardly remaining corrupt. He told the Pharisees they were like “whited sepulchres” which “appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones” (Matthew 23:27). That was not Church Age doctrine concerning the two natures, but the illustration perfectly exposes religious hypocrisy. White paint does not resurrect bones. External religion can make corruption look respectable without changing what lies beneath. Adam looks especially dangerous when he learns to wear church clothes.

The flesh can preach. The flesh can sing. The flesh can teach Sunday school, chair a committee, build a ministry, collect degrees, debate doctrine, give large offerings, and pray

impressive public prayers. First Corinthians 13 warns that a man could speak “with the tongues of men and of angels,” understand mysteries, possess knowledge, exercise remarkable faith, distribute his goods, and even give his body to be burned, yet lack charity. Religious activity by itself is not proof that flesh has become spiritual. Adam likes platforms because platforms attract attention, and attention is one of his favorite foods. A man can preach against pride while feeding his own between every sentence. He can condemn compromise because being known as uncompromising makes him feel important. The flesh can use truth as a mirror for everybody except itself. Religious flesh is not less flesh; it is flesh that learned where the hymnbooks are kept.

That is why some of the ugliest failures occur among people who once appeared spiritually strong. The problem was never that Scripture failed. The problem was that somebody began trusting flesh because flesh had behaved well in public for a while. Proverbs says, “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18). The man who imagines himself beyond certain temptations has already become vulnerable to them. Peter boasted, “Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended” (Matthew 26:33). Within hours he denied the Lord three times. His confidence was sincere, courageous, and completely misplaced. Sincerity does not sanctify self-confidence. A Christian standing closest to the edge is often the one announcing how impossible it would be for him to fall. Adam loves a microphone almost as much as he loves a cliff.

5. Self-Reformation Cannot Produce the New Man

Human beings naturally prefer reformation because reformation leaves them in control. A man can decide to clean himself up, abandon certain habits, become more respectable, join a church, read religious books, and surround himself with better influences. Many of those changes may improve his earthly life, but none constitutes the new birth. Jesus did not tell Nicodemus, a highly religious ruler of the Jews, that he needed to become twenty percent more devout. He said, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Nicodemus already possessed religion, morality, Scripture knowledge, social standing, and discipline. Christ went beneath all of it and touched the root: first birth was insufficient. Adam cannot reform himself into the family of God. You can wash a stray dog, put a collar on him, and teach him to sit in the living room, but you have not changed his ancestry.

This is why salvation by grace cuts directly across man’s instinct for self-improvement. Ephesians 2:8–9 says, “For by grace are ye saved through faith,” and then excludes boasting: “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Adam desperately wants a receipt showing what he contributed. Give him one percent and he will talk as though he financed

Calvary. Grace gives him nothing to boast about because Christ did the saving. The sinner receives salvation by faith. After salvation, good works have their proper place, for verse 10 says believers are “created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” Notice the order. Works follow the new creation; they do not produce it. Fruit grows because life is present. Taping apples onto a dead tree may impress somebody from across the yard, but the first strong wind will expose the horticultural fraud. Spiritual fruit requires spiritual life.

The same principle governs sanctification. The believer does not grow by teaching the old man how to imitate the new man. He grows by walking according to the new life God has supplied. Ephesians 4 says, “put off concerning the former conversation the old man” and “put on the new man” (Ephesians 4:22, 24). Scripture does not say polish up the old man until God stops noticing the difference. The believer must learn to identify conduct belonging to the former conversation and reject it. Lying goes off; truth goes on. Stealing goes off; honest labor and giving go on. Corrupt communication goes off; edifying speech goes on. Bitterness and wrath go off; kindness and forgiveness go on. Biblical sanctification is practical because doctrine eventually reaches the tongue, wallet, temper, schedule, home, and private life. If doctrine never reaches conduct, Adam has merely collected information.

6. The Old Man Must Be Denied the Throne

Romans 6 moves from the believer’s position to the believer’s practice. “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Romans 6:12). Sin can still issue demands, but the believer is commanded not to let it reign. That distinction matters. Temptation is not kingship unless the Christian yields the crown. The old nature may knock, shout, threaten, flatter, argue, and produce a list of reasons why obedience can wait until tomorrow, but none of those noises gives it rightful authority. Adam is a deposed dictator who still owns a loudspeaker. Too many Christians hear the loudspeaker and assume the dictator has been legally restored. God says otherwise. “Sin shall not have dominion over you” (Romans 6:14). The command is not to pretend sin is absent but to refuse its claim to rule.

Paul follows with the language of yielding: “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God” (Romans 6:13). The battle becomes intensely practical there. Your eyes are members. Your hands are members. Your tongue is a member. Your feet are members. Your mind belongs to the life you are living before God. The flesh requires instruments through which to act. Lust wants eyes. Gossip wants a tongue. Theft wants hands. Pride wants an audience. Bitterness wants memory continually rehearsing old injuries. Stop supplying the equipment. A criminal without access to the getaway car has a harder afternoon. The Christian does not need to wonder

mysteriously why certain sins remain strong while constantly yielding the instruments those sins require. God's method is plain: do not yield to sin. Yield to God.

Reckoning is equally important. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11). Reckoning is faith agreeing with God's accounting. The believer does not ask the flesh whether it feels crucified, because flesh will provide an opinion before the question is finished. He accepts God's statement concerning his identification with Christ and orders his conduct accordingly. Feelings are poor accountants. God keeps the books correctly. When temptation says, "You must obey me," faith answers, "You have no rightful dominion." When pride says, "You deserve the throne," faith points to Calvary. When lust says, "This is who you really are," faith answers that the believer's life is in Christ. The flesh thrives when Christians treat its demands as commands. Romans 6 teaches them to treat those demands as mutiny.

7. God's Answer to Adam Is Christ

The positive side of the doctrine must never be lost. Christianity is not merely a lifelong campaign of saying no to flesh. It is a life of saying yes to God because Christ has become the believer's life. Colossians 3:3–4 says, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear." There is the great answer. Not improved Adam—Christ. Not glorified self—Christ. Not self-esteem with Bible verses attached—Christ. The believer's resources are found in his union with the risen Lord. Paul wrote, "For to me to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21). That sentence leaves very little room on the throne for anybody else. The old man asks, "What do I want?" The Christian life asks, "What honors Christ?" Those questions lead down opposite roads even when they begin at the same intersection.

Walking in the Spirit is therefore not an exotic religious experience but the practical alternative to fulfilling the lust of the flesh. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). The verse does not say spend twenty years improving the flesh until it quits lusting. It says walk somewhere else. A man who is walking east cannot simultaneously walk west. The believer occupied with Scripture, prayer, obedience, thanksgiving, service, worship, and fellowship with Christ is moving contrary to the old nature. That does not eliminate temptation, but it changes who receives the believer's cooperation. The Spirit does not need the flesh's permission to produce fruit. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance come from the Spirit, not from Adam finally taking a correspondence course in holiness.

The practical goal is therefore not to reach a day when the Christian announces, “I have finally fixed myself.” That sentence would prove the opposite. Spiritual maturity increasingly distrusts flesh and increasingly depends upon Christ. John the Baptist said, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). The doctrinal setting of that statement belongs to John’s ministry and Christ’s public manifestation to Israel, but the principle rings with obvious devotional force: Christ deserves the prominence. The believer does not need a larger throne for himself with Jesus sitting nearby as adviser. He needs Christ ruling and self denied. The old man will never volunteer for demotion, which is why Scripture says, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself” (Luke 9:23). Adam’s greatest ambition is self-rule. Christian obedience begins where that ambition is refused.

The tragedy of much religious effort is that men spend decades asking God to bless what He already sentenced to death. They want Him to make the old man respectable, admirable, safe, manageable, and spiritually useful. God’s answer remains Romans 6:6: “our old man is crucified with him.” The cross is heaven’s permanent editorial comment on human flesh. It says Adam is not the solution. It says self cannot save itself. It says sin deserves judgment. It says Christ alone supplies the life God accepts. Once that truth settles into the Christian’s thinking, a tremendous amount of confusion disappears. He stops being shocked that the flesh behaves like flesh. He stops bargaining with it as though one more religious seminar might straighten it out. He starts treating it according to Scripture: deny it, refuse it, mortify its deeds, reckon it dead, and yield to God.

This doctrine also protects the believer from both arrogance and despair. Arrogance dies because there is no room to boast in flesh God has condemned. Despair loses its argument because victory does not depend upon rehabilitating what God said could never be trusted. When the Christian fails, he does not need to invent a softer name for sin or conclude that Christ has failed him. He confesses the sin, receives cleansing in fellowship according to 1 John 1:9, learns from the defeat, and gets back under the authority of Scripture. When he succeeds, he does not pin a medal on Adam. He gives God the glory. Flesh wants credit for victory and sympathy for defeat. The Bible gives it neither. God gets the glory, sin gets the blame, and the believer keeps walking. That arrangement is wonderfully offensive to pride and wonderfully healthy for Christian living.

So quit expecting Adam to become Jesus. Quit asking the flesh for spiritual cooperation. Quit measuring maturity by how respectable the old nature can appear under favorable conditions. God never tried to improve the old man, and the Christian wastes years whenever he attempts what God refused to do. Believe the verdict. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh” (John 3:6). Believe the sentence. “Our old man is crucified with him” (Romans 6:6). Believe the new position. “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead

indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11). Adam does not need a fresh coat of paint. He needs the cross. The believer does not need a better version of Adam. He has Christ. Once that becomes settled doctrine, the throne stops looking like a rehabilitation chair and starts looking like what it always was meant to be—the rightful place of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 of 10 — The Old Man and the New Man — The New Man Is a New Creation, Not a Repaired Adam

Key Passage: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Second Corinthians 5:17 does not say that if any man be in Christ he becomes an improved creature. It does not say God takes the old sinner, scrubs him down, straightens his habits, gives him a religious vocabulary, and sends him back into the world with a cleaner shirt. The verse says, “he is a new creature.” That is not renovation language; that is creation language. When God saves a sinner, He does something no school, church, ceremony, government, psychiatrist, philosopher, moral code, or human discipline can accomplish. He gives spiritual life where there was spiritual death. The sinner is placed “in Christ,” and that little expression is one of the richest doctrinal statements in the New Testament. Christianity is not Adam getting a ladder tall enough to reach heaven. Christianity is God placing a believing sinner into Christ and giving him a standing Adam could never earn, manufacture, or imitate.

That distinction matters because Christians often spend years trying to measure eternal truth by the fluctuating condition of their flesh. One morning the Bible seems alive, prayer comes easily, temptation is resisted, and the believer begins to think he has finally reached spiritual adulthood. Three days later he loses his temper, entertains a sinful thought, neglects prayer, or says something foolish, and suddenly he wonders whether God abandoned him overnight. Both conclusions are built on the same error: staring at Adam instead of believing God. The flesh is a terrible thermometer for spiritual standing because it runs hot with pride one day and cold with discouragement the next. God never told the believer to determine his position in Christ by taking the emotional temperature of the old nature. The Christian’s standing rests in Christ. His daily state may rise and fall, but his position was established by a work far more dependable than his latest performance.

The new man therefore must be understood as something God created, not something man gradually engineered. Ephesians 4:24 says, “And that ye put on the new man, which

after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Created. There is the word again. God did not say the new man was trained into righteousness or polished into holiness. He was “created in righteousness and true holiness.” That is why the Christian life cannot be reduced to behavioral improvement. A lost man can quit drinking, stop cursing, pay his bills, become a faithful husband, and clean up his conduct, and every one of those changes may be good without constituting the new birth. Moral reform can trim the branches while the root remains Adam. Salvation reaches deeper. God gives life from above. The new man is not Adam attending church. He is the result of God doing what only God can do: creating something new.

1. A New Creature Means God Started Something New

Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 5 come in a context dealing with the believer’s life in view of Christ, judgment, reconciliation, and eternal realities. He says, “Henceforth know we no man after the flesh” (2 Corinthians 5:16), and then immediately declares, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” The connection is deliberate. God does not evaluate the believer merely according to the old fleshly identity inherited from Adam. The saved man is now viewed in connection with Christ. Something decisive has changed. “Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” That does not mean the believer instantly forgets his past, loses every bad habit, ceases every temptation, or wakes up incapable of foolishness. Anyone who has been saved longer than a Tuesday knows better. It means God has established a new spiritual reality centered in Christ. The believer belongs to a new creation order.

The word “behold” deserves attention because God is calling the reader to look at something remarkable. Men are impressed by cathedrals, monuments, empires, machines, and inventions; heaven points at a saved sinner and says, “Behold.” A new creature has appeared where there was once only Adamic life. That may not attract a television camera, but it attracts biblical attention. The world knows how to improve appearances. It can straighten teeth, reshape bodies, educate minds, rehabilitate reputations, and teach social manners. God deals with something deeper than cosmetics. A cemetery can hire the finest landscaper in the county and still remain full of dead people. Trim the grass, polish the stones, plant flowers, and install a fountain if you please; nobody inside the graves became alive. Salvation is not divine landscaping around spiritual death. God gives life.

That is why the new birth stands at the doorway of genuine Christianity. Jesus told Nicodemus, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Nicodemus was already religious, educated, disciplined, respected, and familiar with Scripture. Christ did not tell him to improve what he already had. He told him he needed

another birth. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). Those two births produce two different orders of life. Flesh produces flesh. Spirit produces spirit. You can train flesh until it memorizes the hymnbook, but it remains flesh. The new creature begins where human improvement ends. God does not climb into Adam’s workshop and help him finish the project. He creates what Adam’s workshop could never produce.

2. The Believer Is “In Christ,” Not Merely Better Than Before

The controlling phrase in 2 Corinthians 5:17 is “in Christ.” That is the believer’s position. Salvation does not merely place Christ near the sinner as an example to imitate from a distance; it joins the believer to Christ in a real spiritual relationship. First Corinthians 12:13 says, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” This is not water baptism producing salvation. It is the Holy Spirit placing the believer into the body of Christ. Ephesians speaks repeatedly of spiritual blessings “in Christ.” The Christian therefore does not stand before God as an improved descendant of Adam trying to prove he has advanced enough to deserve acceptance. He stands accepted in connection with the Son of God. That changes the whole basis of assurance. If your standing rests on how well Adam behaved this week, you had better fasten your seat belt. That road has potholes deep enough to swallow a theology book.

Romans 5 draws the great contrast between Adam and Christ. “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Romans 5:19). The issue is headship. Natural birth connects a man with Adam; salvation connects the believer with Christ. First Corinthians 15:22 says, “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,” with the context there dealing ultimately with resurrection. The Bible repeatedly contrasts what comes through Adam with what comes through Christ because Christianity is not about perfecting the first man. God brings the believer into relationship with the Second Man, the Lord from heaven. Adam supplies sin and death. Christ supplies righteousness and life. One family tree ends in a grave. The other has an empty tomb at its head.

Once that truth settles into the heart, much religious insecurity begins to lose its grip. The believer no longer has to wake each morning wondering whether his spiritual identity survived the night. His position is “in Christ.” He may sin and damage fellowship. He may grieve the Holy Spirit. He may require chastening. He may lose reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ. He may waste years through carnality and suffer consequences that should make any serious Christian tremble. But none of those realities turns eternal life into temporary life. Romans 8:1 says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Notice again the location: “in Christ Jesus.” The believer’s security is not rooted in

the strength of his grip on Christ but in the perfection of Christ's finished work and God's placement of the believer in Him.

3. The New Man Is Created in Righteousness and True Holiness

Ephesians 4:24 gives the character of the new man: "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." That verse does not describe the flesh. Paul already explained in the same chapter that believers are to "put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Ephesians 4:22). There are the two sides standing almost shoulder to shoulder. The old man is corrupt. The new man is created in righteousness and true holiness. One does not evolve into the other. God did not place the corrupt man on a twelve-step improvement ladder and promise holiness at the top. He tells the believer to put off what belongs to the old man and put on what corresponds to the new. Scripture makes the distinction cleaner than religion often likes because religion survives by keeping Adam employed.

The righteousness attached to the new man does not originate in human merit. Philippians 3:9 speaks of being found in Christ, "not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law," but possessing righteousness connected with faith in Christ. Paul had plenty of religious credentials before salvation. He had pedigree, zeal, law, reputation, and discipline, but he counted those gains loss for Christ. Why? Because human righteousness, even when polished to a shine, cannot substitute for the righteousness God provides. Isaiah had already described man's righteousness as "filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6) in its own setting concerning Israel's condition before God. The principle is plain enough: man does not impress a holy God by arriving with Adam's laundry. Salvation is not God laundering filthy rags until they become wedding garments. He clothes the believer in a righteousness Adam never produced.

"True holiness" likewise exposes religious imitation. There is such a thing as counterfeit holiness. It can measure sleeve lengths, count buttons, inspect haircuts, outlaw whatever the preacher personally dislikes, and still overlook pride large enough to need its own zip code. Biblical holiness is not flesh learning to perform holiness theater. The new man is created in "true holiness," and practical sanctification flows from yielding to that new life. Real holiness reaches motives as well as appearances, private conduct as well as public reputation, thought life as well as visible behavior. Adam prefers rules he can display because visible rules make excellent trophies. The Spirit works deeper, confronting envy, bitterness, lust, pride, selfishness, dishonesty, and rebellion. A clean outside with a filthy inside may impress a religious crowd, but God has already inspected the plumbing.

4. The Believer's Standing and His Daily State Are Not the Same Thing

One of the most important distinctions in Christian living is the difference between position and condition, standing and state. The believer's position in Christ is settled by God. His daily state can vary dramatically depending on whether he walks in the Spirit or yields to the flesh. Paul addressed the Corinthians as "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (1 Corinthians 1:2), yet the same epistle rebukes them for carnality, divisions, envy, lawsuits, disorder, and tolerating serious sin. Their bad state did not erase the doctrinal fact that they were saints in Christ. Neither did their standing excuse their conduct. Paul did not say, "Since you are secure, carry on with the circus." He rebuked them because their behavior contradicted the position grace had given them.

That distinction prevents two opposite errors. The first is despair: "I failed, therefore I must not belong to Christ." The second is presumption: "I belong to Christ, therefore my failure does not matter." Both are wrong. Fellowship matters. Obedience matters. Holiness matters. Reward matters. Chastening matters. Testimony matters. The Christian can make a wreck of his earthly life while remaining a child of God, just as a son can disgrace his father without changing his birth certificate. First Corinthians 3 describes a believer's works being tried at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and some may "suffer loss," though "he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Corinthians 3:15). That verse should destroy both insecurity and laziness. Salvation remains; wasted service burns. Grace secures the believer and simultaneously gives him every reason not to squander his life.

The Christian therefore must stop using emotional weather as a doctrinal compass. Feelings change with sleep, health, circumstances, criticism, praise, disappointment, success, temptation, hormones, headlines, and whether somebody ate the last piece of pie. God's truth does not move with any of it. A man can feel wonderfully spiritual while walking directly into pride, and he can feel miserable while standing on sound doctrine. The Bible never says, "The just shall live by how things seem today." It says, "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). Faith takes God at His word. When God says the believer is accepted in the beloved (Ephesians 1:6), faith believes it. When God commands holy living, faith obeys it. Feelings may ride in the back seat, but they make dreadful drivers.

