

# Parallel Biblical Metaphors On Sanctification

We know that God's prime purpose in our discipleship on earth is our sanctification (1 Thess 4:3); consequently, it should not surprise us that the Lord uses a number of different metaphors to help us understand our part in this crucial discipline.

God is our heavenly Father, who cares for us and leads us into truth. He knows how weak and frail we are, how easily we are misled; therefore, the Lord gives us clear didactic teaching via the apostles on how to grow in holiness. But he also gives us pictures within this teaching using differing metaphors that illustrate differing angles of the doctrine. Further, these different illustrations help different folk get the message. While one person understands one metaphor, another better understands a different metaphor. It is my purpose in this brief paper to outline some of the key metaphors in this subject to show the variety God uses for our instruction.

What is the essence of sanctification?

Contrary to popular opinion, growth in holiness is not achieved by striving hard in self-denial and struggling to be good, then asking the Holy Spirit to strengthen our fleshly efforts and fix the things we get wrong. This equates to putting an old patch on a new garment or putting new wine in old wineskins. God's method is nothing like this.

God declares that our old nature is dead. The Adamic fleshly nature that we were born with has been co-crucified with Christ when we were saved so that we became new creatures in Christ as we also shared in his resurrection.<sup>1</sup> We do not try to make this nature better since it grows in corruption.<sup>2</sup> Our job here on Earth is to live in the new nature that God has given us in Christ, which is created in righteousness. The struggle of sanctification is to live in this life and not the old. Each day we must live by faith and consider the old man to be dead, and then put on the new man.<sup>3</sup> The Christian life is a continual dying to ourselves and living in Christ by his Spirit.<sup>4</sup>

This concept confuses many, especially Paul's use of 'old man' and 'new man'. Paul is not saying that believers are two people in one body with two distinct personalities. Yet neither is he merely saying that it is a matter of disposition, that we had a tendency to sin, now we have a tendency to righteousness. No, that is not strong enough to represent his teaching.

What he is saying is that we originally had our source of life in Adam, which is depraved and prone to sin of all sorts. In the right circumstances any man is capable of any sin. This nature cannot stop sinning, it was born to sin. At conversion we came into the good of dying with Christ, which actually happened spiritually at Calvary, this death nullified the

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<sup>1</sup> Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Cor 5:17) Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of His resurrection. (Rm 6:4-5)

<sup>2</sup> ... the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. (Eph 4:22)

<sup>3</sup> reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rm 6) ...put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph 4:24)

<sup>4</sup> Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.' (Matt 16:24-25) Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. (Jn 12:24-25.) See also: Matt 10:38-9; Mk 8:34-35, 10:21; Lk 9:23-24, 14:27.

power of the Adamic life. We no longer are enslaved to sin (Rm 6:6). We were also given a new life in Christ, a life which is righteous and which grows in grace (2 Cor 5:17). This new nature resides permanently in our spirit; we are spiritual people (1 Cor 2:15-3:1).

But this is not the end of the story. The Adamic life was not removed from us since it resides in the soul and body of man, which have not yet been renewed. They are changed at the Second Coming of Christ when we will be like him (1 Jn 3:2). The old life was rendered useless and removed from the control seat but was not eradicated; for this reason we can still sin. If our old life was destroyed and annihilated, we couldn't ever sin, since sin arises from this nature; but we do sin.

So although we are a single personality, and although we are to live in Christ (Gal 2:20) our will can choose to revert to the old Adamic nature and sin. We have one will, but this will can choose to live by faith and abide in Christ, or it can listen to temptation, revitalise the dead man and revert to doing what is dead towards God - sin. When we abide in Christ we glorify God in our body. When we succumb to temptation we dishonour God and revert to our old body of sin. The process of sanctification revolves around this crisis of will. The ground of sanctification is the fight to either put on the new man (Christ) or revert to the old life (of Adam). It is not mere disposition, but a source of life. One is a polluted stream, the other is a river of living water. This process has been planned by God to test our faith and bring us into the good through living experience. Even Christ had to learn obedience through suffering (Heb 5:8).

Now, for some reason, many find this hard to understand; while many more find it impossible to do. An illustration may help here. A believer is vilified in a contemptible way by someone. Taking offence they struggle to contain their temper, but anger rises as their blood boils. Realising this is wrong, they ask God for patience to come from heaven as a gift of grace and pray for help to contain their already boiling anger, but it boils over and wrath is expressed. This is the wrong way. Another believer faces the same opposition, but instead immediately thinks, 'the person being slandered is dead, I am dead to this and alive to God'. The Holy Spirit immediately imparts necessary grace on the basis of faith established on truth; and the believer smiles in an expression of love to the offender. Degrading words cannot hurt a dead man, neither can a dead man react. Instead this believer manifests Christ-like love as the Spirit gives grace on the basis of a stand of faith. This is the right way.

Sanctification is God acting through me in more and more areas of my life as I allow the Spirit to have full reign in my personality. This is done as we die to ourselves and live in Christ. Having established this at the outset, we come to investigate the various forms of this teaching in the New Testament.

