

# 2 Corinthians 5 Commentary

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2 CORINTHIANS - PAUL'S MINISTRY IN THE LIGHT OF THE INDESCRIBABLE GIFT

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Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

[Another Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

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Overview of Second Corinthians		
2Co 1:1-7:16 Character of Paul	2Co 8:1-9:15 Collection for the Saints	2Co 10:1-12:21 Credentials of Paul
Testimonial & Didactic	Practical	Apologetic
Past: Misunderstanding & Explanation	Present: Practical Project	Future: Anxieties
Apostle's Conciliation, Ministry & Exhortations	Apostle's Solicitation for Judean Saints	Apostle's Vindication of Himself
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2Co 1:1-7:16	2Co 8:1-9:15	2Co 10:1-12:21

Adapted & modified from [Jensen's Survey of the New Testament \(Highly Recommended Resource\)](#) & [Wilkinson's Talk Thru the Bible](#)

## INTRODUCTIONS TO SECOND CORINTHIANS:

- **IRVING JENSEN** - [Introduction and study tips](#) - excellent preliminary resource - scroll to page 1877 (Notes on both 1-2 Cor begin on p 1829)
- **JOHN MACARTHUR** [2 Corinthians Introduction - same as in the Study Bible](#)
- **JAMES VAN DINE** [2 Corinthians - Author, Purpose, Outline, Argument](#)
- **CHARLES SWINDOLL** - [2 Corinthians Overview](#)
- **MARK SEIFRID** - [The Message of Second Corinthians: 2 Corinthians as the Legitimation of the Apostle](#)
- **J VERNON MCGEE** - [2 Corinthians Introduction](#)
- **DAN WALLACE** - [2 Corinthians: Introduction, Argument, and Outline](#)
- **DAVID MALICK** - [An Introduction To Second Corinthians](#)

**2 Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.**

- we know: Job 19:25,26 Ps 56:9 2Ti 1:12 1Jn 3:2,14,19 5:19,20
- our: 2Co 5:4 4:7 Ge 3:19 Job 4:19 1Co 15:46-48 2Pe 1:13,14
- dissolved: Job 30:22 2Pe 3:11
- **we have a building from God**, : Jn 14:2,3 1 Co 3:9 Heb 11:10
- **a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens** Col 2:11 Heb 9:11,24 1Pe 1:4
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- **FOR IN DEPTH COMMENT ON THIS VERSE CLICK** [2 Corinthians 5:1](#)

## Related Passages:

Hebrews 11:9+ By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;

1 Corinthians 15:44+ (**RESURRECTION BODY**) it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

Philippians 3:21+ (**RESURRECTION BODY**) Who (JESUS) will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

1 John 3:2+ (**RESURRECTION BODY**) Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

Job 19:25-26 "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. 26 "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God;

Philippians 1:21+ - For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

2 Peter 1:13-14+ (**TENT METAPHOR USED BY PETER TO DESCRIBE THE PHYSICAL BODY**) I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly dwelling* (tabernacle, ESV note = "tent." See NET note below; skenoma from [skenoō](#) = pitch a tent), to stir you up by way of reminder, knowing that the laying aside of my *earthly dwelling* (skenoma) is imminent ("Death was knocking the door of his tabernacle!"), as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

**NET NOTE** - The use of the term **tabernacle** for the human body is reminiscent both of John's statements about Jesus ("he tabernacled among us" in John 1:14; "the temple of his body" in John 2:21) and Paul's statements about believers (e.g., "you are God's building" in 1 Cor 3:9; "you are God's temple" in 1 Cor 3:16; "your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit" in 1 Cor 6:19; "holy temple" in Eph 2:21). It is precisely because the Shekinah glory has been transferred from the OT temple to the person of Jesus Christ and,

because he inhabits believers, to them, that the author can speak this way. His life on earth, his physical existence, is a walking tabernacle, a manifestation of the glory of God.

1 Peter 2:11+ (**SPEAKS TO THE TEMPORARY NATURE OF OUR "TENTS" ON TERRA FIRMA**) Beloved, I urge you as **aliens** (paroikos) and **strangers** (parepidemois) to abstain (apechomai present tense requiring [dependence on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) from fleshly lusts (epithumia), which wage war (strateuomai in present tense - unceasing "strategic" spiritual warfare) against the soul (psuche).

James 4:14+ (**SPEAKS OF THE TEMPORARY NATURE OF OUR LIFE**) Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

Psalms 90:5-6 You have swept them away like a flood, they fall asleep; In the morning they are like grass which sprouts anew. 6 In the morning it flourishes and sprouts anew; Toward evening it fades and withers away.

Isaiah 38:12 (**EARTHLY LIFE AS A TENT**) Like a shepherd's tent my dwelling (physical life) is pulled up and removed (Lxx = kataluo) from me (speaking of the end of his life); as a weaver I rolled up my life. He cuts me off from the loom (as a finished fabric cut off from the loom); from day until night You make an end of me. (English Translation of the Septuagint = "My life has failed from among my kindred: I have parted with the remainder of my life: it has gone forth and departed from me, as one that having pitched a tent takes it down again: my breath was with me as a weaver's web, when she that weaves draws nigh to cut off the thread.")

Proverbs 23:18 Surely there is a future, And your hope will not be cut off.

1 Peter 1:4+ (BELIEVERS POSSESS) an inheritance (kleronomia) which is imperishable (aphthartos) and undefiled (amiantos) and will not fade away (amarantos), reserved (tereo in the perfect tense = permanence!) in heaven for you.

## **CONTRAST OF OUR BODIES PRESENT VERSUS FUTURE**

In 2 Cor 5:1-8 Paul describes our earth (present, temporal ) and heavenly (future, eternal) houses (bodies). In a word death is not the end of the story!