5. The Flesh Cannot Define the Believer's New Identity

Romans 7 shows how necessary this distinction becomes when the believer encounters indwelling sin. Paul says, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18). Notice the parenthesis. Paul identifies where the problem resides: "in my flesh." Later he distinguishes between the inward man that delights in the law of God and another law operating in his members (Romans 7:22–23). He is not denying responsibility for sin, but he is refusing to confuse his regenerated identity with the sinful principle still present in mortal flesh. The Christian who does not understand this may

either excuse sin or let sin redefine him. Scripture permits neither. Adam remains corrupt, but the believer's identity is now tied to Christ. Sin must be confessed and mortified, not promoted to the office of identity manager.

The modern habit of defining people by every appetite, impulse, fear, wound, preference, failure, temptation, or mood they experience runs opposite to biblical thinking. The Bible recognizes the reality of inward conflict without crowning every inward impulse king. A temptation may be real without being righteous. A desire may be strong without being sovereign. The flesh says, "If you feel it, that must be who you are." Scripture says, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24). That is considerably less romantic. The believer is not instructed to build an identity around the loudest appetite in the room. He is instructed to reckon himself alive unto God through Jesus Christ. Adam shouts. The new man listens to Scripture. Volume does not determine ownership.

This also means failure should never be allowed to become a substitute name for the Christian. Peter failed miserably when he denied Christ, but Christ restored him and used him. Mark abandoned a missionary journey, yet later Paul called him profitable for the ministry. The Bible records failures honestly without pretending failure is the final definition of a redeemed man. Grace does not deny what happened; grace refuses to let Adam write the last chapter. A believer may say, "I sinned," without saying, "Sin is all I am." He may confess, repent, learn, and walk forward because his life is in Christ. The flesh loves permanent labels when they produce either pride or despair. God deals in truth. Call sin what God calls it, but call the believer what God calls him too: accepted, redeemed, justified, sealed, and alive in Christ.

6. The Christian Life Is Christ Living Through the Believer

Galatians 2:20 gives one of the clearest summaries of Christian living: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." There is no room there for the theory that Christianity is merely Adam becoming morally impressive. Paul says the old "I" is crucified, yet there is life, and the controlling explanation is "Christ liveth in me." That is the center. The Christian life is not a performance in which the believer imitates Jesus strongly enough to impress heaven. It is yielded life in which the indwelling Christ is manifested through the believer by the Holy Spirit. The flesh can mimic religion, but it cannot manufacture Christ. A wax apple may fool somebody from across the table, but bite into it and the sermon changes. Real spiritual fruit requires real spiritual life.

Philippians 1:21 says, "For to me to live is Christ." That sentence is short enough for a child to memorize and deep enough to expose a lifetime of self-rule. If living is Christ, then

ambition, reputation, possessions, pleasure, applause, and personal preference must all take second place. Adam hates second place almost as much as he hates no place. The flesh wants Christ as an assistant, adviser, emergency contact, and provider of blessings while self remains chairman of the board. The New Testament presents the arrangement in reverse. Christ is Lord. The believer belongs to Him. First Corinthians 6:19–20 says, “ye are not your own” and “ye are bought with a price.” That doctrine does not flatter self-ownership. Salvation means the deed changed hands.

This life of Christ is manifested practically through dependence, obedience, and walking in the Spirit. Colossians 3:4 calls Christ “our life.” Paul tells believers to seek those things which are above and to set their affection above because they are dead and their life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1–3). The Christian therefore lives from a heavenly position while still walking through an earthly battlefield. He does not wait until the flesh feels spiritual before obeying. He obeys because Christ is his life. He prays because Christ is his life. He forgives because Christ is his life. He serves because Christ is his life. Adam keeps asking, “What about me?” The answer of the new man is wonderfully offensive to him: “You were crucified. We are discussing Christ now.”

7. Putting On the New Man Must Reach Daily Conduct

Ephesians 4 refuses to leave the doctrine floating in the clouds. After commanding believers to put on the new man, Paul immediately applies that truth to ordinary conduct. “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour” (Ephesians 4:25). He addresses anger, stealing, corrupt communication, bitterness, wrath, clamour, evil speaking, malice, kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness. That is where doctrine proves whether it has reached the shoes. The new man is not merely an interesting diagram for prophecy conferences and Bible notebooks. He affects what you say when nobody can verify the story, what you do with money, how you treat your spouse, what comes out of your mouth under pressure, and whether you carry grudges like family heirlooms. If doctrine never enters conduct, Adam has merely learned to take notes.

Colossians 3 presents the same pattern. Believers are told they “have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man” (Colossians 3:9–10). Then Paul speaks of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing, forgiving, charity, peace, thanksgiving, and letting the word of Christ dwell richly within. The new man expresses himself through a life increasingly brought under Christ’s authority. Notice that believers are commanded to do these things; spiritual growth is not automatic. The new birth supplies life, but the Christian must yield to that life. Owning a well does not water the field if you never draw from it. God has not left the believer without resources. The problem is often that Adam keeps trying to run the irrigation system.

The goal is not perfection in the flesh but consistency with the believer's position in Christ. "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1). Paul does not say walk worthy so that God may call you. The calling comes first; the walk follows. That order is grace. Christians do not obey to become accepted; they obey because they are accepted in Christ. They do not pursue holiness to manufacture a new man; they pursue holiness because God already created the new man in righteousness and true holiness. They do not serve in order to purchase life; they serve because Christ is their life. Religion reverses the order and leaves Adam sweating on a treadmill. Grace establishes the position first and then commands a walk suitable to it. That is not laxity. That is the only order in which genuine Christian obedience makes biblical sense.

The doctrine of the new man therefore settles a question the flesh keeps trying to reopen. What happened at salvation? God did not repair Adam. He created something new. The believer was placed in Christ, made part of His body, given eternal life, sealed by the Holy Spirit, accepted in the beloved, and connected with a righteousness he never manufactured. None of that encourages sin. It destroys sin's claim to define the believer. The old nature remains present in mortal flesh, and its works must be denied, mortified, confessed, and refused. But the Christian does not face that battle as an unsaved son of Adam trying to climb toward God. He faces it as a redeemed man already joined to Christ. Position comes before practice. Identity comes before conduct. Grace establishes the ground beneath the believer's feet before it commands him to walk.

That truth also removes both boasting and despair. Boasting disappears because the new creation is God's work. "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Ephesians 2:10). A creature does not brag about creating himself. Despair loses its final word because the believer's security rests in Christ rather than the latest report from the flesh. When Adam behaves badly, confess it and deal with it biblically. When the believer walks victoriously, give God the glory. Do not make either failure or success the foundation of identity. The flesh wants to be center stage whether wearing a crown or ashes. Pride says, "Look what I accomplished." Despair says, "Look how hopeless I am." Faith points away from both and says, "Look what God has done in Christ." That is where the Christian's eyes belong.

So quit dragging Adam into the repair shop and asking God to make him dependable. God already told you what He did with him. The old man was crucified with Christ. The new man was created in righteousness and true holiness. The believer is a new creature because he is "in Christ." That is the doctrinal center of gravity. Your standing is not determined by the mood of the flesh, the applause of men, the strength of temptation, yesterday's victory, or today's stumble. Your life is hid with Christ in God. Walk accordingly. Put off what belongs

to Adam. Put on what belongs to the new man. Let the word of Christ dwell richly. Walk in the Spirit. Present your members to God. The Christian life is not Adam climbing toward heaven with a Bible under his arm. It is Christ living through a man whom grace has already made new.

4 of 10 — The Old Man and the New Man — Romans 7: When Paul Found Two Men Living in One Body

Key Passage: “I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.” (Romans 7:21–23)

Romans 7 is where religious perfectionism goes to get buried with the shovel still in its hand. Paul does not describe a man floating three feet above temptation, smiling serenely while the flesh files for retirement. He describes war. He says, “when I would do good, evil is present with me.” He says, “I delight in the law of God after the inward man.” Then, in the same breath, he sees “another law” in his members “warring against the law” of his mind. That is not the testimony of a man who has perfected Adam. It is the testimony of a saved man who has discovered that salvation gave him a new nature without converting his flesh into something holy. Romans 7 does not flatter the Christian. It explains him. The believer has within one mortal body a regenerated inward man that loves God and an old nature that still carries the smell of Adam’s graveyard.

The chapter must be read in its proper doctrinal neighborhood. Romans 6 has already declared the believer’s identification with Christ: “our old man is crucified with him” (Romans 6:6). Romans 7 then exposes the misery of attempting to produce righteousness through flesh under the pressure of law. Romans 8 opens with “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” and unfolds the victorious ministry of the Spirit. In other words, Romans 7 sits between the believer’s position in Christ and his walk in the Spirit. Tear it out of that setting and you can make Paul sound like anything from an unsaved moralist to a defeated apostle who misplaced Christianity. Leave it where the Holy Ghost put it and the picture becomes plain. The law is holy. Sin is the problem. The flesh is powerless. The inward man delights in God. Deliverance is found not in self, but in Jesus Christ.

Paul is not giving sin an alibi. He is identifying where the enemy lives. Twice he says, “sin that dwelleth in me” (Romans 7:17, 20). That language is not Adam slipping responsibility out the back door while grace distracts the judge. The same Paul wrote, “Let not sin

therefore reign in your mortal body” (Romans 6:12). He knows responsibility perfectly well. But he also knows the difference between the regenerated “I” that wants righteousness and the sin principle operating through mortal flesh. A Christian who misses that distinction usually lands in one of two ditches. He either despairs because he still experiences temptation, or he becomes a religious actor pretending he no longer does. Paul chooses neither ditch. He turns the floodlights on the battlefield, names both armies, and lets every honest believer see exactly why the shooting continues after salvation.

1. Romans 7 Describes a Real War Inside a Real Believer

The key phrase is, “when I would do good.” Paul does not say merely that he knows good exists somewhere in the universe. He says he wills to do it. There is a desire within him moving toward righteousness. Again he says, “For to will is present with me” (Romans 7:18). Then he says, “For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do” (Romans 7:19). Notice the repeated “would.” Something within Paul has taken God’s side against sin. That inward desire is not the whole Christian life, for desire without yielding does not produce victory, but it reveals the presence of a man unlike the old Adamic nature. The flesh never wakes up one morning and decides holiness has suddenly become attractive. The leopard did not attend a seminar and vote to remove his spots. A new desire points toward new life.

Then Paul says something even stronger: “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man” (Romans 7:22). Delight is not reluctant acknowledgment. A lost religious man may fear commandments, respect morality, or admire righteousness from a distance, but Paul locates delight “after the inward man.” There is a regenerated part of him that agrees with God and loves what God loves. That phrase belongs alongside Ephesians 3:16, where Paul speaks of being “strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man,” and 2 Corinthians 4:16, where “the inward man is renewed day by day.” Scripture knows an inner spiritual reality produced by God. Romans 7 is not a pagan standing outside the gate wishing he were slightly nicer. It is a believer discovering that the inward man and the members of his mortal body are pulling in opposite directions.

That is why the language becomes military. Paul sees “another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind” (Romans 7:23). Warring is not mild disagreement. Nobody brings artillery to a committee meeting unless the committee has gone badly wrong. The Christian life contains conflict because two contrary principles are present. Galatians 5:17 says the same thing: “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other.” Contrary things do not merge politely after coffee. They oppose one another. The new man will never persuade the old man to become spiritual, and the old man will never stop trying to regain control. If there is gunfire in the

house, it is because somebody new moved in. Before salvation Adam had the premises. After salvation he has opposition.

2. The “I” That Hates Sin Is Not the Same as the Sin Dwelling in the Flesh

Paul makes a distinction that careless readers either abuse or ignore. “Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me” (Romans 7:17). He repeats the same truth in verse 20. Paul is not claiming innocence while blaming a mysterious invisible roommate. He is distinguishing his regenerated identity from the sin principle that remains in his flesh. That distinction fits exactly with verse 18: “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.” Notice the parenthesis. Paul qualifies what he means by “in me.” He does not say there is no good thing in Christ, no Holy Spirit, no inward man, no spiritual life. He points specifically to the flesh. There is the contaminated territory. The old nature did not receive regeneration. It remains what it always was.

That explains why the believer can simultaneously hate a sin and still be tempted by it. One nature says, “That is wrong.” The other says, “That looks good.” One says, “Forgive.” The other says, “Remember what he said in 2014 and keep the file handy.” One says, “Pray.” The other suddenly discovers that the garage absolutely must be reorganized at the very moment prayer begins. One nature wants Scripture; the other develops an urgent interest in anything with a screen. That is not schizophrenia, psychology, or poetic symbolism. It is the biblical conflict between flesh and the inward man. The old man can manufacture a hundred reasons to disobey before breakfast and then call the whole operation common sense. Sin is a gifted attorney when Adam is paying the legal fees.

The distinction must never become an excuse. Paul does not say, “Since sin dwells in my flesh, I may as well let it run the building.” Romans 6 has already destroyed that foolishness: “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body” (Romans 6:12). Sin may dwell there; it is not entitled to reign there. A squatter can occupy a room without possessing the deed. The flesh is present, but presence is not ownership. The Christian is “bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:20). His body belongs to God. Therefore he must refuse the demands of indwelling sin rather than baptize them in doctrinal terminology.

Understanding two natures should make a Christian more alert to sin, not more comfortable with it. Doctrine that identifies the enemy is given so you can shoot straight, not so you can invite him to supper.

3. The Law Exposes Sin but Cannot Give the Flesh Power to Obey

Romans 7 repeatedly defends the law against the charge that the law itself is the problem. Paul asks, “Is the law sin? God forbid” (Romans 7:7). He later says, “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:12). The problem is not

the commandment. The problem is sin taking occasion by the commandment. Law can identify the line, but it cannot change the nature of the man standing on the wrong side of it. A speed-limit sign can tell you what the law requires; it cannot reach under the hood and rebuild the engine. God's law exposes Adam. It does not regenerate Adam. In fact, the commandment gives sin an opportunity to show how rebellious the flesh really is. Tell Adam not to touch something and suddenly he wants fingerprints on every inch of it.

Paul uses his own experience with coveting: "for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7:7). The commandment brought the hidden sin into sharp focus. Covetousness is especially revealing because it can live inside a respectable man where no policeman can see it. A thief may be caught with merchandise under his coat, but coveting can sit in church wearing a tie. The law enters that private courtroom and says God sees the desire too. Then sin reacts. "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence" (Romans 7:8). The command did not create the sinful nature. It exposed it and stirred its rebellion into view. The flashlight did not put the cockroaches in the kitchen. It merely ruined their evening.

The chapter therefore destroys the fantasy that the flesh can be sanctified by placing it under more law. Law is righteous, but flesh is weak. Romans 8:3 states that what the law could not do was due to its being "weak through the flesh." The deficiency was not in God's standard. The deficiency was in Adam. Religious systems have spent generations handing fallen flesh longer lists and then acting surprised when longer lists produce longer failures. Rules may restrain behavior and biblical commandments absolutely instruct Christian conduct, but no law creates spiritual life. If law could manufacture righteousness through Adam, Calvary would have been unnecessary. The law can show dirt on the face; it cannot create soap, water, or a new face. Romans 7 forces the believer to stop blaming God's standard and start distrusting the flesh trying to meet it.

4. "I Delight" and "I See Another Law" Reveal the Two Natures Clearly

Romans 7:22 and 23 may be two of the clearest adjacent verses on the internal conflict of the believer. "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members." There is the contrast. Inward man—members. Delight—war. Law of God—another law. The Holy Ghost did not accidentally arrange those terms. Paul can love righteousness inwardly while discovering resistance bodily because regeneration did not glorify his mortal frame. The Christian is saved, sealed, accepted in Christ, and still waiting for "the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23). That future redemption matters. If the body were already beyond sin's reach, Paul would not groan while waiting for its redemption. The believer has spiritual life now; the glorified body comes later. Confuse those stages and somebody will soon be selling perfection on a platform.

The inward man delights in God because new life has a new appetite. Psalm language may describe the godly delight in God's law under another dispensational setting, but Romans 7 places the inward delight squarely inside Paul's doctrinal argument to Church Age believers. The regenerated man does not merely fear getting caught in sin; he desires God. He wants truth even when the flesh hates the consequences of obeying it. He wants holiness even while temptation pulls the opposite direction. That explains the peculiar misery of Christian sin. The lost man can sin against conscience, certainly, but the believer sins against the desires of a new nature that knows fellowship with God. He can enjoy the bait for a moment while hating the hook already buried beneath it. Sin promises dessert and leaves broken glass on the plate.

The "another law" in the members is equally real. Paul calls it "the law of sin which is in my members" (Romans 7:23). Sin operates with a persistent principle, pulling downward toward self-rule. That law does not disappear because a Christian learns doctrine. In fact, a knowledgeable Christian can become a more sophisticated sinner if knowledge feeds pride rather than obedience. He can explain the old man in six dispensational charts while the old man runs his mouth, his temper, and his household. Correct doctrine in the head does not automatically produce surrendered members. Romans 6 says those members must be yielded to God. The flesh is quite willing to discuss sanctification for three hours if discussion postpones obedience for another three. Adam does not mind Bible study nearly as much as he minds the Bible getting into his business.

5. "O Wretched Man That I Am" Is the Death of Religious Perfectionism

Paul finally cries, "O wretched man that I am!" (Romans 7:24). Notice the tense. He does not say, "O wretched man that I used to be before I became spiritually advanced." He speaks with the honesty of a man who has seen the holiness of God, the goodness of the law, the desire of the inward man, and the corruption still attached to mortal flesh. The more clearly a believer understands God's holiness, the less likely he is to congratulate himself on reaching perfection. Spiritual maturity does not usually produce a larger trophy case for self. It produces a larger view of Christ and a smaller opinion of Adam. The man announcing his own sinlessness has generally achieved it by lowering the definition of sin until he can step over it without lifting his foot.

First John states the matter with equal force: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). Self-deception is religious perfectionism's favorite miracle. A man still has pride, impatience, selfishness, resentment, vanity, idle words, wrong thoughts, and neglected duties, but after enough doctrinal gymnastics he reclassifies the inventory and announces the warehouse empty. The flesh is very good at changing labels. Pride becomes "boldness." Anger becomes "righteous indignation."

Bitterness becomes “discernment.” Stubbornness becomes “conviction.” Laziness becomes “waiting on the Lord.” Once Adam is allowed to rename the merchandise, he can run a holiness store full of contraband. Paul refuses the game. He looks directly at the conflict and says, “wretched.”

Yet Paul’s wretchedness is not hopeless despair. He does not conclude that grace failed, salvation vanished, or God abandoned him. He has already established justification by faith in Romans 3 through 5 and identification with Christ in Romans 6. His cry in Romans 7 arises from discovering the inability of self to produce the deliverance he needs. There is a godly difference between recognizing wretchedness in the flesh and doubting the sufficiency of Christ. One drives the believer away from self-confidence; the other would drive him away from the Saviour. Paul allows the first and rejects the second. When a Christian finally realizes he cannot perfect Adam, he has not reached the end of Christianity. He has reached the end of one of Christianity’s most persistent counterfeits: confidence in himself.