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Abiding in Christ, Jn 15

3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

5 I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

9 As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.

10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

From this we learn the following:

- The believer is legally cleansed as a result of justification by faith. He stands before God declared as righteous in Christ. The word of God has cleansed the person who has believed into Christ. This is a convert's formal, judicial, spiritual status in heaven. (v3; Rm 3:24-26, 5:1, 18-19)<sup>5</sup>
- Although the believer is cleansed before God and seated with Christ in the heavenlies (Eph 2:6), on Earth the believer undergoes a process of growing in practical holiness day by day. Holiness is manifesting more of the life and character of Christ and is spoken of here as 'bearing fruit' (v4).
- The basis of fruit-bearing in the Christian is abiding in Christ. (v4-5)
- Fruit bearing is not an act of the believer, but an act of Christ through the believer. Christians cannot bear fruit by themselves. Indeed, without Christ they can do nothing of spiritual value. (v4-5)
- God is glorified by Christians bearing much fruit, by manifesting the Lord Jesus. (v5)
- Jesus' disciples are only those which bear fruit. Professing Christians who do not bear fruit are not disciples at all. (v5b)
- We must also abide in the love of Jesus. This is maintained as we obey Christ's commandments, which is the law of Christ. This is primarily expressed in loving the brethren. (v9-10, Gal 6:2; 1 Jn 4:21)<sup>6</sup>

### Conclusion

Bearing fruit is all about abiding in Christ. What does this mean? It means dwelling in him, living in the new nature in union with Christ. It means putting on the new man and not living in the old nature. The believer who is abiding in Christ is one through whom the Spirit can freely move and bring life and power, just as sap moves through the branches of the vines. Vines are seen through branches, unlike trees, which are primarily noticed from their trunks. Christ, the head of the body is in heaven and not visible in the world - except through the lives of believers. Those who abide in Christ will manifest the life of Christ and bear fruit - growing in holiness.

### Metaphor

Abide

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<sup>5</sup> Justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Rm 3:24-26) having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rm 5:1) Therefore, as through one man's offence *judgment* came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. (Rm 5:18-19)

<sup>6</sup> Through love serve one another. (Gal 5:13) Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. (Gal 6:2) And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also. (1 Jn 4:21)

The fruit of the Spirit, Gal 5:22-23

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.**

This section must be understood in connection with the following one on being led by the spirit.

We make one simple point here; we saw that bearing fruit is by abiding in Christ. Here we see that bearing fruit is an action of the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit produces fruit as we abide in Christ. This fruit is singular - several expressions of one fruit (unlike the flesh which produces works). This fruit is the life of Christ, the Lord Jesus manifested in the believer's actions when he shows love, joy, peace etc., especially in the face of suffering or persecution. Paul and Silas showed this fruit when they sang songs in a Philippian jail after being scourged (Acts 16:25).

### *Conclusion*

Bearing fruit, which manifest the life of Christ, is an action of the Holy Spirit within the believer.

### *Metaphor*

Bear fruit

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Walking in the Spirit Gal 5:16-25

**16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.**

**17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.**

**18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.**

**19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,**

**20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,**

**21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

**22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,**

**23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.**

**24 And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**

**25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.**

Here we are commanded to walk in the Spirit. How is this possible? How can a material person walk in an invisible, immaterial person? We are back to an *abiding* metaphor - walking in the Spirit is dwelling in, remaining in, living in the Spirit.

- The flesh (the old man, the sinful nature)<sup>7</sup> lusts against the spirit; it is in open rebellion to God and hates righteousness, craving sin. (v16-17)
- The flesh is in us (it is our old nature - the body and soul when united against God and open to sinful temptations) and makes us do things that are opposed to our spirit. (v17)

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<sup>7</sup> 'Flesh' does not always mean the old nature, it has various meaning in the NT and these must be interpreted in context. It can sometimes mean physical flesh - the human body, the animal nature of man without any suggestion of depravity, the nature of animals, or mankind as a whole.

- When we are led by the Spirit of God, we are in a different realm, a spiritual realm, where the law does not apply (v18, 23).<sup>8</sup> The law was for sinners not those in the Spirit.<sup>9</sup> We do not need to be under the law of regulations - do not touch etc - because the Spirit is automatically applying God's law of Christ. This law is higher than the Old Covenant law and deals with thoughts and intents as well as actions. While being actively led by the Spirit we can take thoughts captive, something the law could never do.<sup>10</sup>
- Paul lists some of the manifestations of the flesh so that we should be in no doubt what the flesh does (v19-21). He then lists the fruit of the Spirit so that we can see the contrast (v22).
- True disciples of Christ have crucified the flesh (v24). This means that a genuine believer is one who has been crucified with Christ and has died to the old man/old nature. The lusts, passions and desires of the flesh are dead because the nature that produces them is dead. Note: although the flesh was crucified, this does not mean that it is eradicated and no longer a problem. This whole exhortation is a command not to walk in it, therefore it is an ongoing problem. We will see later that the old man (flesh) that was destroyed (Rm 6:6) is rendered inoperative, not annihilated.
- But, the believer has to live in the good of this. The believer is in the Spirit legally, positionally, in heaven; but he must dwell on Earth in the good of this, he must manifest Christ. He must walk in the Spirit as well as be in the Spirit, be in Christ. (v25). The old nature is legally given the sentence of death and made ineffectual, but the believer has to keep it this way and not live in it, not follow the old nature's habits.

### Conclusion

The reason for this whole exhortation is that these Galatian believers, although being genuine converts of Paul, had fallen into sin and legalism (following the law to attain fleshly righteousness). Despite being true Christians, their walk was fleshly and not in the Spirit; hence the need for this admonition. If Christians do not walk in the Spirit, they will manifest the flesh and not Christ. This can be either by committing sins (an obvious expression of the flesh) or by doing sincere, seemingly 'good' works that are fleshly and not spiritual (less obvious but equally invalid). God wants a true manifestation of Christ that is spiritual, not fleshly, of man's strength. He wants spiritual Christians, not 'good' flesh or sinful flesh.

Note that walking in the Spirit includes active submission, being led by the Spirit Gal 5:18. Being in the Spirit is active, not passive; it includes being directed, commissioned, led, guided, drawn because the Spirit is leading the believer onward.