**Ray Pritchard** - This passage as a whole is one of the most difficult among all the things Paul wrote, and yet once you get past the difficulties, there is a simplicity about it that attracts the believing heart. Even if we do not understand every detail, the first impression it leaves with the reader gives hope as we look ahead to the end of our earthly journey and wonder, "What's next?" Paul tells us in very picturesque language that we have nothing to fear, that no matter how we die or when or where, and no matter what may be our physical condition at the moment of death, we have a promise from God that death itself cannot break. ([Death is not the end](#))

**Guzik** - Paul has just contrasted our light affliction with a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and things which are seen and temporary with things that are not seen and eternal (2 Corinthians 4:17-18). Now, Paul will write more about this contrast between the earthly and the eternal. ([2 Corinthians 5](#))

**William MacDonald** observes that "Paul opens the chapter with the assurance that if his earthly house should be destroyed (as a result of the sufferings mentioned in the preceding chapter) he knows he has a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (Ed: And again Paul's hope [absolute certainty] is not some disembodied state but his reception of the eternal glorified body). ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Matt Postiff** - With regard to 2Co 4:16-18, please note carefully that **'things which are not seen'** are things presently hidden from man's eyes. It does not mean they are not material or visible, as if the eternal state is all just a ghostly thing with no tangibility to it. Spiritual and material can go together simultaneously. In fact, they should be working together in our lives right now! The reason I say this is because of the impact of Platonic philosophy upon Christian thought. Plato postulated a **metaphysical dualism** in which there are two realms: the realm of the forms/ideas which we can perceive with our intellect, and the realm of perception which we can perceive with our physical senses (See [What is dualism?](#)). This comes down to us through the **Gnostic heresy**, which says that the immaterial is good and the material is evil. It is also pertinent to remember from the previous section that the ministry is not to be done for temporal rewards or the honor of men (1 Peter 5:2). These are included among the "seen" things which will pass away. The motivation of the ministry is far more God-centered than that! We hope not for temporal reward, but for the resurrection, for eternal glory and non-temporal things, and for the results of ministry that will cause more and more people to give thanks to God for His mercy. The overall message of 2Co 5:1 is that though our present bodies will, in the end, totally wear out and perish, we have an unseen body awaiting us. ([Sermon](#))

**For** ([gar](#)) - "The preposition **“for”** at the beginning of the verse ties 2Co 5:1 back to 2Co 4:16-18. Here is how: The outward man is on the decline as we saw in 2Co 4:16. In the worst case scenario, so to speak, the outward man does die. But that is OK ("it is not the end of the world"), for we have learned that we are awaiting a far better eternal glory, and the things which we don't see with human eyes are eternally lasting. So 2Co 5:1 then focuses upon **one of the specific eternal blessings that await us, one of the things that is not seen. This is the spiritual, glorified, resurrection body that we will receive So this verse sets up a contrast between the present body and the future one. The contrast is not a material versus a non-material contrast, but a present versus future contrast**" ([Postiff](#))

**We know that if the earthly** (epigeios) **tent** (skenos) **which is our house** (oikia) **is torn down** (kataluo used for "striking down a tent") - Note that Paul uses the plural pronoun **we** throughout chapter (25x in 15 verses!). This is often called the "editorial **we**" and is in essence equivalent to first person singular. The good news for us today is **we** (pun intended) can insert our names/identities with that **“we”** (in most of Paul's uses). (See Technical Note below on different names) **Know** is eido which means knowing beyond a shadow of a doubt, showing confidence in the assertion that there is something beyond this perishing body. As to what happens after we die, science has nothing useful to tell us. Death is a mystery to every unbeliever but not to Paul (or us) - he knew (we know!). It is not knowledge he learned in school, etc, but knowledge God's Spirit had revealed to his heart. Divine inspiration/revelation is the only way Paul could have had knowledge of the future state of our bodies. The word **“IF”** is 3rd class conditional suggesting uncertainty regarding the time of our house being torn down but not the fact that it will happen. In other words the **“IF”** is not a hypothetical **IF** but a chronological **IF** (when the dissolution of our body occurs - at death or rapture). **Earthly** simply refers to our physical body as it is outfitted for earthly existence. We come from the dust of the earth so both our origin and capabilities are **earthly** (Ge 2:7, Eccl 3:20, Eccl 12:7).

**Trapp on we know** - "Not we think, or hope only; this is the top-gallant of faith, the triumph of trust; this is, as Latimer calls it, the sweet-meats of the feast of a good conscience. There are other dainty dishes in this feast, but this is the banquet."

Paul was a tentmaker by trade (Acts 18:3+) and here uses the metaphor of a **tent** to describe our mortal bodies on earth (skenos like the tabernacle in OT - [skene](#) in Acts 7:44+) Just as God had appointed the OT Tabernacle as a temporary place of worship for Israel after departing Egypt and preparing to enter the Promised Land, so too God has give believers a temporary place to worship, our "Holy Tabernacle (temple 1Co 6:19)" in earthly tents, the moment we by grace through faith "left Egyptian" (so to speak) were delivered from bondage to sin, Satan, the evil world system and fear of death, in anticipation of our future glorious resurrection body. Our bodies as a **tent** gives a great picture for everyone knows that tents are temporary, movable, dwelling places (cf "the things which are seen are temporal" - 2Co 4:18), for a time and a purpose, generally indicating a nomadic or pilgrim lifestyle (Heb 11:9+ cf 1Pe 1:1+, 1Pe 2:11+). To Paul his **tent** is something that he wears now, but will shortly put off. Like setting up and tearing down a literal tent, our bodies will be "taken down" at the end of our lives. Our life is temporary (and short - Jas 4:14+)! When the purpose is fulfilled, the **tent** stakes are removed and the body moves on up to "higher ground." In [the passage above](#) Peter used the same metaphor of a **dwelling** (tabernacle, tent) to describe his body and his imminent departure from that dwelling by death. He also uses the metaphor of a **house**, but one that was soon to be torn down or "demolished" by the "wrecking company" named "Death." **Torn down** (kataluo) means literally to unloose or "loosen down" (think of pulling up the "tent pegs" of our "earthly tent") which is very appropriate to the tent metaphor and thus means to "take down" (dismantle, detach) our "earthly tent" (death) for it is time to travel on. **Torn down** does not mean [annihilation](#) for 2Co 5:8 clearly teaches absent from the body present with the Lord (Hallelujah)! Paul is saying that our bodies are like tents which will be **torn down** at the time of our death. At that time the "tent" (the believer's body) goes into the grave, whereas our spirit and soul of go to be with the Lord. The temporary nature of an earthly "tent" also reminds us that we are to be but temporary residents in this short span of time called "life".