6. Paul Asked “Who,” Not “What”

The most revealing word in Romans 7:24 may be “who.” “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Paul does not ask what method, what program, what rule, what seminar, what ritual, what emotional experience, or what new religious technique will rescue him. He asks for a person. Christianity is ultimately not a system for Adam’s improvement; it is union with a Saviour. The answer appears immediately: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 7:25). There is the deliverer. After an entire chapter exposing the inability of flesh, Paul does not hand the reader a self-help manual. He points to Jesus Christ. Religion keeps producing twelve-step ladders for a man God already told to stop trusting his legs. Paul points away from the ladder and toward the Lord.

This leads directly into Romans 8. Chapter divisions are useful for finding verses, but Paul did not finish Romans 7 and take a six-month vacation. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). Then comes the Spirit: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:2). Romans 7 exposed the law of sin in the members. Romans 8 introduces the superior operation of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. The answer is not the flesh trying harder beneath law; it is the believer walking by the Spirit in the life supplied through Christ. God did not save a man and then leave him standing beside Adam with a clipboard. He gave him the indwelling Holy Ghost.

That does not mean Romans 8 teaches the eradication of the flesh. It teaches victory over its dominion through the Spirit. Verse 13 says, “if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds

of the body, ye shall live.” If there were no deeds requiring mortification, the command would be pointless. The believer still faces the old nature, but he does not face it alone or powerless. The same Spirit who raised Christ from the dead dwells in him (Romans 8:11). That is considerably more power than Adam brings to the meeting. The problem is not insufficient provision. The problem is often misplaced confidence. Christians try to defeat flesh with flesh, then wonder why Adam keeps awarding himself both trophies. The Spirit-filled life begins where self-reliance ends.

7. Romans 7 Delivers the Believer From Despair and Hypocrisy

Understanding Romans 7 rescues an honest Christian from unnecessary despair. The presence of conflict is not proof that God’s salvation failed. A man who delights in God’s law after the inward man, hates evil, longs to obey, and grieves over sin is experiencing realities the chapter itself explains. Assurance, of course, rests in Christ and the promises of God rather than in measuring internal struggle. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life” (John 3:36). But Romans 7 tells the saved man why temptation still feels painfully real. He does not need to reinterpret every battle as evidence that Christ abandoned him. A soldier hearing gunfire does not conclude there is no army. The gunfire may prove the enemy encountered resistance.

The chapter also rescues the believer from hypocrisy. If Paul could openly describe the conflict, Christians need not manufacture a plastic version of spirituality in which nobody ever struggles, nobody ever gets tempted, and everybody leaves church smiling like a toothpaste advertisement. Biblical honesty does not glorify sin; it removes the mask that lets sin hide. James says, “Confess your faults one to another” (James 5:16) in its proper context. First John instructs believers concerning confession of sin. Christianity has no need for the theater of pretending flesh disappeared. The danger is not admitting a battle exists. The danger is surrendering while claiming victory for appearances. A church full of people pretending to have no flesh soon becomes a church where flesh learns to operate without witnesses.

Finally, Romans 7 directs the believer toward the proper practical response: distrust flesh, reckon according to Romans 6, and walk according to Romans 8. Do not expect the law to sanctify Adam. Do not confuse temptation with identity. Do not excuse sin because it dwells in the flesh. Do not trust the old nature because it behaved yesterday. Present your members to God. Mortify the deeds of the body through the Spirit. Set the mind on the things of the Spirit. Keep Christ, not self, at the center. Romans 7 is not a hammock for carnal Christians. It is a map of the battlefield. A map does not fight the battle for you, but only a fool throws it away and then complains that the enemy keeps appearing from unexpected directions.

Paul found two contrary principles operating in one saved body, and he did not blink at the discovery. He did not deny the inward man because flesh remained present, and he did not excuse flesh because the inward man was real. He told the truth about both. “I delight in the law of God after the inward man.” “I see another law in my members.” That doctrinal honesty is desperately needed. The Christian is not an improved Adam wandering toward spiritual perfection. He is a redeemed man in Christ, possessing new life, still inhabiting mortal flesh, and awaiting the redemption of the body. Until that redemption comes, the war continues. Salvation settled ownership. Glorification will end the occupation. Between those two stands Christian warfare.

The great lesson of Romans 7 is therefore not that Christians are doomed to permanent defeat. It is that victory cannot come from the flesh. Paul runs the experiment all the way to the wall: “to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not” (Romans 7:18). Human resolve reaches its limit. Law exposes the standard. Flesh fails to meet it. The inward man agrees with God. Sin fights through the members. Then Paul cries for deliverance and points to Christ. That sequence strips Adam of every medal. You do not conquer the old nature by discovering a heroic version of yourself hidden underneath the weakness. You conquer by refusing confidence in yourself and depending upon the life and Spirit God supplied in Christ. The flesh cannot cast out the flesh. Adam cannot perform his own resurrection.

So when the old man growls, do not hand him your birth certificate. When temptation appears, do not conclude the new man vanished. When you fail, do not rename the sin, excuse it, or build a house beside it. Confess it. Judge it. Get back under the word of God. Reckon the old man where God put him at Calvary. Yield your members to righteousness. Walk in the Spirit. And when the battle reminds you how weak Adam is, let the reminder drive you where Paul went: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 7:25). The answer to Romans 7 is not a stronger Adam, a longer rulebook, or a more impressive religious performance. The answer is a Person. The old man may keep firing until the day this mortal body is changed, but Jesus Christ has already settled who owns the field.

5 of 10 — The Old Man and the New Man — Reckon Him Dead Before He Climbs Back on the Throne

Key Passage: “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:11)

Romans 6 does not tell a saved man to spend the rest of his Christian life dragging himself back to Calvary hoping to get crucified enough to remain saved. Calvary happened once. Christ “died unto sin once” (Romans 6:10), and the believer’s identification with Him is presented as an accomplished fact before Paul ever gives the command to reckon anything. “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him” (Romans 6:6). Notice the grammar before somebody builds a religion out of insecurity. Paul does not say the old man might be crucified if you pray hard enough, behave well enough, or manage to keep yourself surrendered until bedtime. He says he “is crucified with him.” Then comes the practical command: “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.” Reckoning does not manufacture the fact. Reckoning agrees with the fact God has already established.

That word “reckon” is bookkeeping language. God has put something on the account, and faith accepts the figures instead of arguing with the Accountant. The Christian does not feel his way into Romans 6. He believes his way into the practical application of it. The flesh may feel very much alive when temptation appears. Lust may shout. Pride may swell. Bitterness may begin rehearsing an old speech. Anger may start warming up in the bullpen. None of those sensations overturns what God said. Reckoning is not pretending that temptation disappeared; it is refusing to give temptation the throne merely because it arrived making noise. A condemned criminal can shout from the jail cell without becoming governor. The old man still makes demands, but God has already ruled on his authority. Faith does not hold another election every time Adam raises his voice.

The practical disaster begins when a Christian negotiates with what God told him to reckon dead. Adam is a talented lawyer. Give him five minutes and he can prepare a twenty-page defense for something Scripture condemned in one sentence. Lust becomes love. Covetousness becomes ambition. Pride becomes confidence. Bitterness becomes discernment. Stubbornness becomes conviction. Laziness becomes waiting on the Lord. Gossip becomes concern. Revenge becomes justice. Before long, the defendant has changed clothes, bribed the jury, rewritten the charge, and is asking to be appointed judge. Romans 6 ends that circus before it starts. God says reckon the old man dead unto sin and yourself alive unto God through Jesus Christ. The believer’s first responsibility is not to hear Adam’s closing argument. It is to agree with the verdict already handed down at Calvary.

1. Reckoning Begins With What God Has Already Done

Romans 6 begins with a question raised by grace: “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” Paul’s answer is immediate: “God forbid” (Romans 6:1–2). Grace is not permission for Adam to keep his office. Paul then reminds believers of their identification with Christ’s death and resurrection. “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into

death” (Romans 6:4), and the passage moves directly toward walking “in newness of life.” The chapter is not teaching that Christians repeatedly die and resurrect themselves through religious effort. It teaches that believers have been spiritually identified with Christ and are therefore to live in agreement with that position. Doctrine comes before duty. God establishes the fact before commanding the walk. Religion often reverses that order because Adam enjoys earning what grace already gave away.

Verse 6 is especially decisive: “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him.” Paul expects Christians to know something before they do something. That order matters. Ignorant zeal can produce a great deal of religious activity while missing the entire doctrinal foundation. The Christian does not overcome sin by whipping himself into enough determination to create crucifixion. He begins with knowledge of what God accomplished in Christ. The old man was identified with Christ’s death “that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Romans 6:6). The result sought is changed service. Sin is no longer the rightful master. Adam may still knock on the office door, but the nameplate was removed at Calvary.

Then verse 11 says, “Likewise reckon.” First know, then reckon. God states the fact; faith puts the fact into the account. That is why Christian living collapses when believers reverse the order and attempt to feel dead before they reckon themselves dead. Feelings make poor theologians and even worse accountants. A man can feel spiritual while drifting into pride and feel miserable while standing on sound doctrine. God never commanded the Christian to consult his emotional weather report before believing Romans 6. He said reckon. The bank does not ask whether you feel your deposit is present; the ledger determines the balance. God’s ledger says the believer is identified with Christ, dead unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ. Faith quits arguing with the statement and starts living accordingly.

2. The Old Man Lost His Right to Reign

Romans 6:12 follows naturally: “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.” Notice the word “therefore.” Because of what God has already established concerning the believer’s identification with Christ, sin must not be permitted to reign. Reigning is king language. Sin wants a throne. It does not merely want an occasional chair in the corner. The old nature wants authority over the body, the mind, the mouth, the appetites, the schedule, the money, the relationships, and the private life. Adam has never met a room he did not want to govern. Give him the coat closet and by Tuesday he will be measuring curtains for the throne room. Scripture says do not let him reign.

The presence of sin is therefore not the same as the dominion of sin. The Christian still experiences temptation because he still inhabits mortal flesh. But temptation does not possess lawful sovereignty. “For sin shall not have dominion over you” (Romans 6:14). That is not a promise that sin will never appeal to you; it is a declaration that the believer no longer stands beneath its rightful mastery. Before salvation, sin ruled the old nature without opposition from a regenerated inward man. After salvation, ownership has changed. First Corinthians 6:20 says, “For ye are bought with a price.” The Christian belongs to Christ. Sin may trespass, but trespassing does not produce a deed. A burglar standing in the kitchen does not become homeowner merely because he found the refrigerator.

This is where many believers surrender before the battle begins. They experience a strong desire and assume strength equals authority. It does not. An appetite can be loud without being lord. A temptation can be persistent without being rightful. The flesh says, “You must.” God says, “Let not sin therefore reign.” Somebody is lying, and it is not Romans 6. The old man has spent thousands of years perfecting the tone of inevitability. He whispers that anger must explode, lust must be entertained, bitterness must be nursed, covetousness must be fed, and pride must be defended. Faith answers that the throne is already occupied. Jesus Christ is Lord. Adam can file all the petitions he wants; heaven is not reopening the case.

3. Reckoning Is Not Pretending the Flesh Is Gone

Biblical reckoning must not be confused with make-believe. Paul does not tell Christians to pretend temptation has ceased or to deny the obvious fact that flesh remains present. Romans 7 would make nonsense of such teaching. Paul later says, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing” (Romans 7:18). He sees “another law” in his members warring against the law of his mind (Romans 7:23). The flesh is present. The battle is real. Reckoning dead does not mean the enemy evaporated; it means the believer treats the enemy according to his judicial position in relation to Christ. A prisoner may still be alive in the cell, but he does not run the courthouse. Presence and authority are two entirely different matters.

That distinction protects Christians from two opposite errors. One error says, “I still feel temptation, therefore Romans 6 must not be true.” The other says, “Romans 6 says I am dead to sin, therefore I no longer have a sinful nature.” Both mishandle the passage. The first lets feelings overrule Scripture. The second lets doctrine erase experience Scripture itself explains. The biblical position is stronger than either. The flesh remains flesh, but the believer does not owe it obedience. Galatians 5:17 says the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. There is conflict because both are present in the saved

man's experience, yet the command remains, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

A soldier who pretends the enemy does not exist gets shot quickly. A soldier who believes the enemy is invincible throws down his rifle. Romans 6 permits neither stupidity. The Christian recognizes the flesh and simultaneously denies its claim to dominion. That is sober warfare. You do not walk around saying, "There is no temptation, there is no temptation," while temptation is climbing through the window carrying luggage. You say, "You have no right to rule here." The flesh is real, but so is Calvary. Sin is present, but so is the Holy Ghost. Adam still argues, but Jesus Christ owns the property. Reckoning does not deny the battlefield. It tells the believer which flag has the legal right to fly over it.

4. Never Let Adam Present the Case Before God's Verdict

The old nature rarely introduces sin by its biblical name. If it did, temptation would lose half its sales force. Adam does not usually say, "Let us practice pride today." He says, "You deserve recognition." He does not say, "Let us covet." He says, "There is nothing wrong with wanting better for yourself." He does not announce, "Let us cultivate bitterness." He says, "You are simply remembering what happened so it will not happen again." Sin is a master of rebranding. The bottle still contains poison, but Adam hires a designer for the label. That is why reckoning must occur before negotiations begin. Once the flesh is permitted to define the vocabulary, it has already moved the boundary markers.

Scripture repeatedly refuses Adam's preferred terminology. Ephesians 4 does not call lying a communication difficulty; it says, "putting away lying, speak every man truth" (Ephesians 4:25). Colossians 3 does not call covetousness healthy aspiration; it identifies "covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5). First Corinthians 6 does not turn fornication into self-expression. Ephesians 4 does not call bitterness a reasonable response to emotional injury. The Bible has an irritating habit, at least to the flesh, of naming the merchandise correctly. Adam cannot run his little spiritual pawnshop successfully if God keeps exposing the counterfeit tags. The Christian must learn to use God's vocabulary before the old man submits his revised dictionary.

This is where the courtroom picture becomes useful. The flesh is both defendant and defense attorney, which should already make the believer suspicious of the proceedings. It presents motive, circumstance, emotion, history, provocation, fatigue, personality, and everybody else's behavior as evidence that God's command should be temporarily suspended. Then it asks the believer to render a verdict. Romans 6 says the verdict was already rendered. The old man was crucified with Christ. You do not need another trial every time temptation files an appeal. God has ruled. Faith agrees. The wise believer

settles the case before Adam starts cross-examining Scripture. Once a Christian decides that obedience depends upon whether the flesh considers God's command reasonable, Adam has climbed from the witness stand toward the bench.

5. Yielding Your Members Determines Who Uses the Equipment

Romans 6 becomes intensely practical in verse 13: "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God." Reckoning is not passive theology. It changes who gets access to the equipment. Your eyes are instruments. Your ears are instruments. Your hands, feet, tongue, mind, body, time, and resources become instruments placed at someone's disposal. Sin requires equipment through which to operate. Lust wants eyes. Gossip wants a tongue. Theft wants hands. Laziness wants time. Pride wants an audience. Bitterness wants memory. The flesh may supply the desire, but it still seeks instruments. Paul says stop handing over the toolbox.

The positive command is just as important: "yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Christianity is not merely standing all day saying no to Adam until sunset. The believer is alive unto God and therefore available for God's use. The same mouth that once cursed can preach Christ. The same hands that once served self can help others. The same mind that once fed on filth can be renewed by Scripture. The same feet that once ran toward sin can carry the gospel. Grace does not merely close the old tavern; it opens the building for better business. The Christian is not an empty house swept clean and waiting for Adam to sneak back with seven friends. He belongs to God.

Yielding also exposes the foolishness of praying for victory while deliberately providing sin with its preferred instruments. A man cannot feed lust through his eyes for hours and then act mystified when lust grows strong. He cannot rehearse an offense every morning and ask why bitterness remains fresh. He cannot spend his money feeding covetousness and wonder why contentment seems weak. Galatians 6:7 remains stubbornly agricultural: "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Christians sometimes want a crop failure in the field they faithfully planted all season. God's answer is not mystical. Stop sowing there. Reckon Adam dead, refuse him the equipment, and yield the members to God. You cannot keep handing the criminal tools and then complain that the prison wall has holes.

6. Reckoning Must Become a Habit Before Temptation Arrives

Temptation is a poor time to begin deciding what you believe about sin. Soldiers do not wait until bullets start flying to ask whether they approve of their commanding officer. The Christian should settle certain matters before pressure arrives. Joseph had already

determined something about God before Potiphar's wife grabbed his garment. He said, "how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9). The historical setting is long before the Church Age doctrine of Romans 6, but the practical lesson is obvious: the issue was settled before the bedroom argument reached closing statements. Joseph did not stand there conducting a seminar on possible exceptions. He fled. Sometimes the most spiritual pair of feet in the Bible are the ones running away.

Second Timothy 2:22 says, "Flee also youthful lusts." Notice that Scripture does not always command the believer to stand around proving how strong he is. Sometimes victory looks like leaving. Flesh calls retreat cowardice because flesh enjoys standing close enough to temptation to feel impressive. God calls fleeing obedience. First Corinthians 10:13 says God provides "a way to escape," but Adam often wants the escape route fitted with reclining seats and a return ticket. Reckoning dead means taking God's side before desire begins rewriting the map. If Scripture says flee, flee. If Scripture says put away, put away. If Scripture says abstain, abstain. Obedience becomes much simpler once negotiation is removed from the procedure.

This habit of advance reckoning also protects the believer during moments of weakness. Fatigue, disappointment, anger, loneliness, success, praise, humiliation, and unexpected opportunity can all become windows through which flesh attempts entry. A settled doctrinal mind does not need to reinvent Christianity in each circumstance. It already knows who Adam is and what God said about him. The old man is crucified. Sin is not to reign. Members are to be yielded to God. The believer is alive unto God through Jesus Christ. Those facts become sandbags stacked before the flood comes. A man who waits until the river is in the living room to begin reading about flood control has developed an unfortunate sense of timing. Doctrine learned in peace becomes ammunition in war.

7. The Throne Belongs to Christ, Not to a Rehabilitated Adam

At bottom, Romans 6 is about mastery. Verse 16 asks, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" The issue is not merely whether the Christian has certain bad habits. The question is who receives obedience. Sin wants service. God demands yielded righteousness. The believer has been made free from sin in relation to its former dominion and has "become servants to God" (Romans 6:22). Christianity is not self-rule with occasional advice from heaven. Salvation changes ownership. The Christian was bought with a price and therefore has no biblical basis for placing himself back on the throne as though Calvary were merely a campaign contribution.

The flesh will gladly accept a compromise in which Christ is called Lord publicly while Adam keeps practical control privately. Let Jesus have Sunday morning, Adam says, provided self keeps the money, entertainment, temper, ambitions, appetites, and secret thoughts. Let Christ own the hymnbook while Adam keeps the checkbook. Let Christ govern doctrine while Adam governs desire. That arrangement has produced enough religious hypocrisy to fill several continents. Jesus Christ is not interested in being ceremonial monarch over a kingdom actually run by the flesh. Romans 6 calls the believer to yield himself to God. The throne is not timeshare property. Adam does not get alternating weekends.