### Metaphor

Walk / Led

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Dying to the old man Rm 6

**1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?**

**2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?**

**3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death?**

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<sup>8</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. (Rm 8:2)

<sup>9</sup> The law is not made for a righteous person, but for *the* lawless and insubordinate, for *the* ungodly and for sinners, for *the* unholy and profane. (1 Tim 1:9) For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. (Rm 6:14)

<sup>10</sup> For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor 10:4-5)

4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of His resurrection,

6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with ('destroyed' AV) , that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.

8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.

10 For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God.

11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

13 And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?

17 But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

19 I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members *as* slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness *leading* to *more* lawlessness, so now present your members *as* slaves *of* righteousness for holiness.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death.

22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

23 For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This passage is so important that we must consider the whole chapter.

Paul has just explained that we are justified by faith in Christ and are legally considered righteous before God. One aspect of sanctification is positional - we are righteous through the imputed (accounted to us) righteousness of Christ. Our sins were given to him and he died for them, while his righteousness was imputed to us. This is the wonder of grace. Our standing before God is that we are righteous. He sees us as being in Christ, the apple of his eye.

Since this is true, all our sins are forgiven and the next question then is - well, does that mean I can keep on sinning and still be forgiven, this means that God's forgiving grace is ever more manifest, forgiving a reckless sinner? It's a valid question.

Firstly, the recipients of God's grace are truly changed, they are new creatures in Christ who do not desire to sin but want to please their father. Any professing convert that continues in sin and has no desire to please God is not a true believer. But the next question is, how do I deal with my occasional sins and my lust to sin which I hate but still do? Paul deals with this in Romans 6 and 7.

- Christians who have died to sin no longer live in that realm but in Christ. To sin they must leave that spiritual realm and descend to a lower nature. (v2)
- When you were placed into Christ you were immersed in his death, you died along with him spiritually. (v3)
- Our inclusion and union in Christ means that as well as dying with him, we were also raised up with him in resurrection life. This is why we are new creatures, no longer human in the Adamic sense. We live in Christ. (v4, 5, 8)
- Our old man (old nature, our nature inherited from Adam) was co-crucified with Christ. What we once were as people was put on Christ's cross and killed with him. In justification and atonement, Christ died as our substitute, in our place. In identification Christ died as our representative man, representing us as humans.<sup>11</sup> The nature that sins died with Christ. A nature that does not sin (the new nature, 1 Jn 3:6<sup>12</sup>) was given to us so that we are no longer to be slaves of sin. A sinful nature no longer controls us. (v6)
- The meaning of 'destroyed'; here is as follows: *katargeo* means to render idle, unemployed, and inoperative; to deprive of force or power. 'Destroyed' in the NT usually means to separate not to annihilate. Paul's point in Rm 6:6 is that the source of power in the flesh is cut off and the believer, who has been co-crucified with Christ, can live a resurrected life since the strength of sin in the man is defeated. For those who walk in faith, the source, dominion and power of sin has been overcome; thus the believer can walk in righteousness by the Spirit - putting on the new man.
- The final clause of v6 sums up Paul's point here - **that we should no longer be slaves of sin.** Our old way of life is dead to us through God's work - so that we shouldn't be enslaved to sin any longer. The natural man is a slave of sin; he can't help sinning, he was born to sin. The new man was born through resurrection with Christ to be righteous. Paul restates this in v7; we are now free from this hold to sin; the link was cut by death. We are not bound to sin.
- Verse 8 restates that our life is now linked with Christ who does not sin. Our life is in Christ not in Adam; in righteousness not in sin; is spiritual not flesh.
- Verses 9-10 are an aside to show that Christ is the author of a new kind of life, eternal life, everlasting life, spiritual life, heavenly life which is the source of our new life.
- Our job now is to reckon (consider) ourselves as being dead in Christ to sin and alive in Christ to righteousness. (v11)
- This means that we do not have to let sin reign over us. We have power to say no to the flesh because it is legally dead in God's eyes. The nature that spawns sin is dead. We must reckon that this is true, we must believe it is true, live by faith - even though we cannot see it as true yet. (v12) When we feel lusts rising, we must consider ourselves to be dead. That is the ground of faith and the place of power. The Spirit comes with grace when we believe what the Bible says.
- Our bodies must be presented to God as a living sacrifice (Rm 12:1-2), they belong to him, the life we live is his; so we must not let ourselves sin, but use our lives to glorify God. (v13)

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<sup>11</sup> Jesus is the Second Man, or the last Adam. The old conception of humanity was taken to the cross and died with Christ. It is finished in God's eyes and will be wiped out at the final judgment. A new humanity emerged at the resurrection based upon Christ as our life (1 Cor 15:45-49). Christ is thus the head of a new race of people - Christians; there are no further Adams, no other races.

<sup>12</sup> Whoever abides in Him does not sin. (1 Jn 3:6) Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. (1 Jn 3:9) Whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. (1 Jn 5:18)

- Since our old life is dead, sin no longer has any power over us. The power of sin resides in the old nature, just as the law condemns the fleshly life. Those who are living under grace are in a spiritual realm where neither sin nor the law operate. (v14)
- If we put on the old nature again (Eph 4:22-24) we will again fall under the power of sin. The crisis of sanctification is the struggle to live in the new nature and not the old nature. (v14, 16) There is no 'once for all' experience that leads to a passivity in sanctification; it is a fight of faith that leads to laying hold of eternal life every day (1 Tim 6:12).
- The result of living in the new nature and dying to the old nature is bearing fruit for God. (v22)

### *Conclusion*

Although we were crucified with Christ, as a once for all past event, we are commanded by Paul to live in the good of this here and in many passages (see next section). We must consider ourselves as dead; this means that we can fail in this and put the old nature back on again. We have to be told not to let sin reign (v12) and sin comes from the old nature. We are told not to present our bodies as instruments of unrighteousness (v13), a giving in to the old nature. These are failures to consider the flesh as dead, thus letting it live. We are exhorted to present our bodies as instruments of righteousness, implying that we can fail in this (v19). This admonition continues throughout the whole apostolic writings.