**Guzik** adds that **torn down** "is the very same word used for *“striking down a tent”* One day, God will *“strike the tent”* and we will receive a new building from God, a place to live in through all eternity...This means that we are more than our bodies, and explains why Paul could consider all the pain and discomfort in his body a light affliction compared to the eternal weight of glory to come. It is a mistake to say, "my body isn't me." In truth, my body is me, but only part of me. There is much more to me than this body. ([2 Corinthians 5](#))

**Spurgeon** - Many people are in a great fright about the future, yet here Paul is viewing the worst thing that could happen to him (death) with such complacency that he likens it to nothing worse than the **pulling down of tent** in which he was making shift to reside for a little season.

Believers of all people should be living in preparation for dying which is the way Paul lived (cp Gal 2:20+)! I like the way **Spurgeon** so aptly described this style of "living" **"No man would find it difficult to die who died every day.** (ED: cf Mk 8:34+, Lk 9:23+) He would have practised it so often, that he would only have to die but once more; like the singer who has been through his rehearsals, and is perfect in his part, and has but to pour forth the notes once for all, and have done." (Amen!)

**J I Packer** asks the question we all do well to answer..."How many Christians live their lives packed up and ready to go?"

**Craig Keener** - Greek writers described the body as a vessel, a house, a tent and often as a tomb; Paul says that a better body awaits. (IVP Bible Background Commentary)

**D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones** put it well noting that "If a philosophy of life cannot help me to die, then in a sense it cannot help me to live."

**Matt Postiff** - Certainly we should conclude from this section that it is not wise to focus too much on our present existence, given its temporary nature. What hope we have!

*"Life is a bridge. Cross over it, but build no house on it."*

- Indian Proverb

**TECHNICAL NOTE ON "WE" = Editorial we.** One has to check the context of each use to see whether the writer intends it to be an "editorial we" or a literal "we" in the sense of describing the writer plus his associates (as Paul clearly does in 1Th 1:2) The use of the first-person plural (**we**) for the first-person singular (I). Also called the **epistolary plural** and **literary plural**. [Click here](#) for more detailed discussion by Daniel Wallace in Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics - page 394

**THOUGHT** - Let the significance of what "**we know**" sink deep into your soul and renew your mind. Knowing these truths that speak of our future should motivate and energize our present passing life. Believers can live with a "Pauline" like anticipation even in times of affliction and trial because we know. **We know** that what is seen is temporal but what is coming and now unseen is eternal. As one has said "Until you are ready to die, you are not really ready to live."

"We are more sure to arise out of our graves than out of our beds."

-- Thomas Watson

**We have a building** (oikodome) **from God**, **a house** ([oikos](#)) **not made with hands** (acheiropoietos), **eternal** (aionios) **in the heavens** - Paul is painting a dramatically contrasting picture (present body vs resurrection body) = (1) tent vs building, (2) natural bodies (implied) vs supernatural bodies (made without hands), (3) temporal (implied) vs eternal, (4) on earth vs in heaven. **We** (remember that includes you dear reader!) **have** is the verb [echo](#) (have, possess, hold) in the present tense meaning we continually possess this sure prophetic promise of a **building from God**. **Building from God** is a metaphor for our resurrection bodies (1Co 15:44), not our heavenly home, the latter described by Jesus in Jn 14:2-3 (A number of commentaries favor it to be our "home" but context is king in interpretation and clearly Paul is taking about literal bodies not literal buildings!). Our future possession is so sure Paul uses the present tense to speak of it as if it were already in our possession, for we look with the eye of faith not at the temporal but the eternal! (2Co 4:18). In a very real sense "We possess the title (deed) to it (the building from God) now by faith. "Faith is the title-deed (hupostasis) to things hoped for" (Heb 11:1+). Paul wants to be sure that his readers knew this truth about the future to allow us to live in light of the truth about this present life. **Not made with hands** (supernatural, miraculous) simply amplifies **from God** and speaks of ""what is spiritual, transcendent, and eternal, not to what is earthly, physical, and temporal." (MacArthur) The same Greek word (acheiropoietos) is used by Paul in Col 2:11+ to describe the supernatural "circumcision made without hands" when the Spirit caused us to be born again. The third and final use of acheiropoietos was by Jesus in Mk 14:58+ describing His own body to be resurrected after 3 days - "I will build another **made without hands**!" **Eternal** describes our resurrection body which is not a temporal body but is among the things unseen (2Co 4:18). In short our temporal **earthly** body we have now is soon to be replaced by an **eternal** heavenly body, a body perfectly supernaturally outfitted to handle the glories of heaven! [Maranatha!](#)

This world is not my home, I am just a passin' through,  
My treasures are laid up, somewhere beyond the blue,  
The angels beckon me from Heaven's golden shore,  
And I can't feel at home in this world any more.