Reckoning the old man dead therefore points directly toward the lordship of Christ in Christian conduct without turning obedience into a condition for receiving or keeping salvation. The believer is secure by grace through faith, not by successful performance. But grace that saves also establishes a new relationship to sin. "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:18). Eternal security is not Adam's permission slip. It is the believer's foundation for obedience without fear that every stumble erased the new birth. Grace does not put the old man back on the throne; grace gives the Christian every reason to keep him off it. The man who uses eternal life as an excuse to serve sin has understood neither eternal life nor service.

Conclusion

Reckoning is faith taking God seriously before the flesh begins speaking. God says the old man is crucified with Christ. Reckon it so. God says sin is not to reign. Refuse its crown. God says do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness. Stop furnishing the weapons. God says yield yourself unto Him as one alive from the dead. Present yourself accordingly. None of those commands creates salvation; they arise from salvation. The believer does not reckon himself dead in order to become accepted by God. He reckons himself dead unto sin because in Christ God has already established the position from which Christian obedience operates. Doctrine is not decoration hanging on the wall of a Bible study. Doctrine is where you stand when temptation kicks the door.

The practical Christian life gets much clearer when Adam loses his right to argue every case from scratch. Pride does not need a hearing. Lust does not need committee review. Bitterness does not deserve another deposition. Covetousness does not require market research. God has already addressed the categories. The old man's great trick is convincing the believer that this particular temptation deserves special consideration because the circumstances are unusual. They always are, according to Adam. Every sin arrives carrying an exemption form. Reckoning tears up the paperwork. The Christian says, "God has

spoken.” That one sentence will save hours of foolish negotiation. The flesh hates final authority because final authority leaves it without an appeal court.

So reckon him dead before he climbs back on the throne. Do it before the sales pitch, before the rationalization, before the old wound starts talking, before the appetite starts bargaining, before pride starts writing its biography. Believe what God said about Calvary. Believe what He said about your union with Christ. Believe what He said about sin’s dominion. Then yield your members to the One who bought them. Adam may still pound on the palace gate, but pounding is not reigning. He may still shout commands, but shouting is not authority. He may still file appeals, but Calvary closed the court. “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11). Faith agrees with the verdict, obedience carries it out, and the throne stays where it belongs.

6 of 10 — The Old Man and the New Man — The Flesh Never Gets Saved

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

There is a dangerous little doctrine floating around Christianity that never appears in the King James Bible: if a believer grows long enough, studies enough, prays enough, preaches enough, suffers enough, and serves enough, his flesh will eventually become trustworthy. Paul destroys that notion with one parenthesis: “that is, in my flesh.” He does not say there is a little good hiding in there if you dig deeply enough. He says, “dwelleth no good thing.” That statement was not written by a new convert still stumbling over Genesis. It came through an apostle who had preached Christ, planted churches, endured persecution, received revelation, suffered for the gospel, and walked with God for years. Spiritual experience had taught Paul many things, but one lesson never changed: Adam does not improve. The flesh can become religious, restrained, educated, and disciplined, but it remains flesh. God never issues it a graduation certificate in holiness.

That truth is humbling because the flesh loves the idea of eventual rehabilitation. Adam does not mind Christianity nearly as much if Christianity promises that one day he will become respectable enough to deserve applause. He will attend Bible conferences, memorize doctrine, wear the right clothes, learn the right phrases, and even preach against himself if somebody will eventually hand him a trophy for spiritual achievement. But Scripture refuses him the trophy. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh” (John 3:6). Jesus

did not add, “until it matures.” Flesh does not grow into spirit any more than a goat grows into an eagle by spending enough time near an airport. The first birth gives a man Adamic life. The new birth gives spiritual life from God. Salvation does not transform one into the other. It introduces something new while the believer still carries mortal flesh awaiting redemption.

That is why spiritual maturity is not the point at which a Christian begins trusting himself. It is the point at which he finally quits. The immature believer often thinks his greatest problem is insufficient confidence. Scripture teaches him that confidence placed in flesh is itself a problem. Paul said, “we have no confidence in the flesh” (Philippians 3:3). No confidence means exactly what it says. Not reduced confidence. Not cautious confidence. Not confidence on good days. No confidence. The mature Christian learns that yesterday’s victory cannot be deposited against today’s temptation like money in a savings account. The flesh that lost yesterday is perfectly willing to try again this morning. Adam has remarkable stamina when rebellion is involved. Wisdom therefore does not ask whether the flesh has behaved long enough to be trusted. Wisdom asks what God has already said about it.

1. God’s Verdict on the Flesh Never Changes

Romans 7:18 is devastating because Paul states his conclusion with certainty: “For I know.” He is not speculating about human nature. He knows. Then he specifies the location: “in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.” The flesh is not morally neutral raw material waiting for proper spiritual development. Romans 8:7 goes further: “the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” That last expression closes the door. “Neither indeed can be.” The flesh does not merely refuse God because nobody explained things properly. Its nature is contrary to Him. Religious man keeps trying to negotiate with what God said “cannot” submit, as though Adam might reconsider after another committee meeting. God knows His creation better than Adam knows himself.

Romans 8:8 follows with an equally final statement: “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Again the word is “cannot.” Human religion usually begins by telling man that he contains some spiritual potential which, properly cultivated, can make him acceptable to God. The Bible begins by shutting down the factory. Fallen flesh cannot produce what holy God requires. It may produce morality that benefits society, discipline that benefits the body, education that benefits the mind, and generosity that benefits the neighbor, but none of that regenerates the man. Cain brought God an offering from the ground and discovered that sincerity does not overrule revelation. Flesh loves presenting

its best produce to God and asking heaven to admire the basket. Scripture keeps pointing toward the blood and reminding Adam that the issue was never vegetable quality.

The verdict therefore remains the same before and after salvation concerning the flesh itself. The believer receives something new from God, but the old nature is not converted into the new nature. Ephesians 4 calls one “the old man” and the other “the new man.” If the old man gradually became the new man, those distinctions would collapse into nonsense. The old man is “corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Ephesians 4:22); the new man “after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:24). Corrupt and created in true holiness are not two stages in Adam’s personal improvement plan. They are opposing realities. God does not instruct the believer to rehabilitate corruption. He says put it off. The old man is not a student approaching graduation. He is a condemned influence the Christian must refuse.

2. The New Birth Does Not Save the Old Nature

Jesus gave the dividing line plainly to Nicodemus: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). Two births produce two kinds of life. The first birth connects a man with Adam. The new birth gives him spiritual life from God. Salvation is therefore not God returning to the first birth and improving its workmanship. The defect is not in God’s original workmanship but in fallen Adam through sin. Man needs another birth. Nicodemus already possessed religion, education, moral discipline, social respectability, knowledge of Scripture, and membership among Israel’s rulers. Jesus did not tell him to strengthen any of those advantages. He said, “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7). Heaven’s answer to flesh is not further cultivation. It is new life.

Second Corinthians 5:17 confirms the point: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” The verse does not say repaired creature, redirected creature, or improved creature. New. God places the believer in Christ and gives him an identity rooted in Christ rather than in Adam. The old flesh remains present in the mortal body, which is why Christians still face temptation, but a new spiritual reality now exists that did not exist before salvation. The new man delights in God. The flesh does not. The new man responds to Scripture. The flesh resists it. The new man desires holiness. The flesh treats holiness like a burglar treats a security system: something interfering with business. Two natures explain the conflict better than all the therapeutic fog ever pumped into modern religious conversation.

This also explains why a Christian must never use his remaining flesh as the measure of whether God’s new work is genuine. The flesh did not get regenerated; the believer did. His standing is “in Christ.” His mortal body still awaits redemption. Romans 8:23 says believers

“groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” If the flesh had already been completely transformed at conversion, Paul would not be waiting for bodily redemption. Salvation has present, settled spiritual realities and future bodily completion. The soul and spirit are joined to Christ now; the body will be changed later. Until then, Adam is carried around like an unwanted passenger who keeps reaching for the steering wheel. The answer is not to tell him he has improved. The answer is to keep his hands off the wheel.

3. Discipline Restrains the Flesh but Does Not Sanctify It

Paul practiced discipline aggressively. “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection” (1 Corinthians 9:27). That verse alone should destroy the idea that mature spirituality makes discipline unnecessary. Why would Paul keep his body under if years of apostleship had made flesh safe? Because maturity taught him what flesh could do when allowed to run loose. He did not say, “I have been saved so long that my body naturally cooperates with holiness.” He says he keeps it under. The language is deliberate. Flesh requires government. A horse that has been bridled for years does not become wise enough to throw away the reins and choose the destination. The reins remain because nature remains. Christian discipline is useful precisely because Adam never receives a sanctified driver’s license.

Discipline can control circumstances in which the flesh operates, and that is valuable. A Christian can establish boundaries, avoid tempting places, control entertainment, regulate appetite, guard his speech, structure his time, and flee situations that invite sin. Scripture commands such wisdom. “Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:14). But notice what Paul does not say: make enough rules and the flesh will eventually quit lusting. The flesh can be denied provision without becoming righteous. Locking a thief outside does not convert him into a deacon. It merely keeps him out of the house. The wise believer uses boundaries without worshipping them, because a fence can restrain Adam but cannot regenerate him. Holiness comes through yielded life in Christ, not through congratulating the fence.

That is why legalism ultimately fails as a cure for flesh. Law can expose sin, condemn sin, and restrain outward behavior, but it cannot put new nature into Adam. Romans 7 demonstrates that the commandment is “holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:12), while sin takes occasion by the commandment. The problem is not God’s standard; the problem is fallen flesh. Add another hundred rules and Adam simply receives a larger catalog of opportunities for pride when he succeeds outwardly and hypocrisy when he fails privately. Rules can tell a corpse how a living man should walk, but they cannot put breath into the

corpse. The believer needs the Spirit. Discipline has a proper place, but if discipline becomes confidence in flesh, the cure has joined the disease.

4. Years of Service Do Not Make Adam Safe

The Bible is brutally honest about experienced servants of God because God has no interest in maintaining our heroes' public-relations departments. David had walked with God, written Scripture, defeated Goliath, survived Saul, led Israel, worshipped passionately, and experienced remarkable deliverance. None of that made his flesh incapable of adultery and murder. The record of 2 Samuel 11 should put a padlock on every Christian's self-confidence. Past victories did not immunize David against future temptation. Killing a giant at seventeen does not guarantee victory over lust years later. Flesh does not respect résumés. A man can have trophies from yesterday's battles hanging on the wall while today's enemy walks through the back door.

Peter provides another warning. He had followed Christ personally, witnessed miracles, walked on water, heard the Lord teach, confessed Him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16), and stood among the inner circle of disciples. Then he boasted, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended" (Matthew 26:33). That sentence ought to have come with a warning siren. The moment Peter announced what his flesh would never do, his flesh began preparing the demonstration. Before the night ended he denied Christ three times. Peter loved the Lord, but love did not make self-confidence safe. The flesh can sit beside Jesus at supper and still deny Him by the fire.

First Corinthians 10:12 therefore gives the proper response: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Paul does not say the danger belongs only to novices. The warning is aimed at the man who thinks he stands. The height of previous success can increase the distance of a fall if pride removes caution. Satan does not need a Christian to deny every doctrine in the Bible; sometimes he only needs him to believe one flattering doctrine about himself. "I would never do that" has launched many tragedies. Better to say, "By the grace of God, I will watch, pray, flee temptation, and trust Christ." Confidence in God strengthens vigilance. Confidence in flesh cancels the alarm system because the burglar promised not to visit.

5. Bible Knowledge Can Educate Flesh Without Conquering It

Bible knowledge is indispensable to spiritual growth, but knowledge itself does not convert the flesh. Paul warned, "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth" (1 Corinthians 8:1). The problem is not knowledge; ignorance is no virtue. The problem is Adam grabbing knowledge and turning truth into another mirror in which he admires himself. A man can know doctrine

accurately and walk carnally. The Corinthians possessed spiritual gifts and considerable knowledge, yet Paul called them “carnal” (1 Corinthians 3:1). They could discuss spiritual matters while dividing over personalities, envying one another, and behaving “as men.” The flesh can learn Bible terminology faster than it learns humility. In fact, Adam enjoys carrying a large Bible if the Bible makes him look important and remains closed when his conduct comes under examination.

Years in ministry are equally powerless to sanctify the old nature. A preacher may become more skilled at communicating Scripture while privately becoming more careless about obeying it. A teacher can expose false doctrine and simultaneously feed pride. A pastor can counsel marriages while neglecting his own home. A missionary can preach sacrifice while resenting inconveniences. Ministry activity is not automatic evidence that the flesh has become safe. Judas participated in apostolic ministry and remained lost, showing how far outward religious involvement can go without spiritual reality at all. For the saved servant, the warning is different but equally serious: never confuse usefulness with invulnerability. God may use truth preached through a man while still dealing severely with sin in the man.

Religious flesh is especially dangerous because it knows how to disguise itself with biblical words. Ordinary pride says, “I am better than you.” Religious pride says, “I am more discerning.” Ordinary anger says, “I hate him.” Religious anger says, “I am defending truth.” Ordinary ambition says, “I want recognition.” Religious ambition says, “I just want a larger platform for the Lord.” Adam can put a necktie on almost anything. That is why the word of God must judge not merely actions but motives. Hebrews 4:12 says Scripture is “a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” The Book does not merely inspect the suit; it searches the pockets. The flesh may fool an audience. It does not fool God.

6. The Bible Says Mortify the Flesh, Not Improve It

Colossians 3:5 gives a command rarely printed on inspirational coffee mugs: “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.” Mortify means put to death. Paul names fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness. God does not instruct Christians to understand these sins until they become harmless. He does not tell them to negotiate, rename, manage, or express them safely. He says mortify. Romans 8:13 similarly says, “if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” Notice the means: “through the Spirit.” Flesh cannot successfully execute itself and then brag about the operation. Victory comes through the Spirit as the believer agrees with God against the deeds of the body.

Romans 6 uses complementary language: “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body” (Romans 6:12). Sin remains capable of attempting rule, which is why the command exists.

“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin” (Romans 6:13). The problem is not that the believer lacks enough years of sanctification; the problem is yielding. Eyes, tongue, hands, feet, mind, time, money, appetite, and imagination can all become instruments placed at sin’s disposal. The Christian does not need to wonder why the flesh remains effective while continually handing it tools. If you keep supplying the burglar with ladders, lock picks, and a floor plan, do not write a theology explaining why the burglary was mysterious. Stop yielding the equipment.

Galatians 5 gives the positive alternative: “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). The verse does not say mature the flesh until it stops lusting. It says walk somewhere else. Flesh and Spirit “are contrary the one to the other” (Galatians 5:17). The believer’s task is not reconciliation between the two. God has not appointed Christians as marriage counselors between Adam and the Holy Ghost. There will be no peaceful merger. One must be denied while the other governs the walk. Spiritual maturity therefore consists increasingly of quick agreement with God and quick distrust of flesh. The mature believer does not say, “Adam has gotten better.” He says, “I have finally learned not to hand him the keys.”

7. The Flesh Will Be Finished Only When the Body Is Changed

The Christian’s hope is not eventual perfection of present flesh but future transformation of the body. Romans 8:23 says believers wait for “the redemption of our body.” That phrase sets the timetable. The believer possesses eternal life now, is sealed by the Holy Spirit now, justified now, accepted in Christ now, and yet still waits for bodily redemption. The unfinished aspect is not Christ’s saving work but the future change of this mortal frame. Until then, the body remains subject to weakness, decay, temptation, pain, and death. Christianity does not promise Adam an endless improvement program. It promises something far more dramatic: God is going to replace corruption with incorruption.

First Corinthians 15 describes that future plainly: “We shall all be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51). The passage goes on: “this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:53). Notice again that God’s final answer is not the indefinite repair of mortality. It is change. At the Rapture, the Church does not receive glorified bodies because flesh finally behaved well enough to earn promotion. The change comes through the power and promise of God. The Christian presently carries treasure “in earthen vessels” (2 Corinthians 4:7). One day the vessel itself will be transformed. Until then, anybody claiming that the present mortal condition has reached complete sinless perfection needs to explain why God still scheduled a change.

Philippians 3:20–21 points the believer toward the same blessed expectation: “we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” There is the destination. Not Adam polished until he shines, but the Lord Jesus Christ changing the body by divine power. That future should produce both hope and sobriety. Hope, because the battle with flesh will not continue forever. Sobriety, because it has not ended yet. The Christian lives between regeneration and glorification, possessing spiritual life while carrying mortal flesh. That is not a contradiction; it is the present arrangement revealed in Scripture. The soldier can rejoice that the war has an appointed ending without pretending the enemy surrendered this morning.

The flesh never gets saved in the sense that the Adamic nature is never converted into something holy. God does not gradually transform corruption into the new man. He gives the believer new life in Christ and commands him to reckon the old man dead, refuse sin’s reign, mortify the deeds of the body, and walk in the Spirit while awaiting bodily redemption. That doctrine is not pessimism. It is biblical realism. Pessimism says victory is impossible. Scripture says victory is available through Christ while confidence in flesh remains foolish. The believer can overcome temptation without ever pretending the flesh became trustworthy. In fact, victory becomes more likely when he stops expecting help from the enemy.

That truth should make an older Christian more watchful, not less. Years with God should teach him where the land mines are. Bible knowledge should make him quicker to recognize Adam’s arguments. Ministry experience should make him more dependent upon grace. Past victories should produce thanksgiving rather than swagger. A veteran soldier does not survive by concluding bullets have become harmless because he has heard them before. He survives because experience taught him to respect the battlefield. The mature Christian knows how quickly pride can rise, how cleverly lust can disguise itself, how easily bitterness can masquerade as righteousness, and how desperately he needs the Spirit of God every day. Maturity does not make flesh safer. It makes the believer less gullible about it.

So never promote Adam because he had a good month. Never trust flesh because it learned Bible verses, collected years of service, survived previous temptations, or acquired a respectable reputation. God’s testimony has not changed: “in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” Believe Him. Keep the body under. Make no provision for the flesh. Mortify its deeds through the Spirit. Flee when Scripture says flee. Stand when Scripture says stand. Yield your members to God. Walk in the Spirit. And keep looking for the Saviour who will one day change this vile body and end the conflict completely. The flesh never graduates into holiness. It remains Adam until God removes the uniform. Spiritual maturity is not finally

discovering something good in the old man. It is finally believing God when He said there never was.

7 of 10 — The Old Man and the New Man — Feed One Nature and Starve the Other

Key Passage: “For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” (Galatians 6:8)

Every day a Christian is feeding something. He may not think of it that way. He may call it entertainment, conversation, relaxation, curiosity, habit, recreation, news, music, friendship, ambition, or merely passing the time, but Galatians 6 gives the matter a simpler name: sowing. Seeds are going into soil, and eventually something comes up. The believer who understands the old man and the new man soon learns that neither operates in a vacuum. The flesh has appetites, and the new man has appetites. One nature leans toward lust, pride, selfishness, resentment, vanity, envy, uncleanness, and everything that keeps self on the throne. The other delights in God, His word, righteousness, thanksgiving, prayer, fellowship, service, and obedience. The Christian cannot continually place a banquet before Adam and then act astonished when Adam gains weight. Spiritual agriculture is not mysterious. Whatever field receives the seed is the field that eventually produces the crop.