The key to the whole matter is:

1. Know and understand that your old nature died on the cross, making it unemployed, able to be switched off, but not eradicated.
2. Believe this to be true for you and that you are no longer enslaved to sin.
3. Every day, consider that the old nature is dead.
4. Everyday consider and believe that you are united with Christ and living in the new nature.
5. Do not feed the old nature in any way, but starve it by denying it. Die to sin.
6. Walk in the Spirit, trust in his operations, and expect grace to help in time of need.

### *Metaphor*

Dying and resurrection

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Putting off and putting on Eph 4:22-24

Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Eph 4:22-24

But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him Col 3:8-10).

We have already covered this in our previous discussions and do not need to amplify the matter unduly.

- We must emphasise that the old man/nature must be put off as an active discipline. When we were justified by faith we put on Christ (Gal 3:27, symbolised by baptism). However, the repeated commands to put on the new nature and warnings to not live in the flesh show that the discipline of sanctification is to stay in Christ, to abide in Christ, to put on the new man because we so soon put on the old nature. In the heavenlies we



are always seen as in Christ, we are seated in him (Eph 2:6), but in this world we choose whether to live in the good of this or not. When we do not, we sin and then need to confess and be forgiven.

- The old nature will not go away quietly on its own, it gets worse; lusts do not diminish.
- Lusts are deceitful. They promise much but deliver little, sin never satisfies, but always leads on to the next sin. The more you give in to sin, the more new sins will be committed.
- Putting on the new man involves a renewing of the mind, a renewal of knowledge, thinking according to God not our old lives.
- The new nature is righteous and holy and resides in a man's spirit. This is where Christ dwells by his Spirit.
- Christian virtues and divine blessings are neither worked up from the flesh, nor dropped from heaven as a pre-wrapped package, but are found in Christ and are put on when Christ is put on in the new nature. For instance: tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness and long-suffering are put on (Col 3:12). Love is put on (Col 3:14). Note these are mentioned immediately after being commanded to put on the new man (Col 3:10).

### Conclusion

Although the old nature legally died on the cross, it must be daily put off. It will not be eradicated until God provides a new body at the Second Coming of Christ (1 Jn 3:2; 1 Cor 15:49). Compare English law which stipulates that after a divorce decree absolute, a man's wife is legally dead to him; he has no legal obligations to her but she is not physically dead.

The new nature must be put on for holiness to be expressed. Holiness is not an improved flesh, but the expression of the new man, the life of Christ. Behaving *like* Christ is not good enough. Divine testimony is when the *actual* life of Christ is manifested in the man by the power of the Spirit. This is the fruit of the Spirit.

### Metaphor

Putting off and putting on

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Standing against the devil

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

13 Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. (Eph 6:10-18)

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfil its* lusts. (Rm 13:12-14)

This passage is often used today against the backdrop of suffering or persecution, the context of opposition and difficult circumstances. The teaching here is eminently suitable for such a perspective. However, it is also key instruction for the individual believer in dealing with his own personal difficulties in holiness. One godly Puritan divine wrote an entire book based upon the 'wiles of the devil' which he saw as snares 'to draw the soul to sin', or 'to keep souls from holy duties'.<sup>13</sup> Paul here is using yet a different metaphor in Ephesians to instruct believers in living in the fulness of Christ.<sup>14</sup>

The first thing to say is that the armour mentioned is the life of Christ. Many teachers spend much time of separating the items of armour (based upon the Roman soldier he was incarcerated with at the time) and treating them as blessings from God to be appropriated one by one. But Paul's point, following from his earlier teaching in this letter is to put on Christ.<sup>15</sup> This is confirmed in Romans 13 when Paul uses Jewish parallelism when he says, **put on the armour of light ... put on the Lord Jesus Christ**. Notice also that Paul connects putting on armour to stand against the enemy with, casting off the works of darkness, walking properly and making no provision for the flesh, to *fulfil its lusts*. Putting on armour is about sanctification.

- We are only strong 'in the Lord', and then we have power beyond our measure. This means being 'in the lord' i.e. putting on the new nature, putting on the armour of the life of Christ. (v10) This section is about being in Christ in the context of temptation and spiritual attack. Previously in Ephesians, the context was dealing with our own internal lusts leading to sin.
- We can only stand against the devil if we are in the new nature, having on the armour of God - the life of Christ. (v11)
- Our opposition is spiritual wickedness. The power behind any earthly temptation is devilish and demonic. Their object is to get us into the old nature. (v12)
- The job of the believer is to stand. This means to put on the new nature and stay in it. (v13). If one is in the new man, one can withstand the attacks of evil. Our weakness is to be in the old man. There is no defence for a believer who is in the flesh and living in sin.
- Aspects of the new man that are most helpful in this standing against evil attacks are firstly, truth to gird our whole being. The basis of all our dealings in the world must be both honest and focused upon the word of God. Honesty without the word and insincere dealing with the word both cause failure. Jesus is the truth. We must be fundamentally focused upon truth in all we do. Secondly, our heart must be right. The breastplate covers the heart, and we must be righteous in everything. Sometimes Christians do the right thing in the wrong way - this is unrighteous. For instance, a valid criticism can be administered in a nasty way. This is not Christ-like and the criticism becomes invalid. Everything we do must be right. Christ is our righteousness and as we walk in him, we will be righteous like him. (v14)
- We must be ready to share the Gospel. Part of being in Christ is being missionary minded as he was. Satanic attacks must not stop us going somewhere, we must be ready to walk where God wants us to speak. Part of our protection is always being ready to share truth, especially the Gospel. (v15)
- Faith is a cover-all. The only thing that can dispel doubts and fears is faith. Even lies against us can be overcome by faith. Without a shield, a soldier can be ready and effective but killed from afar by a javelin or an arrow before he has confronted anyone.