**Postiff on from God** - Just like the body of the first man was created by God as recorded in Genesis, and just like God formed us (Jer. 1:5, Isa 44:2, Isa 44:24, Isa 49:5), He also is the designer and builder of the resurrection body. ([Sermon](#))

**MacDonald** asks why does Paul say **made without hands** because "Our present bodies **are not made with hands**; so why should he emphasize that our future, glorified bodies will not be made with hands? The answer is that the expression not made with hands means "not of this creation." This is made clear in Hebrews 9:11, where we read, "*But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.*" What Paul is saying in 2 Corinthians 5:1 is that whereas our present bodies are suited to life on this earth, our future, glorified bodies will not be of this creation. They will be especially designed for life in heaven. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**David Garland** has an interesting thought on the phrase "**Not made with hands**" stating that it "contrasts something that is temporary, impure, and incomplete (**made with hands**) with something enduring, incorruptible, and finished—something made by

God. In Scripture something "**made with hands**" is connected to idolatry and implies impurity (Lev 26:1, 30; Isa 2:18; 10:11; 16:12; 19:1; Da 5:4, 23; 6:26; Acts 7:48; 17:24; Col 2:11). ([New American Commentary - 2 Corinthians](#))

John uses our glorious **future hope** as a motivator for present **pure living**...

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, **when He appears, we shall be like Him**, because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1Jn 3:2+, 1Jn 3:3+)

Paul writes that believers should be motivated not to set our minds on earthly things (Php 3:19+)...

For (TERM OF EXPLANATION - WHY WE SHOULD NOT SET OUR MIND ON EARTHLY THINGS) our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait (apekdechomai from in the present tense = our lifestyle, our habitual attitude is waiting with great anticipation) for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who will transform (metaschematizo) the body of our humble (tapeinosis) state into conformity with (summorphos) the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power (energeia) that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Php 3:20 21+)

**Beecher** on 2 Cor 5:1 - Living is death: dying is life. We are not what we appear to be. On this side of the grave, we are **exiles**; on that, **citizens**; on this side, **orphans**; on that, **children**; on this side, **captives**; on that, **freemen**; on this side, **disguised, unknown**; on that, **disclosed** and proclaimed as the sons of God.

**Spurgeon** - Is not this grand courage on the part of the apostle? With all the world against him, and himself "always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake," he looks at the new body, the new house that God is making for him, and he reckons that, to shuffle off this mortal coil will be no loss to him, since, when he loses the tent in which he lives here, he will go to "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

**Spurgeon** - Our affliction is light compared with the glory that is so soon to be revealed to us and in us. How soon our mortal life must end! But does the brevity of life cause us any anxiety? Oh, no! "We have a building from God, an eternal dwelling in the heavens, not made with hands." And once we reach that blest abode of all the saints and look back on our earthly experiences, we will feel that any affliction we had to endure was light, indeed, compared with the unutterable bliss that will then be our eternal portion

**George Bernard Shaw** remarked, "The statistics on death have not changed. One out of one person dies."

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**Rod Mattoon summarizes 2Co 5:1-4** - What is Paul saying here? This section is a very difficult one to understand and there are a variety of opinions about it. Here is my opinion. The promise of a heavenly body caused Paul and other believers to groan for it. What an appropriate description... "groan." Doctors today make their living listening to groaning tents. A dermatologist tries to keep the canvass of our tent in good shape. The family doctor spends his life patching up and stitching up this tent of ours. The orthopedic doctor tries to keep our tent legs from pulling loose. Someone once asked John Quincy Adams how he was personally doing. Adams replied, "I am very well, thank you. However, the house in which John Adams lives, is growing old. The thatch is wearing thin, and it trembles in every gale. I think John Quincy Adams will have to soon move out, but he himself is very well, sir."

We groan, especially as we get older. Why do we groan? We groan today, as they did back then, because we feel the pains associated with mortality, namely our physical limitations, sickness, heartaches, and the increasing disabilities that accompany advancing age. We groan also because of the *stress, mess, tests, unrest, and distress* of this life. How many times in frustration or great stress have we said or felt, "Lord, just go ahead and take me home! Lord, please come today and get me out of here!"

The Christian does not groan in his or her present body because he or she wants to get rid of it. We really are not going around hoping, begging, or longing to die today! We groan because we long to receive the immortal heavenly bodies that God has promised us. God's promises of something better make us dissatisfied with what we have now. We are yearning and pining for what we don't have right now, but what we will have someday.

Paul said he "earnestly desired" his glorified body. He longed or pined for it. Having put on our heavenly bodies, we will not be naked. In other words, we will not be spirits without bodies. In this body that we have, we groan because we are burdened, weighed down or pressed by the pressures of this life.

We groan, not because we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us now. We groan because we want to put on our new glorified body so that our earthly decaying body will be swallowed up by life eternal in Heaven. Not only the promise of a glorified body, but pining for it and the blessings of Heaven will help us to keep one eye on eternity. ([2 Corinthians - Treasures from 2 Corinthians 1-7](#))

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**ILLUSTRATION - SAFELY HOME** - Eric Barker, a missionary from Great Britain, spent over 50 years in Portugal preaching the Gospel, often under adverse conditions. During World War II, the situation became so critical that he was advised to send his wife and eight children to England for safety. His sister and her three children were also evacuated on the same ship. Although his beloved relatives were forced to leave, he remained behind to carry on the work. On the Lord's Day following their departure, Pastor Barker stood before his congregation and said, "I've just received word that all my family have arrived safely home!" He then proceeded with the service as usual. Later, the full meaning of his words became known to his people. He had been handed a wire just before the church service informing him that a submarine had torpedoed the ship, and everyone on board had drowned. He knew that because all were believers they had reached a more "desired home." Although overwhelmed with grief, he managed by the grace of God to live above his circumstances and to stay on the firing line for Jesus Christ. The knowledge that his family was enjoying the bliss of Heaven comforted his heart and helped him to keep one eye on eternity. Keeping one eye on eternity involves the promise of a new body. Secondly, it involves pining for our new body. Notice verses two through four (2Co 5:2-4). ([Rod Mattoon - Treasures from 2 Corinthians, Volume 1 - online](#)).