Paul writes Galatians 6 in the context of Christian conduct, responsibility, restoration, burden-bearing, sowing, and reaping. He is not teaching salvation by farming. Eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, and no sinner purchases justification by cultivating enough good habits. Paul has already defended justification by faith against those who would drag believers back under law. But once a man is saved by grace, his choices matter. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7). That verse is not complicated enough for the flesh, so the flesh spends considerable effort trying to complicate it. Adam prefers a theology in which he can plant thorns from Monday through Saturday and pray for grapes on Sunday morning. God says the harvest follows the seed. Heaven is not confused because a believer dislikes what came up in the field.

The Christian therefore needs more than occasional resistance to spectacular temptation. He must examine what he routinely feeds. Great falls are often preceded by hundreds of ordinary meals served quietly to the flesh. Nobody wakes up one morning and accidentally builds a strong carnal appetite out of thin air. It was fed. The eyes brought food. The ears brought food. The imagination brought food. Conversation brought food. Memory reheated yesterday’s leftovers. Pride kept dessert on the table. Then one day the Christian wonders

why temptation seems so powerful. It is powerful because somebody has been feeding it three meals a day and snacks after midnight. The answer is not to blame God, circumstances, or the strength of temptation. The answer is to quit catering the banquet. Starve the old man. Feed the new. Appetite follows diet more often than the flesh wants to admit.

1. Every Nature Has an Appetite

The old man has an appetite because flesh naturally desires what belongs to flesh. Galatians 5:17 says, “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” The word “lusteth” deals with desire. Flesh wants something. It does not sit passively in the corner waiting for instructions. It wants gratification, attention, comfort, recognition, revenge, indulgence, possession, admiration, and control. Romans 13:14 therefore commands, “make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” Provision is advance preparation. You make provision when you stock the pantry because you expect somebody to eat. Paul says do not stock Adam’s pantry. Do not keep supplying the old nature with the material it uses to inflame desire. A Christian who makes provision for flesh and then prays against temptation is stocking the bar and asking God to prevent drunkenness.

The new man also possesses spiritual appetite. Peter says, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2). There is appetite in that verse too, but the food is different. The regenerated man responds to Scripture because his life came from God. Colossians tells believers to “seek those things which are above” and to “set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:1–2). The inward man delights in the law of God (Romans 7:22). Spiritual life desires spiritual nourishment. A saved person may neglect that desire, suppress it beneath carnality, and become terribly weak through starvation, but the appetite belongs to the new nature. A healthy Christian does not have to be dragged toward Scripture like a mule toward a bath every single day. Something inside him knows where the bread is.

Those two appetites do not peacefully share a table. What strengthens one often weakens the practical influence of the other. Feed resentment and forgiveness becomes harder. Feed lust and purity feels increasingly distant. Feed pride and humility begins to look offensive. Feed vanity and contentment feels like poverty. Conversely, saturate the mind with Scripture and worldly reasoning begins to smell rotten. Spend time in prayer and self-sufficiency becomes harder to maintain. Serve others and selfishness gets fewer opportunities to sit in the chief seat. Adam complains whenever the menu changes because he has expensive tastes and no intention of paying the bill. The Christian must

decide which appetite receives cooperation. You cannot keep both natures equally satisfied. They want opposite meals and opposite outcomes.

2. What Enters the Mind Eventually Reaches the Life

The eyes are among the flesh's favorite delivery systems. David said, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes" (Psalm 101:3). The direct historical setting belongs to David's determination concerning his own house and conduct as Israel's king, but the practical wisdom is obvious. What a man continually places before his eyes does not remain outside him. Images become thoughts; thoughts become imaginations; imaginations become desires; desires seek opportunity. Job said, "I made a covenant with mine eyes" (Job 31:1). That is not because eyes are sinful organs, but because they are gates through which temptation receives supplies. A Christian who feeds on sensuality, violence, vanity, covetous display, and every filthy spectacle the world manufactures should not act bewildered when his imagination begins smelling like the kitchen where he has been eating.

The ears feed appetites too. Conversation matters. Music matters. Comedy matters. Gossip matters. The constant stream of mockery, profanity, sexual talk, bitterness, complaint, slander, boasting, and worldly philosophy does not become harmless because everybody else calls it normal. First Corinthians 15:33 says, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." God inserted "Be not deceived" because human beings are remarkably gifted at being deceived precisely where they insist they are immune. A believer says, "It does not affect me," while repeating the phrases, adopting the attitudes, laughing at the filth, and thinking the world's thoughts. Apparently it affected somebody. Adam enjoys poison best when the label says entertainment. If the devil put a skull and crossbones on every corrupting influence, even careless Christians might become suspicious.

The mind then becomes the warehouse where all those deliveries are stored. Philippians 4:8 commands believers concerning what deserves sustained thought: "whatsoever things are true," honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy. That verse is not decorative needlework for a wall. It is mental warfare. The believer cannot always control what flashes across his path, but he can determine what receives a chair, a cup of coffee, and an invitation to stay overnight. Second Corinthians 10:5 speaks of "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Adam wants an open-border policy in the mind. Scripture installs customs inspection. Every thought does not deserve citizenship merely because it knocked. Some thoughts need to be arrested at the border.

3. Whatever Field You Plant Is the Field That Grows

Galatians 6:7 gives a law no prayer meeting repeals: “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” A farmer understands the sentence without a commentary. Sow corn, reap corn. Sow weeds, reap trouble. Nobody plants poison ivy in April and kneels in August asking why strawberries did not appear. Yet Christians routinely attempt the spiritual equivalent. A man feeds anger, rehearses offenses, talks about them continually, imagines arguments, and then wonders why peace is scarce. Another feeds lust through images, fantasies, and secret habits, then pleads for purity while leaving the pipeline open. Another feeds envy by constantly measuring his life against everyone else’s possessions and accomplishments, then complains that contentment will not grow. The harvest is not mysterious. The seed identified it months ago.

Paul specifically says, “he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption” (Galatians 6:8). Corruption is what flesh produces because corruption belongs to its nature. The flesh cannot yield spiritual fruit any more than a thorn bush can bear figs. The works of the flesh are listed plainly in Galatians 5:19–21, and none of them improves with cultivation. Feed wrath and you get more wrath. Feed envy and envy multiplies. Feed uncleanness and appetite demands stronger doses. Sin rarely remains satisfied with yesterday’s portion. The old man is a customer who returns asking for a larger plate. Indulgence does not quiet flesh permanently; it trains flesh to expect service. Every time the believer obeys an ungodly appetite, he teaches that appetite that shouting works.

The other half of Galatians 6:8 says, “he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” In the doctrinal setting, this is not Paul contradicting his defense of justification by faith and teaching salvation by accumulating spiritual habits. He is contrasting the harvest produced by two directions of living. The saved man possesses eternal life in Christ, and sowing to the Spirit produces the character and practical fruit consistent with that life. Galatians 5 has already named the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Galatians 5:22–23). You do not manufacture those with Adam’s machinery. They grow where the Spirit governs. The believer who wants spiritual fruit should stop fertilizing the opposite field.

4. Starving the Flesh Is Not Legalism

Some Christians hear any call to deny the flesh and immediately shout “legalism,” as though grace means keeping Adam comfortable. That is a serious doctrinal confusion. Legalism attempts to use works, law, or human performance as the basis of justification or acceptance before God. Biblical self-denial is the conduct of somebody already saved by grace. Paul, the great apostle of grace, said, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection” (1 Corinthians 9:27). Apparently nobody informed him that discipline was incompatible with grace. Grace does not eliminate self-control; it supplies the proper

ground for it. Titus 2:11–12 says the grace of God teaches believers that, “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly.” Grace teaches denial. Adam would prefer a grace that teaches dessert.

To starve the flesh means refusing it the provisions Scripture warns against. Romans 13:14 says, “make not provision for the flesh.” If a particular place, relationship, habit, device, program, conversation, or routine consistently feeds sin, wisdom does not ask how close you can remain while maintaining technical innocence. Wisdom cuts supply lines. Jesus used severe practical language in Matthew 5 concerning removing occasions of sin in its kingdom setting. The direct doctrine is not that Church Age believers earn salvation by mutilation, God forbid; the principle of taking sin seriously remains unmistakable. Christians sometimes want victory while preserving the exact route temptation uses to enter the house. They pray over the front door while leaving the back door propped open with a Bible.

Starvation also means refusing repeated mental feeding after the external stimulus is gone. Bitterness can survive for years without fresh contact because memory keeps reheating the meal. Lust can continue after an image disappears because imagination stores copies. Pride can dine on compliments from ten years ago. Envy can survive on somebody else’s success without ever meeting the person. Therefore Colossians 3:5 says, “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.” Mortify does not mean admire the appetite from a safe academic distance. It means put it to death in practice. Stop servicing it. Stop rehearsing it. Stop making excuses for it. Adam cannot be trusted with an unlimited buffet and a promise to exercise moderation later.

5. Feed the New Man With the Word of God

The primary food for spiritual growth is the word of God. Jesus said, quoting Deuteronomy, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). The statement was given in the Lord’s temptation, but the truth is plain: physical food is not sufficient for the whole man. Peter commands desire for “the sincere milk of the word” so believers may grow thereby (1 Peter 2:2). Jeremiah said, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them” (Jeremiah 15:16) in his prophetic setting. Scripture repeatedly uses food language because truth must be taken in, digested, remembered, and allowed to shape the life. A Bible on the shelf feeds nobody any more than a steak in the refrigerator strengthens the man who never eats it.

Reading Scripture must therefore become more than collecting daily religious attendance marks. The aim is not merely to say the chapters were finished. Colossians 3:16 says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.” Dwell means live there. Richly means

not barely. Some Christians give Scripture a rented room in the attic while the world owns the rest of the house. Then they wonder why worldly thinking dominates every decision. Psalm 119:11 says, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” Again, the direct historical setting belongs to an Old Testament saint, but the practical value is universal. Stored Scripture becomes ammunition available when temptation arrives. You cannot fire a verse you never loaded.

Sound doctrine also feeds the new man because truth shapes spiritual judgment. Paul repeatedly commands sound doctrine in the pastoral epistles. Error feeds flesh because error usually gives Adam either something to boast about or something to excuse. False doctrine tells him he can earn salvation, lose salvation, perfect flesh, indulge flesh, worship self, or reinterpret sin. Truth closes those escape routes. Ephesians 4 describes believers growing so they are “no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:14). A spiritually underfed Christian is easy prey for theological junk food. If it is sweet, dramatic, new, flattering, mystical, or emotionally exciting, Adam opens his mouth. Mature believers learn to read the label.

6. Prayer, Thanksgiving, Fellowship, and Service Strengthen Spiritual Appetite

Prayer feeds spiritual dependence because prayer reminds the believer that God is God and he is not. Flesh hates that arrangement. Adam prefers independence, control, and the illusion that he can manage life without divine help until the machinery catches fire. Philippians 4:6 says, “in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” Prayer brings needs before God; thanksgiving keeps prayer from becoming a catalog of complaints. A praying Christian repeatedly turns his attention away from self-sufficiency toward the Lord. The flesh would rather worry because worry at least lets self remain chairman of the emergency committee. Prayer hands the matter upward and admits somebody higher governs the universe.

Thanksgiving is especially powerful because gratitude starves several fleshly appetites at once. Envy struggles where thanksgiving grows. Covetousness loses oxygen where a man thanks God for what he already has. Bitterness finds less room where mercy is remembered. Pride weakens when blessings are recognized as gifts rather than achievements. First Thessalonians 5:18 says, “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” Adam prefers comparison. He scans the next man’s property, talent, opportunity, reputation, family, ministry, and possessions, then prepares a complaint. Thanksgiving closes the comparison catalog and opens the account book of grace. A grateful Christian is hard for envy to feed because the pantry keeps getting cleared out.

Fellowship and service likewise move the believer away from self-occupation. Hebrews 10:24–25 speaks of believers provoking one another “unto love and to good works” and not forsaking assembling together. Christian fellowship is not merely sitting in the same building while everybody stares forward. It is mutual strengthening around truth. Service turns doctrine outward in practical charity. Galatians 5:13 says, “by love serve one another.” Flesh asks, “Who noticed me?” Love asks, “Who needs help?” Flesh wants a platform. Service is willing to carry a box when nobody is watching. Adam does not object to serving if a photographer is available. The new man can serve because Christ is worthy whether applause comes or not.

7. The Stronger Appetite Begins Directing the Walk

Repeated feeding creates momentum. This is why habits matter. A Christian who consistently opens Scripture develops familiarity with God’s language, categories, warnings, promises, and priorities. A Christian who consistently feeds on the world develops familiarity with its assumptions. Eventually each begins to think in the vocabulary he has consumed. Romans 12:2 says, “be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Renewal is necessary because the world spends every day attempting conformity. It preaches constantly through screens, advertisements, conversations, entertainment, institutions, celebrities, and cultural pressure. Nobody needs a subscription to hear the world’s sermon; the speakers are mounted everywhere. The believer therefore needs deliberate biblical renewal or he will absorb conformity by osmosis.

This does not mean the Christian reaches a stage where the stronger practical appetite destroys the old nature. Flesh remains flesh until bodily redemption. But feeding one direction and starving the other changes practical influence. A temptation repeatedly denied does not gain the same easy access it once enjoyed. A spiritual discipline repeatedly practiced becomes more natural to the walk. Hebrews 5:14 speaks of those “who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Use matters. Exercise matters. The believer does not become sinless, but he becomes trained. A sword left in the closet stays sharp perhaps, but the soldier holding it may become useless. Scripture is not merely to be owned; it is to be used.

The direction of life therefore reveals where much of the feeding has occurred. “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). Walking implies continued movement, not one spectacular leap at a revival meeting. Step after step, choice after choice, meal after meal, seed after seed. Christian character usually grows quietly before it becomes visible publicly. So does carnality. Both crops spend time underground. Then harvest day arrives and everybody acts surprised at what suddenly

appeared. It was not sudden. Roots were growing where nobody looked. Seeds were being watered. Appetites were being trained. The visible life eventually reports on the hidden diet.

The Christian who understands two natures must therefore stop treating spiritual appetite as an accident. He has choices about the food supply. The old man will eat whatever feeds lust, pride, resentment, envy, vanity, selfishness, and unbelief. The new man responds to Scripture, prayer, thanksgiving, fellowship, sound doctrine, worship, and service. God has not hidden the menu. The question is which table receives daily attendance. Fifteen hurried minutes with the Bible cannot be expected to neutralize six hours of carefully curated garbage as though Scripture were a spiritual antacid. God's word is powerful, but the believer is commanded to walk in it, not merely sample it between courses of worldliness.

This truth should produce deliberate choices rather than nervous legalism. Nobody needs to build a monastery, count every harmless pleasure as sin, or invent commandments God never gave. The issue is not whether something carries a religious label. The issue is what it feeds. Does it stir lust, vanity, covetousness, resentment, filthiness, pride, foolish talking, and worldliness? Then stop pretending the diet is neutral. Does it strengthen love for truth, gratitude, purity, service, obedience, and devotion to Christ? Then give it room. First Corinthians 10:23 says, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient." Liberty asks more than, "Can I?" Wisdom asks, "What is this doing to me?"

So feed the new man and starve the old. Sow to the Spirit and stop fertilizing corruption. Guard the eyes. Guard the ears. Guard the imagination. Fill the mind with Scripture. Pray. Give thanks. Serve. Assemble with believers who strengthen truth rather than weaken it. Cut off provision for the flesh before the appetite starts issuing demands. And when Adam complains that he is hungry, remember that starvation is precisely the point. The old man does not need another meal; he needs another reminder that the cross is where God placed him. Spiritual strength is not produced by asking God to bless both diets. Pick the field you want to harvest, then plant accordingly. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). God wrote the law of the harvest plainly. The wise Christian stops arguing with agriculture and starts watching the seed.

8 of 10 — The Old Man and the New Man — Walking in the Spirit Is How the New Man Wins the Battle

Key Passage: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16)

The Christian life is not won by putting Adam on probation and asking him to behave himself until supper. The flesh has never signed a peace treaty with God, never improved its attitude toward holiness, and never become trustworthy because a believer has accumulated enough years in church. That is why Galatians 5:16 does not say, “Strengthen your flesh until it learns obedience.” It says, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” God’s answer to the flesh is not better flesh. His answer is the Holy Ghost governing the life of a believer who has been joined to Christ. The order matters. Paul does not say defeat every lust first, reach a state of spiritual perfection, and then qualify to walk in the Spirit. He says walk in the Spirit, and the flesh loses the opportunity to carry its desires into action. God begins with the source of victory, not the symptoms of defeat.

That distinction separates biblical spirituality from religious willpower. Willpower says, “I will not sin.” Faith says, “I will yield to God.” Willpower stares at the temptation until the temptation becomes the largest object in the room. Walking in the Spirit turns the believer toward Christ, Scripture, obedience, prayer, thanksgiving, service, and things above. The difference is not small. A man can become so fascinated with defeating sin that he spends all day thinking about the sin he is trying not to commit. That is like trying to avoid a pothole by staring at it until you drive straight into it. Scripture gives a better direction: “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2). Victory is not produced by becoming an expert on Adam. It comes as the believer becomes occupied with Christ and yields to the Spirit who indwells him.

Walking in the Spirit must also be rescued from the circus into which religious emotionalism has dragged it. The Holy Ghost is not a producer of confusion, uncontrolled spectacle, private commandments that contradict Scripture, or mystical feelings that conveniently excuse disobedience. The Spirit who inspired the Bible has not developed amnesia about what He wrote. He does not lead a Christian against His own Book. Jesus called Him “the Spirit of truth” (John 16:13). Paul says the fruit of the Spirit includes “temperance” (Galatians 5:23), which is self-control, not spiritual chaos with a church organ behind it. Walking in the Spirit is supernatural Christian living, but supernatural does not mean irrational. It means the indwelling Spirit governs the believer according to truth, magnifies Christ, produces holiness, and brings the Christian’s conduct under the authority of the word of God.

1. “Walk” Means a Daily Manner of Life

Paul says, “Walk in the Spirit.” He does not say visit the Spirit once a week between eleven and twelve. Walking is continuous movement. One step follows another. The Christian life is therefore lived in ordinary moments more often than dramatic ones. A believer may imagine spirituality is proved in some great crisis while ignoring the fact that most of his life

consists of mornings, meals, conversations, work, family, decisions, temptations, frustrations, inconveniences, and private thoughts nobody else sees. That is where walking occurs. Ephesians 5:15 says, “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.” A walk is measured in repeated steps. Anybody can take one impressive step while the congregation is watching. The question is where your feet go when nobody is handing out certificates.

The New Testament repeatedly uses “walk” because salvation establishes a position and then commands conduct consistent with that position. Romans 6:4 says believers should “walk in newness of life.” Ephesians 4:1 says, “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” Colossians 2:6 says, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.” The believer does not walk in order to become saved; he walks because he has received Christ. That order protects grace. Adam loves reversing it because Adam wants wages. Grace says Christ saves the sinner completely, then teaches the saved sinner how to walk. The walk never purchases the life. The life makes the walk possible. You do not walk out of a grave in order to become alive. You walk because God first gave life.