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<sup>13</sup> Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, Banner of Truth.

<sup>14</sup> Other metaphors in Ephesians include: putting on and off, sitting, walking, being married etc.

<sup>15</sup> See Eph 1:3, 19, 23, 2:5, 6, 10, 18, 21, 3:6, 10-12, 16, 17-20 etc.

Faith is crucial in living the Christian life. The act of putting on the new nature is an act of faith since nothing is seen and nothing appears to have changed. We believe that we are in Christ and then act according to him. (v16)

- Our minds must be filled with salvation; that is we must have the mind of Christ. There is no defence if our minds are preoccupied with earthly, foolish things. (v17a)
- We must also take the word of God and use it effectively. Ultimately, Jesus is God's word, the fulness of God's thought manifest in human form. The Bible is the representation of Christ in words, the expression of God's mind. The sword here is a short stabbing sword used for close quarters fighting. We must be prepared to bring the word of God down and apply it effectively in situations that call for it. This may mean directing it against ourselves if we see that we are out of line with God's commands. It may also mean standing up for the truth. This is the only offensive weapon and means that the believer is to take the offensive when required. (v17b)
- We must pray always. When we are in need, we must make our supplications to God and ask for what is required. A silent Christian is a needy Christian. We must pray in the Spirit. This means we must be in the new nature or our prayers are ineffective. Prayers out of the flesh, even religious flesh, are worthless. We must watch that we are a praying people, there is great opposition to prayer. Finally, prayer must always be in conjunction with intercession, we must pray for those brethren in need and never forget them. (v18)

We stand

- Focused upon truth.
- Guarded with righteousness.
- Prepared to speak the Gospel.
- Covered and protected by faith.
- Our minds covered in salvation.
- Ready to use the word of God.
- Always praying for others and ourselves.

*Conclusion*

Standing is based upon a putting on; the armour must be put on. This is all about being in Christ and putting on the new nature. Putting on the armour and standing against temptation or attack is all about: casting off the works of darkness, walking properly, not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, and putting on the Lord Jesus Christ (Rm 13:12-14).

*Metaphor*

Stand

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War against the flesh / Living in the Spirit Rm 8

**1** *There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

**2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

**4** ... the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

**5** For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

**6** For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

**7** Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

**8** So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

10 And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors -- not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

17 and if children, then heirs -- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.

For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. (Gal 5:17)

Again a long passage is required to do justice to Paul's teaching.

First, we have to clear up a point - who are these carnal people? Many insist that there is no such thing as a carnal (fleshly) Christian, so Paul must be comparing believers with unregenerate sinners. Is this true? I believe that it is false. Paul is in the middle of a long section explaining sanctification and the need to develop after being justified. Why would he suddenly begin talking about unbelievers, a subject he finished in chapter 3? Paul definitely believed that Christians could be carnal because he addressed certain Christians as being carnal in 1 Cor 3:1-3. These were 'brethren' who were living in the flesh and manifesting signs of the old nature (strife, envy, sectarianism etc.).<sup>16</sup> Carnal Christians are immature believers who have not learned to put off their old nature and behave badly. If a person continues in a carnal state for a long time and never grows in grace, that person cannot be a genuine believer.

- God does not condemn those in Christ who walk in the Spirit. (v1) God's wrath is on the wicked not upon the righteous.<sup>17</sup> Whilst a true Christian will never feel the wrath of God in eternal judgment, does this mean that a believer can never grieve God or be chastised by God? Indeed no. If a believer actively sins, he grieves the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30) and can expect divine discipline as a father punishes a child that he loves (Heb 12:5-8).
- Verse 2/4 see Gal 5:18, 23.
- It is crucial to set the mind on the right thing. Believers must set their minds on Christ, on heavenly matters (Col 3:1-3). If your mind is fixed on earthly things and worldly pursuits, expect to be beset by earthly temptations. (v5)
- We must understand that the flesh is legally dead. In God's eyes it is finished and dead. It belongs to the realm of death. If a Christian sets his mind on the flesh the result will be death. All his works will be dead works. The pursuit of these works will not be peaceful but fraught with worry and strife. A key indicator to spot a godly person or a work with a divine testimony is - does it manifest peace or strife? (v6)

<sup>16</sup> I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. (1 Cor 3:1).

<sup>17</sup> He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. (Jn 3:36)

- The carnal (fleshly) mind is enmity against God; it is the enemy of God. There is no neutral ground here, the flesh is God's enemy. If we live in the flesh we side with God's enemy. It sins with no regret since it is not subject to God's law. (v7)
- Those who live in the flesh cannot please God. This is not just talking about unbelievers, but also Christians who choose to sin, who live in their old nature. Such are rebels at that time. (v8)
- Firstly, a genuine Christian is indwelt by the Spirit. If the Spirit is not in a person, they cannot be a Christian. Secondly, believers are not in the flesh but in the Spirit. Their true home is with God in Christ. The Holy Spirit dwells in the human spirit, in the new nature. The believer who has put off the old nature and put on the new is living in the Spirit. (v9)
- Christ lives in us by his Spirit thus the human spirit is full of life, standing righteously before God and receiving grace. ['Spirit' here = the human spirit.] While this order remains (the old nature put off), the lusts of the flesh will not be manifested in the body, but will be dead. The physical body also has the seeds of death in it and will die to be replaced by a spiritual body like that of Christ. The three tenses of salvation are: the (human) spirit has been saved, the soul is being saved and the body will be replaced in the future. Thus the whole man is sanctified.<sup>18</sup> (v10)
- Verse 11 is the key to power in sanctification. The promise is that genuine Christians (those in whom the Spirit dwells) will receive life from God just as he gave life to the Lord Jesus in the tomb. In Christ we died to our old man and were buried in Christ's death. Similarly, in Christ we will be raised up and given power to live a new life in the Spirit. The believer is to live in the Spirit, not his old life.
- Therefore, our obligation is not to the flesh, the old sinful life, but to the Spirit who raised us up. A spiritual principle is that those who live in the flesh die. The unregenerate who only ever live according to flesh will die eternally; but believers who put on the old nature and live in the flesh will be as good as dead - their works are dead. However, if we are led by the Spirit and mortify (put to death) the deeds of the body our lives will be full of spiritual vitality. This shows that putting off the old nature, putting to death the deeds of the body requires spiritual power only gained by following the Spirit. [Verse 13 has no application to the unregenerate that cannot put the deeds of the body to death. This verse is for believers who can. He is talking about deeds, about the habits of practical living, not being saved.] (v12-13)
- Those who do this show that they are God's children. In the spiritual realm, we are not only sons but also heirs with Christ. The spiritual riches granted to the new man are available for us as we walk in the Spirit.<sup>19</sup> (v14-17)