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**Illustration** - Over the triple doorways of the Cathedral of Milan there are three inscriptions spanning the splendid arches. Over one is carved a beautiful wreath of roses, and underneath is the legend, "All that which pleases is but for a moment." Over the other is sculptured a cross, and there are the words, "All that which troubles us is but for a moment." But underneath the great central entrance to the main aisle is the inscription, "That only is important which is eternal." If we realize these three truths, we will not let trifles trouble us, nor be interested so much in the passing pageants of the hour. We would live, as we do not now, for the permanent and eternal (See 2Co 4:17 18+).

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**R. C. Gillie.** The words often on Jesus' lips in His last days express vividly the idea, "going to the Father." We, too, who are Christ's people, have vision of something beyond the difficulties and disappointments of this life. We are journeying towards fulfillment, completion, expansion of life. We, too, are "going to the Father." Much is dim concerning our home-country, but two things are clear. It is home, "the Father's House." It is the nearer presence of the Lord. We are all wayfarers, but the believer knows it and accepts it. He is a traveller, not a settler.

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**How beautiful must be our future home** - A little girl was taking an evening walk with her father. Wonderingly, she looked up at the stars and exclaimed: "Oh, Daddy, if the wrong side of heaven is so beautiful, what must the right side be!"

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### **C H Spurgeon - OUR EARTHLY HOUSE. 2 Corinthians 5:1**

This poor body of ours, which at times is so full of aches and pains, will one day be taken away to make room for a more glorious one. This one is getting worn-out; some parts of it have already fallen away. It is like a very old lath and plaster building, which cannot last much longer and seldom stands to the end of the ninety-nine year lease. It soon crumbles and, by-and-by with all of us, the old house will fall to pieces and be done with.

Shall we then worry? Shall our soul cry concerning the body, "Alas my sister! Alas my brother"? No! "He takes away the first that He may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9). As we have carried the image of the earthly in this body of humiliation, we will, in the second condition of this body, carry the image of the heavenly. "The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:42-44).

"He takes away the first that He may establish the second." And what a glorious second that will be! Our resurrection body will know no pain, no weariness, no weakness, no sign of disease, no sin, and no possibility of corruption or death. Well may we sing: O glorious hour! O blessed abode! Since this poor body will be made like the glorious body of Christ Jesus our Savior, let the first body go, without a murmur or a sigh.

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### **Vance Havner - THE TENT AND THE BUILDING 2 Corinthians 5:1.**

I awake each morning to find myself still in this old body in this old world. But shortly I put off this old tent and then await my new home, my new resurrection body. Paul longed for that new garment, his "Easter outfit." He does not have the resurrection body yet and there is much about the intermediate state of the spirits now absent from the body and present with the Lord that we do not understand, but the soul does not sleep. Paul was not anticipating sleep, but to be with Christ which is far better.

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**"ONE OF FIVE HEADING HOME"**

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have . . . an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 Corinthians 5:1

A story in our local newspaper one day during World War II was captioned: "One of Five Heading Home." The account, pertaining to my family, stated that Peter, a Marine (one of five of us who were in the service), was coming home on an extended furlough after years of almost continuous frontline combat duty. My parents were deeply grateful that God had spared his life, for he, more than the rest of us, had been exposed to a great deal of danger. While he was here, however, a tragedy occurred. A telegram came which bore sad tidings. Another son, Cornelius, who was only 20 years old, had died as a result of antiaircraft fire while on a bombing mission! My father and mother received the news calmly because they knew the Savior, and were assured that His will was always best. They were confident that their son had gone to be with the Lord. One member of the family exclaimed, "How true that caption in the newspaper the other day: 'One of Five Heading Home!'" What a blessing to have the comfort of the Scriptures at a time like that!

As a pastor I have seen many leave this world to be with Jesus without expressing any fear. They too recognize that Heaven is Home! It is our Father's house of many mansions (John 14:2). It is the place where we shall meet our Elder Brother (Heb. 2: 17), and where loved ones who died in Christ will once again be reunited. Tender ties, severed by death, will there be re-established, never to be broken again. New friendships also will be made, for we shall meet the saints of all the ages. We therefore have a deep and rich comfort in the midst of our grief. Although we mourn, we sorrow not as the worldly man, for we know we shall meet our dear ones again in God's bright and blessed tomorrow!

We are but strangers here,  
Heaven is our Home;  
Earth is a desert drear,  
Heaven is our Home.  
—T. R. Taylor

Heaven, the "haven of the happy," is best spelled "H-O-M-E"! —Bosch

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## **MORTALITY SWALLOWED UP OF LIFE -- 2Co 5:1.**

THIS CHAPTER begins with **We know**. There is no shadow of uncertainty. From first to last it is saturated with unwavering conviction. When it was written Faith and Hope had almost faded out of the world. Men and women were groping in the wilderness of atheism, with no star in their sky, and no oasis in their march. In the midst of a decadent civilization and vanished hope, Paul, and others who stood with him, dared to avow that there were certain facts of which man might be absolutely sure. They were not proved by argument or analogy, but discerned by the Spirit's intuition, and proved by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We must always distinguish between theories, which change with the various moods of human thought, and the eternal facts, which are established on solid testimony, and are as steadfast as the Throne of the Eternal. "We know"--there was an accent of certainty in those words, which changed the outlook of the world!

God's Objective. It is an immense help in this human life to know the direction in which God's fiery cloud or pillar is leading us. If only we can get a clue to what God is meaning in our life, it will smooth out many perplexities and disentangle many a ravelled skein. What is God doing for you and me? The Apostle answers--He is endeavouring to bring it about that our mortality may be swallowed up of life. God wants to wipe out in each of us all traces of the Fall. It is His purpose to eliminate everything which brands us as members of an exiled race, so that our mortality, whether of spirit, soul, or body, may be swallowed up by Life--"the life of which our veins are scant, the life for which our spirits pant, more life and fuller!" Think of it! For thee, and me, and all who have been translated from the region of darkness, and brought into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love! Mortality engulfed in Life! We cannot fathom it! We know not what we shall be, we only know that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Such is God's objective. He is working for us and in us, for this very thing!