Daily walking also means victory is often decided before the large temptation arrives. The man who neglects Scripture, prayer, thanksgiving, fellowship, and obedience for weeks has already been wandering from the supply line before the enemy appears. Then, when temptation comes, he wonders why the battle seems difficult. A soldier cannot abandon headquarters, throw away his map, skip meals, lose his ammunition, and then complain that warfare is unexpectedly demanding. Walking in the Spirit is preventive as well as corrective. It keeps the believer spiritually alert, truth-filled, and responsive before crisis. Many defeats that appear sudden were prepared quietly through days of careless walking. Likewise, many victories that look dramatic were prepared quietly through hundreds of ordinary acts of obedience nobody applauded.

2. The Spirit and the Flesh Are Contrary, Not Cooperative

Galatians 5:17 explains why the command is necessary: “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other.” Contrary means opposition. The flesh and the Spirit do not represent two departments of the same company learning to cooperate. They want opposite things. The flesh pulls toward self-rule, appetite, pride, envy, lust, bitterness, covetousness, and worldly desire. The Spirit leads toward Christ, truth, holiness, obedience, charity, purity, thanksgiving, and self-denial. The Christian who imagines he can keep both satisfied has misunderstood the conflict. You cannot place Adam and the Holy Ghost on a joint management committee and expect a unanimous vote. One says, “Please self.” The other says, “Glorify Christ.” Somebody must be denied.

This is why spiritual victory cannot consist of making the flesh slightly more religious. Flesh dressed in church clothes remains flesh. Galatians 5:19–21 lists its works: “Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,” followed by idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, “and such like.” The list reaches from the gutter into the church aisle. Some works look scandalous; others can hide beneath respectable clothing. Wrath can sit in the deacon’s chair. Envy can hold a hymnbook. Strife can quote doctrine. Flesh does not cease being flesh because it learned when to say “Amen.” The Spirit’s answer is not to baptize those works with better terminology. He opposes them.

The believer therefore should not be surprised by conflict. Galatians 5:17 says the two are contrary “so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” Romans 7 describes the same miserable tug of war: the inward man delights in God while another law operates in the members. The presence of battle does not mean the Christian has been abandoned. It means contrary forces are present. What matters is which one receives cooperation. A ship may have wind blowing against it while the captain still knows where the harbor lies. The wind is real; it does not get to choose the destination. Likewise, flesh can shout, pull, entice, and complain without possessing rightful command. Walking in the Spirit means the believer stops taking navigation orders from the mutineer below deck.

3. Walking in the Spirit Begins With Yielding

Romans 6 gives the practical language of yielding: “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God” (Romans 6:13). The Holy Ghost indwells the believer, but the believer is still commanded concerning what he yields. Eyes, ears, mouth, hands, feet, imagination, mind, time, money, energy, and opportunity become instruments. Sin wants to borrow them. God wants them surrendered for righteousness. The battle is often less mysterious than Christians make it. Lust cannot see without eyes. Gossip cannot speak without a tongue. Theft cannot take without hands. Bitterness cannot rehearse itself without memory. Pride cannot perform without an audience. Stop lending Adam the equipment and then acting astonished when he closes early for lack of tools.

Yielding to the Spirit means responding to revealed truth as God brings it to bear upon the life. If Scripture says forgive, forgive. If Scripture says flee, flee. If Scripture says put away lying, speak truth. If Scripture says abstain from fornication, the Holy Ghost will never lead you to “pray about” whether an exception should be made for your circumstances. Adam loves turning plain commands into complicated spiritual mysteries because mystery buys time. The flesh can conduct a three-day seminar on a verse that requires three seconds of obedience. Walking in the Spirit does not require private revelation where public revelation

already spoke. Often the most spiritual thing a Christian can do is stop waiting for another impression and obey the verse sitting open in front of him.

Yielding is not passive. Some believers speak as though walking in the Spirit means becoming a spiritual mannequin while God moves their arms and legs. Scripture never teaches that. Paul commands believers to put off, put on, mortify, flee, resist, seek, set their affection, pray, watch, serve, forgive, study, and stand. The Holy Ghost empowers obedience; He does not erase the believer's responsibility to obey. Philippians 2:13 says, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure," but verse 12 still says, "work out your own salvation" in the sense of carrying its practical implications into life. Divine working does not produce human laziness. The Spirit is power for obedience, not an excuse to sit on the couch waiting for holiness to happen by remote control.

4. The Spirit Leads Through the Word He Inspired

Biblical spirituality is anchored to biblical revelation. Second Peter 1:21 says holy men of God "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The same Spirit who moved men to write Scripture does not lead Christians against Scripture. That point should be elementary, yet religious flesh has discovered that "the Spirit led me" makes an excellent smoke screen when the Bible says no. People have blamed the Holy Ghost for everything from foolish decisions to outright sin because a feeling arrived with enough emotional voltage. Feelings are not Scripture. Impressions are not Scripture. Dreams are not Scripture. Personal desire is certainly not Scripture simply because somebody lowers his voice and places "God told me" in front of it.

First Corinthians 14:33 says, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace." In the direct setting Paul is correcting disorder in the Corinthian assembly, where spiritual gifts had become a spectacle rather than an edifying ministry. That chapter alone should sober anybody who associates the Holy Ghost with uncontrollable religious chaos. Paul gives rules. He demands order. He insists on edification. He finally says, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). Apparently the Spirit of God is not offended by order nearly as much as some modern performances suggest. A man rolling on the floor may be having an experience, but experience does not become biblical merely because somebody put a microphone near it.

The word of God gives the Spirit-governed believer objective authority outside his own emotions. Psalm 119:105 says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Though written in an Old Testament setting, the principle remains plain: God's word illuminates the path. For Church Age believers, Colossians 3:16 commands, "Let the word

of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.” The Spirit-filled life and the word-filled life never contradict each other. Compare Ephesians 5:18–20 with Colossians 3:16–17 and the similarities are striking: singing, thanksgiving, Godward conduct. The Holy Ghost does not lead away from the Bible toward vague spiritual fog. He takes what He inspired and drives it into the believer’s walk.

5. The Spirit-Filled Life Produces Fruit, Not Theater

Immediately after exposing the works of the flesh, Paul gives “the fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5:22–23: “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance.” Fruit grows from life. It is not strapped onto a branch with religious wire. A man may imitate manners for an hour, but spiritual fruit appears as the Holy Ghost governs the life over time. Notice also what is absent from the list. Paul does not say the fruit of the Spirit is screaming, falling backward, acting uncontrollably, receiving private doctrinal revelations, or drawing attention to oneself. The fruit is Christlike character. The Spirit who magnifies Christ does not spend His ministry building monuments to human excitement.

“Temperance” is especially inconvenient to counterfeit spirituality because it means self-control. The flesh says spirituality is proved when control disappears; the Bible puts control in the fruit basket. That is an awkward detail for religious theater. The Spirit governs appetite, emotion, speech, reaction, and conduct. He does not produce a believer who can sing for two hours and cannot control his tongue for two minutes. He does not produce somebody who claims heavenly experiences while tearing up his home with anger. Spirituality that performs in public and collapses in private has failed the fruit inspection. Jesus said, “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:20) in His kingdom teaching concerning false prophets, and the general principle is unmistakable: fruit reveals nature better than advertising.

The fruit also develops in situations where flesh would naturally produce the opposite. Longsuffering requires something irritating enough to suffer long. Meekness matters when pride has opportunity to fight for the throne. Peace matters when circumstances give flesh reasons to panic. Gentleness matters when harshness would be easier. Temperance matters when appetite wants indulgence. In other words, the fruit of the Spirit does not grow in a glass case protected from real life. It appears in homes, churches, workplaces, traffic, disappointments, insults, temptations, losses, delays, and ordinary human friction. The Christian who wants to know whether he is walking in the Spirit should inspect more than what happens during a church service. Ask what happens when somebody crosses him before lunch.

6. Occupation With Christ Weakens the Flesh’s Practical Grip

Colossians 3:1 says, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.” Then Paul says, “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2). The direction is positive. Seek Christward things. Set affection upward. The believer does not defeat flesh by making flesh the center of his entire spiritual life. Some Christians stare at their weaknesses so constantly that Adam receives more attention in their sanctification program than Jesus Christ does. That is backwards. You do not extinguish darkness by holding seminars about darkness. Turn on the light. Christ is the center of Christian victory because Christ is the believer’s life.

Hebrews 12:2 says, “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” In its context, believers are running a race with endurance and laying aside weights and sin. The direction of the eyes matters. A runner staring continually at his ankles will eventually meet a tree. The Christian looks unto Jesus. That does not mean ignoring sin. Hebrews 12 plainly says lay aside sin. It means sin is dealt with in the larger context of pursuing Christ. Confess it, forsake it, refuse it, then keep moving. Adam would love to keep the believer sitting beside yesterday’s failure indefinitely because even despair can become another form of self-occupation. Grace gets the eyes back on Christ and the feet back on the racecourse.

This Christ-centered occupation also exposes how small many fleshly ambitions really are. Pride looks impressive until Christ fills the vision. Covetousness looks attractive until heavenly riches become real to faith. Lust looks glamorous until holiness is seen as fellowship with Christ rather than mere denial. Bitterness feels justified until the cross reminds the believer how much he was forgiven. Selfish ambition sounds noble until Philippians 2 points to Christ, “who made himself of no reputation” (Philippians 2:7). The flesh grows fat where Christ grows small in the believer’s thinking. Magnify Christ, and Adam begins losing room at the table. Spiritual victory is not merely saying “no” louder. It is having a greater “yes” in front of you.

7. Walking in the Spirit Must Reach the Home, Mouth, and Private Life

Walking in the Spirit is tested first where religious appearances have the least protection. Ephesians 4 and 5 move from doctrine into speech, anger, forgiveness, purity, marriage, thanksgiving, and daily conduct. A man may know the vocabulary of spiritual warfare and still lose every battle at the breakfast table. If he is harsh with his wife, impatient with his children, dishonest in business, filthy in private, envious of others, and proud in conversation, an exciting testimony about being “Spirit-filled” does not repair the contradiction. The Holy Ghost works holiness into ordinary conduct. The fruit is not reserved for church property. If spirituality evaporates when the car leaves the parking lot, somebody was wearing a costume.

The mouth is one of the clearest gauges. Ephesians 4:29 says, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying.” James says the tongue is “a fire” (James 3:6). Flesh loves a loose tongue because words can injure before wisdom gets its shoes on. Gossip, sarcasm without charity, filthy talk, lying, exaggeration, angry outbursts, self-praise, and constant complaining all reveal feeding patterns. The Spirit-filled believer is not speechless, timid, or artificial; he is governed. Truth may need to be spoken hard, but hard truth and fleshly cruelty are not twins. A sharp sword still belongs in a steady hand. The Holy Ghost does not need Adam’s temper to make Scripture powerful.

Private life matters most because private conduct shows who rules when applause disappears. Joseph fled temptation when nobody from his family was present to congratulate him. Daniel prayed when it became dangerous, not because prayer improved his public brand. Paul could say, “herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16). Walking in the Spirit creates consistency between the visible and invisible life. The Christian does not become perfect, but he stops maintaining two separate versions of himself—one for people and one for darkness. Hypocrisy is flesh managing public relations. Spirituality is truth ruling whether anybody is watching or not.

Conclusion

The victory promised in Galatians 5:16 is beautifully direct: “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” God does not promise that flesh will stop lusting before glorification. He promises that the believer who walks in the Spirit need not carry those lusts into fulfillment. That is real victory without imaginary perfectionism. The old nature remains present; the Holy Ghost remains greater than the old nature. The believer does not need to make Adam holy before he can obey God. He needs to stop yielding to Adam and begin walking under the government of the Spirit. Sin’s voice may still be heard, but hearing a voice is not the same as obeying an order.

Walking in the Spirit therefore means living under biblical authority with Christ at the center. It means Scripture over impulse, obedience over appetite, prayer over self-sufficiency, thanksgiving over complaint, service over self-exaltation, purity over lust, forgiveness over bitterness, truth over convenience, and Christ over Adam. It means no mystical fog is needed where God already supplied a Book. It means the Spirit’s presence is seen not merely in excitement but in fruit. It means the believer quits asking the flesh to cooperate with holiness and starts denying its demands while yielding his members to God. The Christian life gets much clearer when the old man loses voting privileges.

So do not fight the flesh by staring at the flesh all day. Walk somewhere else. Set your affection above. Let the word of Christ dwell richly. Yield yourself to God. Mortify the deeds of the body through the Spirit. Make no provision for the flesh. Keep your eyes on Jesus Christ. The old man may complain every mile, but he does not choose the road. The Spirit of God indwells the believer, the word of God marks the path, and Christ Himself is the destination. “Walk in the Spirit.” Not perform in the Spirit. Not pretend in the Spirit. Not feel impressive in the Spirit. Walk. One surrendered step after another until the trumpet sounds and the body itself is changed. That is how the new man wins the battle.

9 of 10 — The Old Man and the New Man — Put Off the Old Man and Put On the New

Key Passage: “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” (Ephesians 4:22–24)

Christian sanctification is not fog drifting around a stained-glass window. Paul gets it down where a man lives. “Put off concerning the former conversation the old man.” Then, “put on the new man.” Those are clothing words because everybody understands the difference between taking off filthy garments and putting on clean ones. God does not tell the believer to admire the dirty coat, analyze why it became dirty, baptize it in religious terminology, or wear it proudly because it has been in the family since Adam. Take it off. Neither does He leave the Christian standing spiritually naked after removal. “Put on the new man.” The gospel gives a believer a new standing immediately in Christ, and sanctification brings daily conduct increasingly into agreement with that standing. Grace never teaches the Christian to polish Adam’s wardrobe. Grace tells him the old clothes belong to a man God already sentenced to the cross.

Ephesians 4 belongs to believers. Paul has spent the opening chapters laying out their position in Christ: chosen in Him, redeemed through His blood, sealed with the Holy Spirit, saved by grace through faith, made nigh by the blood of Christ, and joined together in one body. Then chapter 4 turns from position to practice: “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Ephesians 4:1). That order is everything. Paul does not tell sinners to walk worthy so God might eventually save them. He tells saved people to walk like people whom God has already saved. Christianity does not begin with behavior and climb upward toward acceptance. It begins

with grace and then demands conduct suitable to grace. The uniform does not make the soldier enlisted; the enlisted soldier is expected to wear the proper uniform.

That is why Ephesians 4:22–24 must never be reduced to vague talk about becoming a better person. The passage is far sharper. The old man is “corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.” The new man “after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” One is corrupt; the other is created after God. One operates through deceitful lusts; the other corresponds to righteousness and holiness. God has not confused the two, and neither should the Christian. The next verses identify the wardrobe piece by piece: lying, anger, stealing, corrupt communication, bitterness, wrath, clamour, evil speaking, malice, kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness. Biblical sanctification eventually reaches your mouth, wallet, temper, work ethic, marriage, grudges, thoughts, friendships, and private habits. If your doctrine never reaches your behavior, Adam has merely learned to take excellent notes.

1. The Old Man Has a Former Conversation

Paul says, “put off concerning the former conversation the old man” (Ephesians 4:22). In the King James Bible, “conversation” often refers to manner of life, not merely spoken words. The old man has a way of living consistent with what he is. Before salvation, the Gentile world walked “in the vanity of their mind,” having the understanding darkened and being alienated from the life of God (Ephesians 4:17–18). Paul tells believers, “ye have not so learned Christ” (Ephesians 4:20). Something changed. The Christian may still possess the flesh, but he no longer belongs to the old way of life as though nothing happened at conversion. A man rescued from a burning house should not keep sleeping in the ashes because that was where his old bedroom happened to be. Grace brought him out.

The former conversation includes more than scandalous public sins. Adam likes to narrow the definition of carnality to whatever somebody else is doing. A respectable church member can condemn drunkenness while feeding pride large enough to require its own parking lot. He may despise fornication while nursing hatred. He may keep a clean vocabulary in public and use his tongue as a knife at home. The old man does not need a nightclub to operate. He can function quite efficiently in a church hallway. Paul names “vanity,” blindness, greediness, deceitful lusts, lying, corrupt communication, anger, bitterness, evil speaking, and malice. Some of those sins wear work boots; others wear neckties. Adam is flexible about wardrobe as long as he remains underneath it.

Putting off the former conversation means refusing to let yesterday’s manner of life define today’s conduct. Salvation does not erase memory or remove every established habit instantly, but it destroys the believer’s excuse for treating old habits as rightful masters.

Romans 6:14 says, “For sin shall not have dominion over you.” Dominion is authority. The Christian may have spent years practicing a particular sin before salvation, but years of practice do not grant that sin a deed to the property. The old man argues, “This is just who you are.” Scripture replies that the believer is “in Christ” and is commanded to put off what belonged to the former conversation. Habit may explain the battlefield; it does not decide the victor. Adam can bring historical documents to court all day. Calvary already changed ownership.

2. The Mind Must Be Renewed Between Taking Off and Putting On

Between “put off” and “put on,” Paul inserts a crucial command: “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Ephesians 4:23). That is no accident. Conduct changes durably when thinking comes under biblical authority. The world trained the old man in its assumptions long before many believers learned enough Scripture to recognize them. Pride was called self-esteem. Covetousness was called success. Lust was called chemistry. Rebellion was called independence. Bitterness was called boundaries. Vanity was called personal branding. Adam has always been skilled at changing labels on poison bottles. Renewal occurs when the word of God restores the correct labels. A Christian starts learning to call things what God calls them, not what the flesh’s advertising department prefers.

Romans 12:2 says, “be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The world presses from outside; Scripture renews from inside. Transformation is not achieved by turning the brain off and waiting for a mystical sensation. God gave the believer truth to think, believe, remember, and obey. Colossians 3:10 says the new man “is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” Knowledge matters. A mind saturated with Scripture develops different reflexes from a mind saturated with the world. When temptation arrives, the issue is often decided by which vocabulary is already loaded. If all you know is what the flesh says, Adam will win the debate by default because he brought the only dictionary.

Renewal also means the Christian must challenge patterns of thinking that once operated unquestioned. The old man says, “If I feel it strongly, it must be true.” Scripture says the heart can deceive. The old man says, “If everybody does it, it cannot be that bad.” Scripture says broad is the way that leadeth to destruction. The old man says, “If I am offended, I am entitled to revenge.” Scripture says forgive. The old man says, “My circumstances justify disobedience.” Scripture says obedience is better than sacrifice. A renewed mind does not merely know more verses; it stops giving Adam the benefit of the doubt. The flesh has lied in every generation. There is no reason to appoint it chairman of the truth committee now.

3. Put Away Lying and Put On Truth

Paul's first practical example is wonderfully plain: "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour" (Ephesians 4:25). There is the pattern of sanctification in one verse. Put off something and put on its righteous replacement. God does not merely say, "Do not lie." He says speak truth. Christianity is not an empty closet. The dirty garment comes off; the clean one goes on. Lying belongs to the old man because Satan himself is "a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). Truth belongs to Christ, who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). The saved man should not wear the devil's uniform while claiming allegiance to Christ.