### *Conclusion*

Paul's argument is that we must live in the Spirit to manifest Christ with spiritual power. The Spirit gives us this power as we are opposed to the flesh and live as if it is dead. The moment we live in the flesh again, we express death. All the time we live in the Spirit we manifest peace, power, life and bear fruit for Christ.

### *Metaphor*

War / Life

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<sup>18</sup> Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thess 5:23) Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart. (1 Pt 1:22) Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (Jm 1:21)

<sup>19</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. (Eph 1:3).

Filled with the Spirit Eph 5:15-21

15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,  
 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.  
 17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*.  
 18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,  
 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,  
 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.

When Paul exhorts believers to walk carefully and wisely in the midst of a dark, evil world, he states that we need to understand the will of the Lord and be filled with the Spirit. Christians who are filled with the Spirit are those who praise God, edify their brethren in the assembly and give thanks for all things all the time expressing deep reverence for God.

What is being filled with the Spirit?

- It is contrasted with being drunk. Being drunk means being out of control as a result of intoxication. Your system has been poisoned by drink and your whole body cannot function properly - you cannot walk, see clearly, speak coherently or think straight. Every bodily function is impaired. Being filled with the Spirit means being completely overwhelmed with the Holy Spirit so that every part of your being is affected and controlled by the Lord: you think right, walk right, see clearly and speak truth. As a result, the person is a living testimony to God.
- Everyone needs to be filled all the time. The verb is an imperative present, which in the Greek has the sense of a continuous tense, we must be continually filled.
- The apostles were filled on several occasions (Acts 2:4, 4:8, 31, 9:17, 13:9, 52).
- Very few people are ever said to be full of the Spirit, so filled that no more was needed. Only three were ever said to be thus totally controlled by God: Jesus (Lk 4:1), Stephen (Acts 6:5, 55), Barnabas (Acts 11:24). Unless we are full, we need to be filled.
- This means that the human spirit is filled of the Holy Spirit in the new man, and the spirit controls the submissive human soul (the executive of the personality comprising the will, emotions and mind) which then effects the will of the Spirit of God in the material body. This is a submitted man (whose soul does not overpower his spirit); a meek, controlled man; a man who is dead to the flesh; a man who glorifies God.

### *Conclusion*

It is only those who are filled with the Spirit who are growing in grace. We must seek daily to be filled.

### *Metaphor*

filled

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Being 'in Christ' Eph 1:13

Scores of times in the New Testament (too many to list here) Paul tells us that we are 'in Christ' or 'in him', 'in whom' etc. Every aspect of the Christian life is predicated upon being 'in Christ'. We are nothing of ourselves - except rebellious flesh, but in Christ we are sons of God and inheritors with the saints in light. Everything is due to being in Christ. We grow in grace as we are in Christ.

Now being in Christ can sometimes mean, simply, that we are Christians; we are united with Christ and transferred out of the kingdom of darkness. But more often it is emphasising the practical union of believers with the Lord as their source of life now. How does righteousness come, it comes not by human effort, but from union with Christ which bears fruit by the Spirit: being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God (Phil 1:11). Our very lives must be lived continually in the practical awareness of this union:

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain (Phil 1:20-21).

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Gal 2:20)

For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col 3:3)

Over and over the Spirit brings us to crisis points where we cannot continue, where we are ready to give up, where the strength of our old life has failed us. Only then do we see that our flesh must be brought to nothing, where we die to our human strengths (as well as our sin) and can only live in Christ. The Christian life is definitely not an imitation of Christ as one famous book says; it is an actual living of the life of Christ, letting Christ live through me: I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Phil 4:13). We are only complete 'in him' (Col 2:10).

Do we want knowledge and wisdom, it is in Christ (Col 2:2-3). Do we want our needs supplied, they will be in Christ (Phil 4:19). How do we walk by faith, we walk in him (Col 2:6-7).

This is the only real testimony to God where his Son is manifest in human life by the Spirit. The testimony of the church is to be just like the human life of Jesus (as he is, so are we in this world 1 Jn 4:17). God was manifest through Jesus Christ the man, manifest through a human body. Now, the Lord is expressed through many bodies, not as an imitation but as actual manifestations of his life by the Spirit.<sup>20</sup> For this reason we can do more works than he did (Jn 14:12).

### *Conclusion*

It is one thing to die to sin by understanding our co-crucifixion with Christ, but it is another to die to ourselves and learn to live in Christ alone as our source of life. We must die to our strengths and good points as well as our sins if we are to maintain a true testimony to the Lord. It is Christ's life that is to be expressed through us. Our calling is in Christ alone, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil 3:14).