PRAYER Carry me over this last long mile, Man of Nazareth, Christ for me! Speak to me out of the silent night, That my spirit may know, as onward I go, That Thy pierced hands Are lifting me over the ford. AMEN.

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## **A W Tozer - Blessedness to Come (2 Corinthians 5:1)**

A lot of people talk about going to heaven in spite of the feeble hope popular religion affords.

Any valid hope of a state of blessedness beyond the incident of death must be in the goodness of God and in the work of atonement accomplished for us by Jesus Christ on the Cross.



The deep, deep love of God is the fountain out of which flows our future beatitude; and the grace of God in Christ is the channel by which it reaches us. The Cross of Christ creates a moral situation where every attribute of God is on the side of the returning sinner.

The true Christian may safely look forward to a future state that is as happy as perfect love wills it to be. Since love cannot desire for its object anything less than the fullest possible measure of enjoyment for the longest possible time, it is virtually beyond our power to conceive of a future as consistently delightful as that which Christ is preparing for us.

And who is to say what is possible with God?

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### **David Jeremiah - THE LAST LECTURE -- 2 CORINTHIANS 5:1**

When Professor Randy Pausch learned he was dying of pancreatic cancer, he gave a talk to his students at Carnegie Mellon University. His presentation circulated widely on the Internet, and then it was published in his book titled *The Last Lecture*. In an interview with *Reader's Digest*, Pausch said that his life was measured now in months, not years, and that he simply wanted to do what good he could do "on my way out of the building."

That's reminiscent of Paul's teaching in 2 Corinthians 5. We're laboring now in an earthly tent that is passing away, but we have an eternal house in the heavens. We don't know if our remaining days on earth are measured in years, months, weeks, or minutes. Our times are in His hands, and our goal is to do all the good we can on our way out of the tent: "Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him" (verse 9).

JOHN WESLEY - Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, in all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave  
Awaits alike the inevitable hour  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.  
Gray's Elegy

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### **HOW ARE YOU TODAY?**

Wilfred Yoder is one of the most enthusiastic Christians I know, even though he has suffered with the pain of arthritis for many years. When people greet him and inquire, "How are you today?" he cheerfully answers, "Just fine!"

Those who know of his pain sometimes question his sincerity. "How can you say you're fine when you're in so much pain?" Wilfred's standard response is: "How I feel has very little to do with how I am. You see, the part of me that hurts is just a shell, not the real me, and the real me is just fine!"

What Wilfred calls a shell, Paul called a tent (2 Cor. 5:1). And the "real me" that Wilfred refers to, the apostle called the inward man (2Co 4:16). Although Wilfred's earthly tent is painful and perishing, he realizes that it is after all just a temporary housing for the inward man. One day he will exchange it for his permanent home awaiting him in heaven. That is his confidence. But until then, the inward Wilfred is conscious of being renewed daily.

How are you today? Is your tent drooping? Remember, if Christ is your Savior and Lord, a perfect body awaits you one day. But until then, no matter what's on the outside, on the inside we can say, "I'm just fine!" -- Joanie E. Yoder

Just a few more days left for toiling,  
Just a few more nights, dark and cold,  
Then our tents will be folded forever--  
We shall trade them for mansions of gold.  
-- Meadows

Although our body is perishing,  
our spirit can be flourishing.

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### **Vance Havner on We know -**

A doctor friend of mine gave me a book composed of the statements of faith, or rather of the lack of faith, of many prominent writers. I read it awhile and was growing rather weary of it when the radio began to broadcast from somewhere those precious lines

of that great hymn:

Change and decay in all around I see;  
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

I threw down the book and said, "Thank God, I don't have to read such guesswork."

1. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12).
2. "If any man will do his will, he shall know the doctrine" (John 7:17).
3. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).
4. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14).
5. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).
6. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Cor. 5:1).

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**Spurgeon on WE KNOW in 2 Corinthians 5:1** - When I was a boy it would have seemed odd to me to meet with a man who gloried in being an ignoramus, and yet that is the Latin for that Greek word 'agnostic.' Is it not singular to hear a man boastfully say, 'I am an ignoramus'? How different is our apostle! He says 'we know'. How did he know? First, Paul knew that he had a Father in heaven, for he felt the spirit of sonship; he knew also that his Father had a house, and he was certain that if ever he lost the tent in which he lived he should be sure to be welcomed into his own Father's house above. How do our children know that if ever they are in need of a house they can come home to us? Did they learn that from their tutors at school? No, their childhood's instinct teaches them that our house is their home, just as chickens run under the mother-hen without needing to be trained. Because they are our children they feel that as long as we have a house they have a house too; Paul, therefore, unhesitatingly said, 'We know'; and we know the same through like confidence in our Father's love. In the house of the many mansions we feel quite sure of a hearty welcome in due time. Shut out from our Father's home we cannot be! Houseless wanderers while our royal Father dwells in his palace we cannot be! We are not merely hopeful on this matter, but certain; and therefore we say, 'I know.' Paul knew, again, that he had an elder brother, and that this brother had gone before to see to the lodging of the younger brethren. Paul remembered that Jesus had said, 'I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.' So Paul had no question whatever.

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### **Doorway to Heaven**

We are . . . well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. — 2 Corinthians 5:8

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:1-8

In his book *God Cares for You*, Walter B. Knight gives this account of the memorial service in 1929 for the widely known Bible teacher and author F. B. Meyer:

"London has seldom witnessed a funeral such as was held for him. There was not a single note of grief or tragedy heard. The Scriptures all spoke of the Christian's hope of immortality; and Easter hymns were sung. As the organ began to play at the conclusion of the service, the vast audience rose and stood with bowed heads, waiting for the funeral march to begin. But to their surprise they heard the triumphant notes of the 'Hallelujah Chorus.' What music could have been more appropriate! A faithful soldier of the cross had been ushered into the presence of his King."