Lying includes more than inventing an entire fictional story. The flesh can lie by exaggeration, omission, selective editing, false impressions, flattery, convenient silence, manipulated statistics, broken promises, and stories improved every time they are told. Adam can turn one fish into three by the time dessert arrives. Christians must resist the childish idea that deception is harmless if technically every word can be defended in court. God judges truth "in the inward parts" (Psalm 51:6) in David's confession. Integrity asks not merely, "Can I prove this statement?" but, "Am I deliberately causing someone to believe something false?" A lie wearing a necktie is still a lie.

Paul grounds truthfulness in the body of Christ: "for we are members one of another" (Ephesians 4:25). Lying damages fellowship because deception poisons trust. A church cannot function biblically when believers manipulate one another. A marriage cannot grow strong where truth is rationed. A parent destroys credibility by demanding honesty from children while practicing convenient deception. A ministry that exaggerates numbers, accomplishments, conversions, influence, or finances may impress men while grieving the God of truth. Truth does not need inflation. The believer who puts on the new man learns that a smaller true story is better than a larger false one. Adam wants applause. The new man wants a clear conscience.

4. Put Off Stealing and Put On Honest Labor and Giving

Ephesians 4:28 continues the pattern: "Let him that stole steal no more." Clear enough. God does not send the thief to a conference on understanding his acquisitive tendencies. Stop stealing. But Paul does not end there: "but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good." The thief's hands receive a new assignment. Formerly they took what belonged to another; now they work honestly. That is sanctification in work clothes. Salvation reaches economics. The new man does not merely stop obvious theft while continuing to cheat customers, waste an employer's time, falsify hours, dodge obligations, manipulate contracts, or keep what he knows is not his. God can see a stolen dollar whether it came through a ski mask or paperwork.

Then Paul goes one step further: “that he may have to give to him that needeth.” That turns the whole direction around. The old man takes. The new man works and gives. Adam asks, “How much can I get?” Grace asks, “What can I supply?” Christianity does not simply remove theft; it replaces grasping with generosity. The man whose hands once reached into someone else’s pocket now reaches into his own to help somebody in need. That is a remarkable transformation. The flesh considers possessions extensions of self. Grace teaches stewardship. First Corinthians 4:2 says, “it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” A steward knows he is managing what belongs ultimately to another.

This exposes covetousness hiding beneath respectable prosperity. The sin is not owning things; Scripture contains wealthy men whom God used. The problem is things owning the man. First Timothy 6:10 says, “the love of money is the root of all evil.” Money is a useful servant and a miserable god. The old man measures worth by accumulation. The new man can work hard, provide responsibly, enjoy God’s provision with thanksgiving, and still hold possessions with an open hand. Adam counts everything by what it costs him. Grace sometimes counts by what it lets him give. A Christian wallet is not outside the doctrine of the two natures. One of the clearest places to see who is being fed is where the money goes.

5. Put Off Corrupt Communication and Put On Edifying Speech

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth,” Paul writes in Ephesians 4:29. The word “corrupt” describes something rotten, spoiled, harmful. The old man’s mouth can become a garbage chute for whatever the flesh manufactures. Filthy talk, gossip, ridicule, cruelty, slander, foolish jesting, exaggeration, complaint, backbiting, angry accusations, and constant negativity all flow easily when the tongue is yielded to Adam. James says, “the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity” (James 3:6). That little piece of flesh behind the teeth has burned down friendships, churches, families, reputations, and marriages while weighing only a few ounces. Never confuse small equipment with small damage.

Again Paul supplies the replacement: speak “that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” The new man uses words to build. That does not mean he speaks soft nonsense or refuses biblical rebuke. Jesus Christ spoke sharper words than most modern congregations could print in a bulletin. Paul rebuked error directly. Truth may cut because a sword that never cuts is decorative metal. But even sharp truth should serve a righteous purpose. Flesh wounds because it enjoys the wound. The Spirit uses truth to correct, warn, restore, instruct, and protect. There is a difference between performing surgery and swinging a knife in the parking lot.

The home exposes this distinction quickly. A man may speak graciously to strangers and treat his family like targets because public reputation restrains him more than Christian character. A woman may encourage everybody at church and shred her husband with contempt in private. Parents may demand respectful speech from children while modeling sarcasm, shouting, and insult. Ephesians 4 walks straight through the front door and sits down at the dinner table. New-man speech should appear where familiarity removes the audience. Anybody can sound spiritual for seven minutes in a foyer. The tongue proves what governs the heart when patience is thin, dinner is late, somebody is irritating, and nobody from church is around to hear.

6. Put Off Bitterness, Wrath, and Malice and Put On Forgiveness

Ephesians 4:31 gathers an ugly family together: “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.” These sins travel in packs. Bitterness stores the offense. Wrath heats it. Anger gives it energy. Clamour gives it volume. Evil speaking gives it words. Malice wishes harm on the offender. Adam can build an entire factory from one remembered injury if the Christian keeps supplying raw material. Bitterness is yesterday’s poison preserved for tomorrow’s breakfast. It convinces the wounded person that refusing to forgive punishes the offender while it quietly chains the wounded person to the event.

The replacement is Ephesians 4:32: “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another.” Again, God does not merely empty the closet. Kindness replaces malice. Tenderheartedness replaces hardness. Forgiveness replaces the ledger. Then Paul gives the standard: “even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” That destroys Adam’s favorite argument: “But you do not know what they did.” The cross reminds the believer what God forgave. Forgiveness does not call evil good, eliminate every consequence, restore every broken trust instantly, or forbid wise boundaries. It releases personal vengeance and refuses to keep demanding payment on a debt placed into God’s hands. The new man can forgive because he lives on forgiven ground.

Bitterness especially reveals whether doctrine has penetrated deeper than vocabulary. A Christian may understand eternal security, dispensations, prophecy, and the distinctions between Israel and the Church while carrying a grudge from twenty years ago like a sacred relic. Doctrine that never confronts bitterness has not finished its work. Colossians 3:13 says, “forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.” Churches are full of imperfect people, which means opportunities to practice forgiveness arrive with remarkable punctuality. Anybody can love an imaginary church composed entirely of agreeable saints. The real test comes when Brother Sandpaper sits beside you. God sometimes uses rough people to reveal how much Adam remains under the surface.

7. Put On Conduct Suitable to the New Man

Ephesians 5:1 continues naturally: “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.” Identity comes before imitation. They are “dear children,” therefore they should follow God. Paul does not command them to imitate God so they can become His children. That distinction protects grace while demanding holiness. Verse 2 says, “walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.” The pattern is Christ. Not popular culture, personal preference, religious tradition, or whatever seems normal among other believers. Christ. The old man asks how much he can get away with. The new man asks what resembles the One who bought him. Those are entirely different questions, and they produce entirely different lives.

Paul then addresses fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, jesting, thanksgiving, and darkness. The new man is not confined to Sunday doctrine. He walks differently because he belongs to light. “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8). Notice again the order. “Ye are” comes before “walk.” Position before practice. Grace before conduct. Identity before behavior. The believer does not manufacture light by walking correctly; he walks correctly because he is light in the Lord. Adam reverses the sentence and builds religion. Scripture keeps the sentence straight and builds sanctification.

Putting on the new man therefore means allowing the believer’s conduct to display what God has already created in righteousness and true holiness. It is not pretending the old nature vanished. It is refusing to dress the Christian life in Adam’s garments when Christ has supplied something better. Colossians 3:12 says, “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.” Those garments fit the new man. Pride looks ridiculous on somebody saved entirely by grace. Bitterness clashes with forgiveness received at Calvary. Lying does not match the God of truth. The believer should stop wearing outfits that contradict his family name.

The practical force of Ephesians 4 is impossible to escape. Put off lying. Put on truth. Put off theft. Put on honest work and generosity. Put off corrupt speech. Put on words that edify. Put off bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, and malice. Put on kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness. That is sanctification without fog. God gets into the mouth, the money, the job, the temper, the memories, and the relationships. Christianity is not merely agreeing with doctrine about two natures. It is recognizing which nature produced the garment you are about to wear and refusing to leave the house dressed like Adam.

None of this means the Christian earns salvation by dressing correctly. The believer was saved by grace through faith before Ephesians ever reached chapter 4. Ephesians 2:8–9 settled that issue. But verse 10 immediately says believers are “created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” Grace saves apart from works and then produces a life where good works belong. Eternal security is not permission to keep wearing the grave clothes. Lazarus came out of the tomb alive before the grave clothes were removed, but Jesus still said, “Loose him, and let him go” (John 11:44). Life first. Then clothing suitable to life. That is a fine picture of the order even though the doctrinal setting of Lazarus is different.

So open the closet and inspect the garments. Some things belong to the man you were in Adam, not the man God has made you in Christ. Do not sentimentalize them because they are familiar. Familiar filth is still filth. Put them off. Renew the mind with Scripture. Put on what agrees with the new man. Speak truth. Work honestly. Give. Control the tongue. Forgive. Show kindness. Walk in love. Live as a child of light. The world should not need a microscope to discover that grace changed something. God did not create the new man in righteousness and true holiness so the Christian could spend the rest of his life proudly wearing Adam’s dirty coat. Take it off. Christ has given you better clothes.

10 of 10 — The Old Man and the New Man — When the War Finally Ends

Key Passage: “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” (1 Corinthians 15:51)

The Christian carries a war inside him that will not last forever. As long as he lives in this mortal body, the flesh remains present, the Spirit remains contrary to it, and Galatians 5:17 keeps describing the battlefield accurately. The old man still pushes toward self, appetite, pride, resentment, lust, fear, vanity, and sin, while the inward man delights in the things of God. Romans 7 still has ammunition in it because the Christian still knows what Paul meant when he cried, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24). But that cry is not the final sentence in the story. Salvation has an appointed conclusion for the body. God did not save the believer’s soul and spirit merely to leave him dragging Adam’s mortal equipment through eternity. The trumpet is coming. The body is going to change. The war has an expiration date.

First Corinthians 15:51 gives the announcement in language plain enough to shake a cemetery: “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” That is Church Age mystery truth concerning the transformation awaiting believers. Some saints will die before the Lord comes; others will be alive when He descends to receive His Church. But dead or living, the

result is change. “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump” (1 Corinthians 15:52). God is not scheduling a long rehabilitation program for mortality. He is going to change it. Corruption will put on incorruption. Mortality will put on immortality. The body that presently tires, ages, hurts, weakens, tempts, and dies will be transformed by divine power. Adam does not get a final tune-up. God replaces the whole arrangement with a body suited to the life the believer already possesses in Christ.

That truth puts the entire doctrine of the old man and new man into proper perspective. The Christian presently possesses eternal life, is sealed by the Holy Spirit, accepted in Christ, justified by faith, and joined to the body of Christ, while still awaiting “the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:23). Salvation is complete in its security while redemption still has a future bodily manifestation. That distinction explains why the believer can be eternally saved and still groan. It explains why a child of God can love righteousness and still feel flesh pulling the opposite direction. It explains why victory is real without sinless perfection being present. The Christian is living between regeneration and glorification. He has already received life that cannot die, while carrying a body that still can. But one day the body will catch up with the life. When that happens, the war ends permanently.

1. The Present Battle Has a Divinely Appointed End

Romans 8 says believers “groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:23). Groaning is appropriate language for the present condition. The Christian knows Christ, possesses the Spirit, enjoys fellowship with God, and yet still inhabits a body subject to weakness and corruption. He gets tired. He gets sick. He ages. He hurts. He feels temptation. He must discipline appetites. He must mortify deeds of the body. He must keep watch because flesh never retires honorably. The believer can praise God in the morning and still discover by afternoon that Adam has not moved to another county. Romans 8 does not deny that tension. It places hope beyond it. We are waiting for something God has promised to do to the body itself.

That waiting does not imply uncertainty. Biblical hope is not crossing the fingers and wishing heaven might eventually solve the problem. Philippians 3:20 says, “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Then verse 21 says He “shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” “Shall change” is stronger than religious optimism. God has already written the future tense. The Christian body is headed toward transformation because the Saviour possesses the power “even to subdue all things unto himself.” The believer does not need Adam to cooperate with the process. God is not asking the flesh whether it approves the replacement program. When Christ comes, mortal flesh does not get a vote.

The war therefore must be viewed as temporary without being treated casually. A soldier who knows the war ends next week still wears his helmet today. Hope is not permission to become careless. First John 3:2–3 connects the expectation of seeing Christ with purification: “every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” Future glorification strengthens present vigilance. The believer does not say, “Since God will change me later, I may indulge the flesh now.” That is Adam trying to turn prophecy into a permission slip. The correct response is the opposite. Since the Lord is coming, walk clean. Since the trumpet may sound, stay ready. Since this body will one day be fashioned like Christ’s glorious body, do not hand it over today as an instrument of unrighteousness.

2. The Redemption of the Body Completes What the New Birth Began

The new birth gives spiritual life immediately. Jesus said, “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). The believer becomes a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Yet the body itself remains mortal. That is why salvation should never be described as God gradually saving the old nature. He gives new life now and promises bodily transformation later. Romans 8:10 says, “if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” Then Paul points forward to resurrection power operating upon the mortal body. The sequence is beautiful. Spiritual life is present now. Bodily change is guaranteed later. God knows the difference, even when religious systems blur it into one vague cloud of sanctification.

The body’s future redemption also explains why Christian perfectionism crashes into Scripture. If the present body had already reached complete freedom from corruption, why would God need to redeem it? If the flesh had become holy in itself, why would Paul call the body “vile” and say Christ must change it? If mortality had already become suitable for eternal glory, why does 1 Corinthians 15:50 say “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption”? The answer is plain. The present body is not the finished product. Anybody claiming the construction is complete while scaffolding still covers the building needs to read the blueprints again. God is not finished with the body.

At the Rapture, God does what sanctification never promised to accomplish in the present flesh. “This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:53). Notice the two problems: corruption and mortality. Both are answered supernaturally. Corruption puts on incorruption. Mortality puts on immortality. That means no decay, no dying, no disease, no weakness, no sinful pull operating through mortal flesh, and no body dragging the believer downward. The Christian does not carry Romans 7 into eternity as permanent luggage. God is going to empty that suitcase. The

future body will not require daily warnings about making provision for flesh because corruption will be gone. The battle is fierce now, but the battlefield itself is temporary.

3. The Rapture Changes the Living and Raises the Dead

First Thessalonians 4 gives the Church its great reunion passage. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God” (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Then “the dead in Christ shall rise first.” Those words concern believers in this present Church Age who have died physically. Their bodies went into graves, but their connection with Christ was never broken. Death claimed the mortal shell; it did not cancel eternal life. When the Lord descends, the grave receives eviction papers. The same Jesus who said, “I am the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25) will demonstrate that death never had final ownership of anybody in Him.

Then Paul says, “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds” (1 Thessalonians 4:17). First Corinthians 15 supplies the transformation language for those living saints: “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” The living believer does not need to die first in order to receive a glorified body. God can bypass the cemetery entirely. In a moment, faster than human machinery could even register the operation, mortality becomes immortality. There will be no appointment desk, no recovery room, no rehabilitation therapy, and no waiting for insurance approval. Heaven performs surgery without incision. God speaks, the trumpet sounds, and the body changes.

That event also marks the final separation from the old Adamic condition for the believer. Until then, even the most faithful saint carries mortality. Paul did. Peter did. Every preacher, missionary, mother, father, martyr, and unknown believer in Christ has. Some walked more faithfully than others, but none graduated out of flesh by achievement. At the Rapture every saved member of Christ’s body receives transformation on the same divine basis: grace and union with Christ. The saint who served for seventy years does not receive immortality because he earned better tissue. The believer saved five minutes before the trumpet does not receive a second-class body. Glorification is Christ’s work, not Adam’s reward certificate.

4. No Old Nature Will Survive Into the Glorified Body

The old man has no eternal future because the old man belongs to Adam, sin, corruption, and death. The new man is “created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:24) and corresponds to the believer’s life in Christ. The present conflict exists because these contrary realities operate while the believer remains in mortal flesh. But once corruption puts on incorruption, the fleshly platform from which the old nature has conducted its operations is gone. There will be no Romans 7 groaning in glory. Nobody in heaven will say,

“For the good that I would I do not” (Romans 7:19). The internal tug of war will have ended because God has completed the bodily redemption that present sanctification anticipates.

Think about what that means practically. No temptation will need resisting. No lust will need mortifying. No bitterness will need confessing. No wandering thought will need bringing into captivity. No appetite will have to be denied. No pride will need exposing. No temper will require restraint. No corrupt communication will threaten to escape the mouth. The glorified believer will not spend eternity nervously guarding against a relapse into Adam. Heaven is not a probation office. God does not save His children eternally and then station angels around them with clipboards in case somebody backslides off a cloud. Incorruption means corruption is finished, not merely restrained.

That is why Revelation 21:4 can speak of a future in which “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.” The direct setting is the eternal state after the Millennium and Great White Throne, but the absence of death and corruption perfectly agrees with the final destiny of the redeemed. Sin’s entire system reaches its end. The curse does not follow the believer into eternity like luggage lost by the airline and delivered later. God is not transporting Adam into the New Jerusalem with an ankle monitor. What belongs to the fall is finished. The believer’s eternal existence is suited to Christ, holiness, glory, and incorruption.

5. The End of the War Does Not Mean the Battle Is Optional Now

Future victory can become a dangerous excuse if flesh is allowed to interpret it. Adam hears, “One day you will be glorified,” and immediately proposes taking the afternoon off from holiness. Scripture answers with present commands. “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth” (Colossians 3:5). “Walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16). “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body” (Romans 6:12). “Put off concerning the former conversation the old man” (Ephesians 4:22). God has promised final victory, but He has not cancelled present obedience. The Christian waits for glorification while fighting from a position of salvation already secured in Christ.

That means vigilance remains necessary until the last moment. Paul could say near the end of his ministry, “I have fought a good fight” (2 Timothy 4:7). He did not say, “I discovered after thirty years that fighting was unnecessary because I was secure.” Eternal security never became spiritual laziness in Paul’s theology. Grace secured him and then sent him into battle. The Christian should know that he cannot lose eternal life and simultaneously know that he can lose fellowship, testimony, usefulness, reward, opportunity, and years through carnality. First Corinthians 3 warns of saved men whose works burn at the

Judgment Seat of Christ. Salvation is secure; stewardship is accountable. Adam hates that distinction because he prefers either fear or license. Scripture permits neither.

A Christian therefore keeps short accounts with sin. When he fails, he confesses. When temptation appears, he flees or stands as Scripture directs. When pride rises, he remembers grace. When bitterness begins talking, he remembers forgiveness. When lust demands attention, he refuses provision. When the flesh starts quoting its favorite excuses, he answers with Scripture. None of that earns the glorified body. It simply reflects loyalty to the Lord who promised it. A bride does not stay faithful because fidelity purchases the wedding. She stays faithful because she belongs to the bridegroom. The Church belongs to Christ. Until He comes, conduct should agree with ownership.