### *Metaphor*

In / Union

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Walking in the light, 1 Jn 1

**5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.**

**6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.**

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<sup>20</sup> But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed [transfigured] into the same image [likeness] from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor 3:18). You are an epistle of Christ, [an expression] ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart. (2 Cor 3:3)

7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *oursins* and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Again we do need to give a long and complete passage for examination. Notice that John, in this letter, uses many of the metaphors already used 'abide', 'walk', and so on but focuses upon one that is only occasionally used by Paul and Peter - being in 'light'. His exhortation, frequently misunderstood, also echoes Paul's teaching about the two natures of the believer - one that sins and one that is righteous.

- God is light; that is, God is pure. (v5)
- If we claim to be united to God, to be believers, we cannot walk in darkness. In other words, we cannot habitually sin, walk in corruption. (v6)
- As we walk in the light, that is walk in Christ by his Spirit (God is the light), two things follow: i) we have true fellowship with other brothers; ii) we are cleansed by the blood of Christ. What does this mean? Firstly, the old nature gets worse, it is never forgiven, never cleansed but is destroyed by God at the Second Coming. At the moment it is under the sentence of death but not eradicated. Our souls and bodies are neutral vehicles to express that which we determine.<sup>21</sup> They are meant to be the expression of Christ, temples for God; but when they follow satanic temptations they become a body of sin. When we walk in light, in the Spirit, our souls and bodies are continually cleansed. Our spirit is already cleansed. (v7)
- John confuses many folk here when he firstly says that we are cleansed, then that we have sin. This is to make people think carefully. In several places he says that we have no sin, and then that we have sin. Clearly, a believer has two natures, one that is full of sin, the other that is righteous in Christ. The flesh is a rebel to God and sins, the new nature is made in the likeness of Christ in righteousness. Christians must choose which to live in - this is the struggle of sanctification. (v8)
- When a believer walks in the flesh and commits sin, he must confess it to God in truth and openness. The believer must do this quickly - sin must be dealt with and not ignored. (v9)
- There is no such thing as entire sanctification, or sinless perfection, in this life. We deceive ourselves if we think we have no sin. (v10)

2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin.

He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.

10 He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

11 But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

John's purpose in writing is to exhort people to be sanctified and walk correctly. An easy sign to identify if believers are sinning is to see if they hate other brothers. This is not talking about the unregenerate, but about brethren. Hate is a fruit of darkness and causes spiritual blindness. A bitter person cannot see the truth. Love is a fruit of light and life. (2:1, 10-11)

3:6 Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

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<sup>21</sup> The choice is made in the heart, the gateway of the spirit and soul which controls the issues of life, Prov 4:23.



7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.

8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother.

14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother abides in death.

24 Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

- The new nature does not sin. Believers who have put on the new nature do not sin. Believers who are walking in the Spirit do not sin. Believers abiding in Christ do not sin. When they fall and sin, they are living in the flesh which knows nothing of God. (3:6)
- Righteous people are those who are walking in Christ, in the Spirit, and they do righteous things because Christ is righteous. Anyone who claims to be righteous and united to Christ, but does evil things, is a liar and is in darkness. (v7)
- Anyone who sins is of the devil, the one who tempts people to sin. Believers who sin are following the devil whose stomping ground is the old nature. (v8)
- Only that which is born of God does not sin, the new nature, this is the seed of the life of Christ in the believer. What is truly born of God cannot sin. (v9)
- The deeds of the body express that which motivates and dominates it. Unrighteousness springs from the devil working through the flesh. (v10)
- Again, a proof of being in the new nature is love for the brethren. Loving brothers shows that we are in life, in the new nature. Hating brothers shows that we are abiding in death, walking in the flesh. (v14)
- Repeating what Jesus told him during his last hours, John states that only those who abide in Christ keep the Lord's commandments. You cannot obey Christ while in the flesh, the flesh cannot please God. Those abiding in Christ have Christ abiding in them by his Spirit. (v24)

4:4 You are of God, little children,

13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *as* Savior of the world.

15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

- Again, true sons of God are known by having the Spirit of Christ. Those who abide in Christ are walking in the Spirit. (4:4, 13)
- Those who are genuine believers, who confess Christ in their lives (not just in words), have God abiding in them by the Spirit, and they also abide in God. (v15)
- Those abiding in God will manifest love in their lives. (v16)

5: 4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world -- our faith.

11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

8 We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

10 He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself;

- The flesh cannot overcome the world for it is allied to it. To overcome the world we must be in the new nature. The walk of faith is to believe what God has said and put on the new nature. The life of faith is abiding in Christ, walking in the Spirit, living in the new nature. Those that live in faith will overcome the world. (5:4)
- God's testimony is eternal life manifest in human beings. The life is not an arbitrary gift from heaven, it is the life of Christ, the life is in Christ. Whenever God gives power to strengthen character it is always an expression of life in Christ. Patience, kindness, faith, love etc. are not gifts sent down from heaven whenever we need them, they are the fruit of Christ's life. If we need patience, we must first put on the new nature, abide in Christ, and then we will manifest patience when the need arises. We must not pray for things God has already given us in Christ (e.g. patience), we must apply the truth he has shown us and walk in the Spirit, abide in Christ, put on the new nature. The life is in God's Son. (v11)
- Again, John explains that the new nature is born from God and cannot sin. He also explains that the genuine believer will be given grace to keep himself and be delivered from evil. God preserves those who are truly saved to the end. (v8)
- The believer has the witness of God in his heart, the presence of Christ by the Spirit. (v10)

Eph 5:8-10

8 For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

9 (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),

10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. (1 Thess 5:5)

Christians were once darkness. The old Adamic life is condemned and full of darkness. There is no good in it. Christians are now light, because they are in God who is light. The fruit of light is the fruit of the Spirit. When believers walk as children of light, they bear the fruit of the Spirit and behave acceptably to the Lord. Walking in the light results from abiding in Christ. By having the mind of Christ we can find out God's will.