Many people are terrified by the thought of dying. It is looked upon as the most tragic of all our human experiences. To be sure, there's pain in being separated from those who are dear to us. The physical discomfort that sometimes accompanies dying is not pleasant to endure. At times our faith may falter as we lose sight of the glory that awaits us. That's why we must never forget that death for the Christian is but the doorway to heaven! By: Richard DeHaan

When all my labors and trials are o'er,  
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,  
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore

Will through the ages be glory for me.

—Gabriel

When a Christian dies, earth's story ends and heaven's glory begins.

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### **Robert Morgan - If Our Earthly Tent ...**

Thomas Jonathan Jackson overcame many hardships in life. Orphaned at an early age, he worked hard and snatched up whatever schooling he could find. Through Herculean effort, he secured an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy and finished high in his class. While serving with U.S. forces in Central America, he began studying Christianity, gave himself to Christ, and was baptized at age 25.

In 1857, Major Jackson married Mary Anna Morrison, and immediately the young couple started tithing and having family devotions. Jackson used his lunch hour every day for intense Bible study. The couple joined a Presbyterian Church where Jackson started a Negro Sunday school class. "My Heavenly Father has condescended to use me as an instrument in getting up a large Sabbath school for the Negroes," he wrote. "He has greatly blessed it."

When Virginia seceded from the Union, Jackson sided with his fellow Southerners; and on Sunday, April 21, 1861, he and his cadets were ordered into the Confederate Army. Just past noon, Jackson knelt with his wife in their bedroom for prayer. They opened the Bible and Jackson read aloud these words of assurance: "For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ..."

Finishing the passage, he rose and left, never to return.

Jackson maintained his devotional life in the field, and his men soon learned that when they saw him stumbling over stumps and rocks, he wasn't drunk. He was just praying with his eyes closed as he walked. Jackson rode among the troops distributing tracts and often took part in the revivals that spread through the Rebel army.

In May 1863, General "Stonewall" Jackson went out at nightfall to scout and was shot by mistake by his own men.

"I always wanted to die on a Sunday," he said, and he did just that. His earthly tent had been dissolved. (From This Verse)

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### **With God All The Time**

If our earthly house . . . is destroyed, we have a building from God, . . . eternal in the heavens. —2 Corinthians 5:1

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

It was the summer between Melissa's sophomore and junior years of high school. She and her friend Mandy were in Spain on a trip with their Spanish class, and they stayed up one night in their hotel room for a serious discussion. They had just seen a report on the BBC about some teens who had died in an accident, and they started talking about death.

Melissa told Mandy that she could not figure out why Christians were afraid to die. After all, she told her, when a Christian dies, he or she gets to be "with God all the time." What could be better than that? Melissa wondered.

How do I know about this conversation? Mandy shared this story with me and my wife shortly after we lost our precious 17-year-old daughter in a car accident in 2002. We have been comforted by this story, because it reminds us that Melissa knew she was saved, and she was confident that she would spend eternity with her Savior. We just never expected that she would be "with God all the time" so suddenly and so early in her life.

Do you have the assurance that Melissa had, that if you were to die you would be in God's presence forever? (2 Corinthians 5:6-8). Make sure of your salvation today. Then you won't need to be afraid to die. By: Dave Branon

### **MAKING SURE**

Admit that you are a sinner (Romans 3:23; 7:23).

Believe in Jesus for forgiveness (John 1:12; 3:16).

Confess that Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:9).

If you make room for Jesus in your heart, He will make room for you in heaven.

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THE owner of the tenement which I have occupied for many years has given notice that he will furnish but little or nothing more for repairs. I am advised to be ready to move. At first this was not a very welcome notice. The surroundings here are in many respects

very pleasant, and were it not for the evidence of decay, I should consider the house good enough. But even a light wind causes it to tremble and totter, and all the braces are not sufficient to make it secure. So I am getting ready to move.

It is strange how quickly one's interest is transferred to the prospective home. I have been consulting maps of the new country and reading descriptions of its inhabitants. One who visited it has returned, and from him I learn that it is beautiful beyond description; language breaks down in attempting to tell of what he heard while there. He says that, in order to make an investment there, he has suffered the loss of all things that he owned here, and even rejoices in what others would call making a sacrifice. Another, whose love to me has been proven by the greatest possible test, is now there. He has sent me several clusters of the most delicious fruits. After tasting them, all food here seems insipid.

Two or three times I have been down by the border of the river that forms the boundary, and have wished myself among the company of those who were singing praises to the King on the other side. Many of my friends have moved there. Before leaving they spoke of my coming later. I have seen the smile upon their faces as they passed out of sight. Often I am asked to make some new investments here, but my answer in every case is, "I am getting ready to move."—Selected.

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## [Heaven in the Real World](#)

**Steven Curtis Chapman**

I saw it again today in the face of a little child  
Looking through the eyes of fear and uncertainty  
It echoed in a cry for freedom across the street and across the miles  
Cries from the heart to find the missing part

Where is the hope, where is the peace?  
That will make this life complete  
For every man, woman, boy, and girl  
Looking for heaven in the real world

To stand in the pouring rain and believe the sun is gonna shine again  
To know that the grave is not the end  
To feel the embrace of grace and cross the line where real life begins  
And know in your heart you've found the missing part

And there is a hope, and there is a peace  
That will make this life complete  
For every man, woman, boy, and girl  
Looking for heaven in the real world  
Looking for heaven in the real world

It happened one night with a tiny baby's birth  
God heard creation crying and He sent heaven to earth

He is the hope, and the peace  
That will make this life complete  
For every man, woman, boy and girl  
Jesus is the hope, and the peace  
That will make this life complete  
For every man, woman, boy and girl  
Jesus is heaven in the real world  
Jesus is heaven in the real world  
Yes he is  
Jesus is heaven  
He is heaven in the real world