6. The Judgment Seat Comes After the Battle, Not Another Chance to Fight It

The Rapture ends the believer's warfare with the flesh, but it does not erase accountability for how the Christian lived while the war was being fought. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:10). This is not the Great White Throne, where the unsaved dead are judged in Revelation 20. The Judgment Seat concerns believers and their service. First Corinthians 3 describes works being tested by fire. Some endure as gold, silver, and precious stones; others burn as wood, hay, and stubble. The believer whose works burn "shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Corinthians 3:15). Salvation remains secure; reward does not.

That truth gives present warfare eternal seriousness. The Christian cannot say that choices made in mortal flesh do not matter because the flesh will eventually disappear. They matter precisely because this life is where faithfulness is tested. Opportunities to serve Christ now will not continue forever. You cannot go back after glorification and relive the wasted Tuesday when pride ruled. You cannot revisit the years lost to bitterness and give them back to God. Grace forgives completely, but grace does not turn wasted time into time never wasted. The Judgment Seat will not condemn the believer to hell, but it will reveal what his life amounted to under the searchlight of Christ.

That should produce sobriety without terror. The believer does not approach the Judgment Seat wondering whether Christ's blood was sufficient. That issue was settled at Calvary. He approaches as a servant giving account to his Lord. Second Corinthians 5:9 says, "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him," speaking of pleasing Christ in service. The Christian who understands glorification does not become careless; he becomes purposeful. The war will end, so fight well while there is still a war to fight. The race will finish, so run while the track remains beneath your feet. A finish line does not make running unnecessary. It makes every remaining step matter.

7. Only the New Man Has an Eternal Future

The old man belongs to the first Adam. The believer's eternal destiny belongs to Christ, "the last Adam" and "the second man" (1 Corinthians 15:45, 47). That contrast runs straight through the resurrection chapter. "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Corinthians 15:47). Natural birth connected us to the earthy man. Salvation joins us to Christ. Verse 49 says, "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." There is the destination of redemption. The believer presently bears marks of Adam's mortality; he will one day bear a bodily condition suited to the heavenly Man.

That future destroys every argument for making peace with the old man now. Why invest your loyalty in something God has no intention of carrying into eternity? Why pamper a condemned tenant whose lease expires at the trumpet? Why sacrifice fellowship, reward, peace, testimony, usefulness, and obedience to satisfy appetites that have no place in your eternal future? Adam keeps presenting himself as though his desires are urgent and permanent. They are neither. The old nature's entire empire exists on borrowed time. The flesh can scream for immediate gratification because it knows it has no tomorrow in glory. The Christian should stop treating temporary appetite like eternal authority.

Conversely, everything connected with Christ belongs to what lasts. Truth lasts. Holiness lasts. Charity lasts. Service done for Christ has eternal reward. Scripture lasts. The believer's life in Christ is eternal. Colossians 3:4 says, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." That sentence is where the doctrine of the new man ends. Christ is our life. Glory is the destination. The old man never appears in that verse because Adam has no part in the future God is describing. The Christian may presently carry two opposing natures in one saved body, but only one side owns property in eternity.

Conclusion

The war will finally end, and it will end not because Adam became cooperative but because Jesus Christ changes the battlefield. "We shall all be changed." The body that presently groans will be redeemed. The mortal will become immortal. The corruptible will become incorruptible. The Christian who presently must reckon the old man dead will no longer need daily reckoning against temptation because the old nature's operating base will be gone. The believer who presently walks by faith will see Christ. The man who now fights through weakness will stand clothed in glory. Romans 7 will have completed its usefulness. Galatians 5:17 will no longer describe an internal war. The trumpet will have settled the matter forever.

Until that moment, the marching orders remain unchanged. Reckon the old man dead. Let not sin reign. Yield your members to God. Walk in the Spirit. Make no provision for the flesh. Feed the new man. Put off Adam's garments. Put on the conduct suitable to one created in righteousness and true holiness. Keep the word of Christ dwelling richly. Keep your eyes on the Saviour. Keep serving while there is time to serve. The coming transformation is not an excuse to loosen the armor; it is the reason to keep it fastened. Relief is coming, but the sentry stays at his post until relieved.

Then, in a moment, the Christian's oldest internal enemy will be finished. No more whispered temptation from the basement. No more flesh bargaining for the throne. No more confessing the same stubborn weakness. No more fighting appetite, pride, anger, lust, envy, bitterness, fatigue, sickness, decay, or death. Christ will have changed the vile body and fashioned it like unto His glorious body. The war that began when new life entered an old mortal frame will be over because mortality itself has been replaced. The believer presently carries two opposing natures in one saved body, but only one has an eternal future. Adam goes no farther than the grave or the trumpet. Christ goes all the way into glory. And when the trumpet sounds, there will be no rematch.

Conclusion

The doctrine of the old man and the new man explains more about the daily Christian life than a truckload of religious slogans ever will. A man gets saved, receives eternal life, is placed in Christ, sealed by the Holy Ghost, justified by faith, and immediately discovers that the flesh did not leave the premises. That does not mean salvation failed. It means God told the truth when He said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). The first birth gave you Adam. The second birth gave you life from God. Those two are not variations of the same nature. They are contrary. One pulls toward self, sin, appetite, pride, lust, resentment, and independence from God. The other delights in Christ, Scripture, holiness, obedience, truth, prayer, and fellowship with God. Once that distinction is understood, the Christian quits wondering why there is a battle and starts learning how God told him to fight it.

The great mistake of religion has always been trying to improve what God condemned. Adam has been polished, educated, baptized, confirmed, disciplined, counseled, dressed, decorated, and marched into churches for two thousand years, and he remains exactly what Jesus called him: flesh. Paul said, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18). That statement leaves very little room for human flattery.

The flesh does not need a better self-image. It needs the cross. “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him” (Romans 6:6). God never established a rehabilitation center at Calvary. He established an execution ground. The sooner the Christian stops asking God to improve Adam, the sooner he can begin believing what God already said about Adam. You cannot sanctify what God told you to reckon dead.

The new man, on the other hand, is not repaired Adam. He is “created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:24). The believer is “a new creature” because he is “in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:17). That is where Christian assurance belongs. Not in the latest report from the flesh. Not in whether yesterday felt victorious. Not in whether temptation was loud this morning. Your standing before God does not fluctuate with Adam’s mood swings. The believer’s state can certainly vary. Fellowship can be damaged. Service can become carnal. Chastening can come. Reward can be lost. A Christian can make a miserable wreck of years that should have been fruitful. But eternal life does not become temporary every time the old nature gets noisy. Christ did not save you by making your flesh dependable. He saved you by putting you in Himself.

Romans 7 then tells the truth every honest Christian eventually discovers. “When I would do good, evil is present with me” (Romans 7:21). Paul delighted in the law of God “after the inward man” while seeing “another law” in his members warring against the law of his mind (Romans 7:22–23). There is your battlefield. One saved body, two contrary principles, and no cease-fire in sight while mortal flesh remains. Paul did not hide behind religious acting. He did not put on a plastic smile and pretend that mature Christians never struggle. Neither did he excuse sin. He identified it. He said, “sin that dwelleth in me” (Romans 7:17). Then he cried, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24). That “who” is everything. The answer is not a program, a system, a mystical experience, or another promise made to the flesh. “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 7:25).

That is why reckoning matters. Romans 6:11 says, “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Reckoning is faith taking God’s side before Adam opens his mouth. And Adam can talk. Give the old man a five-minute hearing and he can turn almost any sin into a virtue. Lust becomes affection. Greed becomes ambition. Pride becomes confidence. Stubbornness becomes conviction. Bitterness becomes discernment. Gossip becomes concern. Laziness becomes waiting on God. Flesh has the finest public-relations department on earth because it has been practicing since Eden. The Christian who waits until temptation begins arguing before deciding what Scripture means has already given the defendant too much courtroom time. God rendered the verdict at Calvary. Faith agrees before the appeal is filed.

Then comes the hard lesson every mature believer eventually learns: the flesh never graduates. Years in church do not make it safe. Years preaching do not make it safe. Bible knowledge does not make it safe. Yesterday's victory does not make it safe. David killed Goliath before he fell with Bathsheba. Peter walked on water before he warmed himself by the enemy's fire and denied Christ. Paul still distrusted his flesh after years of apostolic ministry. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). The dangerous Christian is not always the weak Christian who knows he is weak. Sometimes it is the experienced Christian who has started believing his own résumé. Adam loves trophies because trophies make him forget the cross. Spiritual maturity is not when you finally discover that the flesh has improved. It is when you finally stop being surprised that God was right about it all along.

That brings the battle down into what you feed. "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Galatians 6:8). God has not hidden the agricultural principle. Sow there, reap there. Feed the eyes filth and the imagination remembers the menu. Feed resentment and bitterness comes back for seconds. Feed envy and contentment starves. Feed pride and humility starts looking like an insult. Christians sometimes spend a week feeding the flesh every appetite it requests and then wonder why fifteen minutes in the Bible did not produce spiritual power. That is not a mystery. It is farming. If you plant weeds six days a week, do not blame God when you cannot harvest roses on Sunday. Starve the old man. Feed the new. The field does not care about your intentions. It remembers the seed.

And the answer is not merely negative denial. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). Notice again that God starts with where you walk, not with how impressed you are with your ability to resist. Walking in the Spirit means Scripture rules. Christ is central. Prayer replaces self-sufficiency. Thanksgiving replaces complaint. Obedience replaces negotiation. Service replaces self-occupation. The mind is renewed by truth. The members are yielded to God. The Holy Ghost is not some excuse for religious chaos, private revelation, uncontrolled behavior, or convenient feelings that contradict the Book. The Spirit who inspired Scripture does not lead against Scripture. If your "leading" requires God to contradict what He already wrote, the problem is not a mysterious movement of the Spirit. Adam has simply learned religious vocabulary.

Then Paul gets even more practical: "put off concerning the former conversation the old man" and "put on the new man" (Ephesians 4:22, 24). That doctrine belongs in the closet every morning. Lying off. Truth on. Theft off. Honest labor and generosity on. Corrupt speech off. Edifying words on. Bitterness off. Forgiveness on. Wrath off. Kindness on. Malice off. Tenderheartedness on. Biblical sanctification does not float above real life in

clouds of religious language. It walks into your home, sits beside your spouse, looks at your bank account, listens to your mouth, checks your private habits, inspects your grudges, watches what you do when nobody is around, and then asks whether the clothes match the man God created in Christ. Adam owns plenty of garments. None of them belong on the new man.

This doctrine also strips hypocrisy of its hiding place. Christians do not need to pretend flesh disappeared in order to prove they are spiritual. Scripture already said it remains present. The question is whether it reigns. “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body” (Romans 6:12). A squatter in the house is not the homeowner. A rebel shouting commands does not become king because he is loud. A temptation may be powerful without being rightful. The Christian’s body has been bought with a price. Sin can knock; you do not have to hand it the deed. Sin can appeal; you do not have to reopen the case. Sin can demand; you do not have to salute. Jesus Christ owns the house. Adam may still rattle the doorknob, but rattling is not reigning.

And all of this warfare is temporary. That may be the sweetest truth in the whole series. Romans 8 says we are waiting for “the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:23). First Corinthians 15 says, “We shall all be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51). Corruption will put on incorruption. Mortality will put on immortality. Philippians says the Lord Jesus Christ “shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Philippians 3:21). God’s final answer to the flesh is not eternal management. It is transformation. The Christian does not spend eternity fighting Adam in a glorified hallway. No lust. No envy. No bitterness. No pride. No sinful appetite. No wandering thought. No temptation. No Romans 7 groan. No Galatians 5 civil war. The trumpet ends what regeneration began in mortal flesh by changing the body itself.

That future should make the Christian vigilant now, not lazy. The fact that the war has an ending does not mean the soldier throws away his rifle before relief arrives. Keep watch. Reckon the old man dead. Make no provision for the flesh. Mortify the deeds of the body through the Spirit. Feed what belongs to Christ. Starve what belongs to Adam. Put off the old garments. Put on the new. Keep short accounts with sin. When you fail, confess it. When temptation appears, obey Scripture immediately. When pride rises, remember grace. When bitterness begins rehearsing the past, remember the cross. When flesh demands the throne, remember who bought you. Salvation is secure, but stewardship matters. The Judgment Seat of Christ still lies ahead, and wasted years do not return because grace forgave the sinner who wasted them.

So this is the final verdict of the matter. There are two natures in one saved sinner, but there are not two equal destinies. The old man came through Adam and belongs to corruption,

mortality, sin, and death. The new man is connected with Christ and belongs to righteousness, holiness, life, and glory. One nature will fight until the trumpet. The other will remain forever. Do not spend your brief Christian life investing in the side that has no eternal future. Do not feed what God will leave behind. Do not crown what God crucified. Do not trust what God condemned. And do not despair because the battle is fierce. The fact that Adam still fights does not mean Adam still owns you.

Christ owns you. Christ saved you. Christ indwells you by His Spirit. Christ gave you His word. Christ supplies grace for the battle. Christ will judge your service. Christ will descend from heaven. Christ will change this vile body. Christ will finish what He began. The old man may have accompanied you from the first birth, but he will not accompany you into glory. One day the trumpet will sound, mortality will disappear, corruption will be finished, and the longest war you ever fought will end in a moment. Until then, keep Adam off the throne, keep the Bible open, keep walking in the Spirit, and keep your eyes on Jesus Christ. The old man has a present voice, but he has no eternal future. The new man has both.

THE OLD MAN AND THE NEW MAN

Two Natures in One Saved Sinner

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." (Galatians 5:17)

OLD NATURE
DECEIVES
BUT LEADS
TO DEATH

FLESH
PRIDE
LUST
REBELLION
DEATH

NEW CREATION
HOOLNESS
OBEDIENCE
FELLOWSHIP
LIFE

NEW NATURE
DELIGHTS
AND LEADS
TO GLORY

CENTRAL TRUTH

Salvation does not repair Adam; it gives the believer new life in Christ. The old man remains present in the flesh, the new man delights in God, and practical victory comes by reckoning the old man dead, yielding to God, and walking in the Spirit until the body is changed.

Feature	Old Man	New Man
Source	In Adam	In Christ
Character	Corrupt according to deceitful lusts	Created in righteousness and true holiness
Desire	Self, pride, lust, rebellion	Truth, holiness, obedience, fellowship
Language	Excuses sin	Agrees with God
Rule	Wants the throne	Yields to Christ
Future	No eternal future	Belongs to glory

THE BATTLE PATHWAY

1
New Birth

2
Inner Conflict

3
Rock the Old Man Dead

4
Yield the Members to God

5
Walk in the Spirit

6
Put Off / Put On

7
Final Glorification

FROM CONFLICT ... TO CONFORMITY ... TO GLORY

PRESENT STRUGGLE
PRODUCES
A FUTURE GLORY
(Romans 8:18)

1 WHAT CHANGED AT SALVATION?

- The first birth remained flesh: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." (John 3:6)
- The believer received new life: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- God created the new man: "created in righteousness and true holiness." (Ephesians 4:24)
- Standing in Christ is settled now; bodily glorification is still future.

BORN TWICE
TWO NATURES
ONE PERSON
JOHN 3:6

2 THE OLD MAN: WHAT HE IS

- He is connected with Adam and the fall.
- He is "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." (Ephesians 4:22)
- Paul said, "in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." (Romans 7:18)
- Religion can decorate the flesh, but it can never sanctify it.

IN ADAM
THE ROOT
OF OUR OLD MAN
(ROMANS 5:12)

3 THE NEW MAN: WHAT HE IS

- He is connected with Christ and the new birth.
- He delights in the law of God "after the inward man." (Romans 7:22)
- He responds to truth, holiness, prayer, and obedience.
- He is the side of the believer that has an eternal future.

IN CHRIST
A NEW CREATION
(2 CORINTHIANS 5:17)

4 THE INNER WAR

- The flesh and the Spirit are "contrary the one to the other." (Galatians 5:17)
- Paul found "another law" in his members warring against the law of his mind. (Romans 7:23)
- The struggle is not proof salvation failed; it is evidence of opposing natures.
- Temptation is real, but temptation is not the same as dominion.

TWO LAWS
ONE HEART
GALATIANS 5:17

5 GOD'S VERDICT ON THE OLD MAN

- "Our old man is crucified with him." (Romans 6:6)
- "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." (Romans 6:11)
- "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body." (Romans 6:12)
- "Yield yourselves unto God." (Romans 6:13)

CRUCIFIED
RECKONED DEAD
NO LONGER HIS
ROMANS 6:6, 11

6 HOW THE BATTLE IS FOUGHT

- "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16)
- "Make no provision for the flesh." (Romans 13:14)
- "Mortify the deeds of the body" through the Spirit. (Romans 8:13)
- Paul kept his body under subjection. (1 Corinthians 9:27)

PUT ON
THE WHOLE ARMOUR
EPHESIANS 6:11

7 FEED ONE NATURE, STARVE THE OTHER

- "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." (Galatians 6:8)
- Sowing to the Spirit strengthens spiritual fruit and holy appetite.
- The word of God, prayer, thanksgiving, and fellowship feed the new man.
- Lust, vanity, bitterness, filth, and pride feed the old man.

WHAT YOU SOW
YOU REAP
GALATIANS 6:8

8 PUT OFF / PUT ON

- Put off lying; speak truth. (Ephesians 4:25)
- Put off stealing; labor and give. (Ephesians 4:28)
- Put off corrupt communication; speak what edifies. (Ephesians 4:29)
- Put off bitterness; put on kindness and forgiveness. (Ephesians 4:31-32)

PUT OFF DARKNESS
PUT ON CHRIST
ROMANS 13:14

9 THE FLESH NEVER GETS SAVED

- Years in church do not make the flesh trustworthy.
- Bible knowledge and ministry experience do not make the flesh safe.
- "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12)
- Maturity means having "no confidence in the flesh." (Philippians 3:3)

LEAN NOT
ON YOURSELF
PROVERBS 3:5

10 WHEN THE WAR FINALLY ENDS

- Believers still wait for "the redemption of our body." (Romans 8:23)
- "We shall all be changed." (1 Corinthians 15:51)
- "This corruptible must put on incorruption." (1 Corinthians 15:53)
- Only one nature has an eternal future: life in Christ.

THE TRUMPET
THE CHANGE
THE GLORY
1 CORINTHIANS 15:52

PRACTICAL / DOCTRINAL TAKEAWAY

- Distinguish standing from state: accepted in Christ, yet still called to holy walking.
- Do not confuse temptation with ownership; sin may be present, but it must not reign.
- Cut off provision for the flesh quickly, and keep short accounts with God.
- Keep Christ on the throne, and let Scripture govern the life.

MORE OF CHRIST
LESS OF SELF
UNTIL HE COMES

PRESS TOWARD
THE MARK

SAME PILGRIM
A BETTER COUNTRY
HEBREWS 11:16

GRACE
TRUTH
SCRIPTURE
CHRIST
FOR ALL
GENERATIONS
(John 1:9-14)

BOTTOM LINE: The old man is not reformed but reckoned dead; the new man is life in Christ. Therefore walk in the Spirit now, and wait for the trumpet that will end the war forever.

VerseQuest Ministries

SAME
GOSPEL
SAME
POWER
TO EVERY
BELIEVER
ROMANS 1:16