### *Conclusion*

Christians can be in light or in darkness. Christians were once darkness - they had no light at all and were dead in sin, but now Christians have been given light, this light is the life of Christ. However, when they walk in the flesh, they extinguish the light and walk in darkness. When they do this they sin and destroy Christian unity. This is how strife begins in churches - some brothers are not walking in the light.

The new nature is the realm of light. John's favourite words for salvation are: light, life and love. They are all metaphors of Christ as the expression of God - he is the manifestation of God's love; he is the light and the life of God is in him. Since the new nature is the life of Christ in men, the new nature is the realm of light, love and life.

John here commands believers to walk in this nature, to walk in light, to walk in Christ's life.

### *Metaphor*

Being in light

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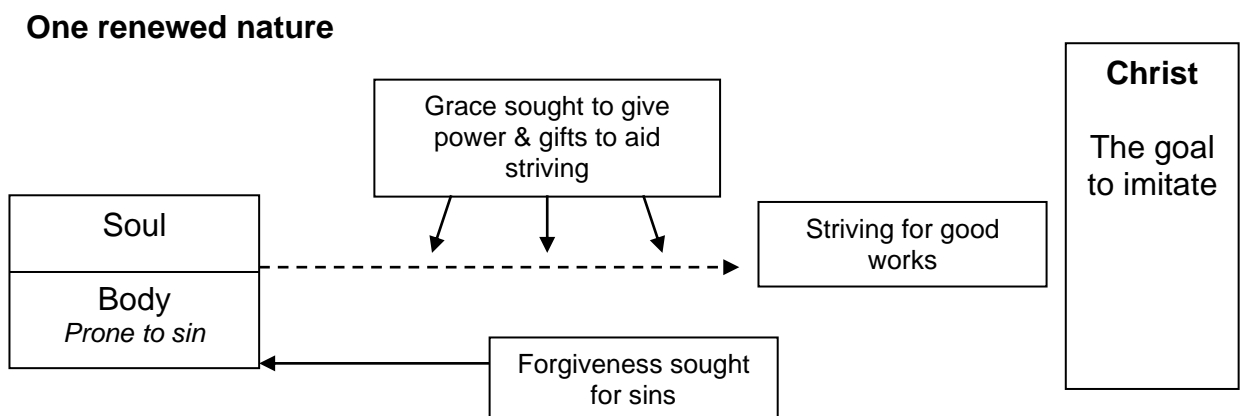
## Final Conclusion

By comparing and evaluating the different ways the NT explains sanctification, we see the broad picture of what it is and how it works. The key is all about living a new divine life; it is not an improvement of the old Adamic one.

The essence of the different metaphors is to stop living in the old life and live in the new life, the life given by God at conversion. It could be summarised as follows:

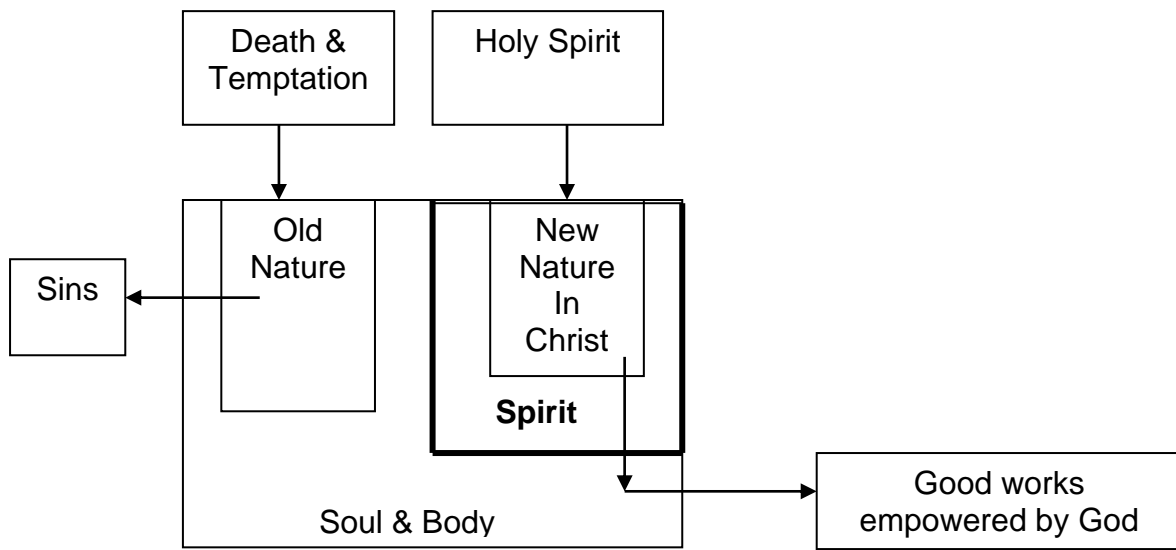
Before Conversion	After conversion
We were darkness.	We are now light, we must walk in the light.
We walked in the flesh.	We are now new creatures. We must not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
We were born in Adam.	We are now regenerated (born again) in Christ, we must walk in him, abide in him.
We were once just old nature, of the 'old man', a man of flesh.	We now have a new nature, the new man, a spiritual man. We must put on this new nature and put off the old one.
We once had no protection from Satan.	We now have the armour of God, the life of Christ; we must put this on and stand against the enemy.
We once lived in the realm of death.	We now have died to the old nature which resides in death, we are now alive in the Spirit, in Christ, and put to death daily the old man.
We once manifested the works of the flesh all the time.	We must now bear the fruit of the Spirit.

### THE WRONG METHOD OF SANCTIFICATION



# THE RIGHT METHOD OF SANCTIFICATION

## Two opposed natures at war



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