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## [Almost Home](#)

**Play Mercy Me**

Are you disappointed?  
Are you desperate for help?  
You know what it's like to be tired

And only a shell of yourself  
Well, you start to believe  
You don't have what it takes  
'Cause it's all you can do  
Just to move, much less finish the race

But don't forget what lies ahead

Almost home  
Brother, it won't be long  
Soon all your burdens will be gone  
With all your strength  
Sister, run wild, run free  
Hold up your head, keep pressing on  
We are almost home

Well, this road will be hard  
But we win in the end  
Simply because of Jesus in us  
It's not if, but when  
So take joy in the journey  
Even when it feels long  
Oh, find strength in each step  
Knowing Heaven is cheering you on

We are almost home  
Brother, it won't be long  
Soon all your burdens will be gone  
With all your strength  
Sister, run wild, run free  
Hold up your head, keep pressing on  
We are almost home

Almost home  
Almost home

I know that the cross has brought Heaven to us  
Make no mistake, there's still more to come  
When our flesh and our bone are no longer between  
Where we are right now and where we're meant to be  
When all that's been lost is made whole again  
When these tears and this pain no longer exist  
No more walking, we're running as fast as we can  
Consider this our second wind

Almost home  
Brother, it won't be long  
Soon all your burdens will be gone  
With all your strength  
Sister, run wild, run free  
Hold up your head, keep pressing on  
We are almost home

Almost home  
Almost home

We are almost home  
Almost home  
Almost home  
We are almost home

What is more, being housed in this tent we constantly sigh with longing because we yearn to put on over it, as someone would don an overgarment, our dwelling that is supplied from heaven. (Murray Harris' expanded paraphrase).

- **For indeed in this house we groan:** 2Co 5:4 Ro 7:24 Ro 8:23 1Pe 1:6,7
- **longing :** Php 1:23
- **to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven :** 2Co 5:3,4 1Co 15:53,54
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

2 Corinthians 5:4 For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.

Romans 7:24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

Romans 8:18-24+ **(BELIEVERS ARE GROANING AS THEY AWAIT ADOPTION, THE REDEMPTION OF THEIR BODIES, EVEN AS BELIEVERS IN 2Co 5:2 ARE GROANING FOR THEIR NEW BODIES)** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation **groans** ([sustenazo](#)) and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves **groan** (stenazo in present tense = continually) within ourselves, waiting eagerly (apekdechomai from in the present tense = our habitual attitude is waiting with great anticipation) **for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.** 24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?

Php 1:21-24+ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. 23 But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; 24 yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENT ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:2](#)**

## GROANING FOR GLORY

Paul mixes metaphors of a **house** by picturing putting it on like **clothing**. This context would also support the interpretation of the phrase "we have a building from God, a house not made with hands" in verse 1 as indicative of our bodies not our eternal abode as some commentaries suggest.

**For** ([1063](#))(**gar**) is a term of explanation which here gives the reason for his groaning now is his anticipation of the glory to follow, not so much a reflection of present afflictions or trials. This groaning is for our future grace (1Pe 1:13+) and glory (Ro 8:23+ where *redemption of our body* = glorification)

**MacArthur** points out that "The twice-repeated phrase **for indeed** (2Cor 5:2, 4) expressed Paul's intense longing for heaven and the certainty that he would one day enter its glory. ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**indeed in this house we groan** (stenazo) - **NET** = "in this earthly house we groan" **House** is not in the Greek text in context refers to our present mortal bodies. **This** (house) is as if Paul in a sense is pointing to his own body as he begins writing this verse. **Groan** (stenazo) is in the present tense picturing the believer's groaning as our "habitual practice" because we know that these frail, decaying earthly bodies (2Co 4:16) pale in comparison to our inestimably superior future glorified bodies. While life gives us many negative things to groan about, Paul is not speaking so much about our groans and moans over trials, afflictions, illnesses, etc, but about groaning for our future wardrobe in God's eternal kingdom. John tells us "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, **we will be like Him**, because we will see Him just as He is." (1 Jn



3:2+) This is a prophetic promise that is worth waiting for. In fact this glorious truth (Vertical Vision) should "energize" our present ("Horizontal") living as John goes on to state writing "And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies ([hagnizo](#) in present tense = continually, daily; active voice - make a choice each day to do this, a choice/desire enabled by the Spirit - Php 2:13NLT+) himself, just as He is pure." (1Jn 3:3+) Paul goes on to say that we (he) **groan** because we (he) long.

**Warren Wiersbe** - Paul was not **groaning** because he was in a human body, but because he longed to see Jesus Christ and receive a glorified body. He was groaning for glory! This explains why death holds no terrors for the Christian. Paul called his death a "departure" (2Ti 4:6+). One meaning of this Greek word is "to take down one's tent and move on." [Bible Exposition Commentary](#)

**Murray Harris** - Paul's sighing did not stem from a desire to become permanently disembodied but from an intense longing to take up residence in his "heavenly dwelling" ("we sigh, because we long...," v. 2 Wey.). The passage does not define the precise nature of the "sighing" or "groaning," but the immediate context and Paul's thought elsewhere (Ro 8:19-23; Philippians 3:20, 21) suggest it was his sense of frustration with the limitations and disabilities of mortal existence, knowing as he did that he was destined to possess a spiritual body perfectly adapted to the ecology of heaven. Paul sought liberation only from the imperfection of present embodiment, from "bondage to decay," not from any and every form of corporeality. After all, it is to Paul that Christian theology owes the doctrine of the "spiritual body" (1Cor 15:35-49). But not all at Corinth shared Paul's view of the Christian's destiny. There were some who taught that resurrection lay in the past, accomplished spiritually and corporately for all believers at the resurrection of Christ or else personally experienced at the moment of baptism (cf. 2Tim 2:17, 18). Having in mind these "proto-Gnostics" who denied any future, bodily resurrection but envisaged a disembodied immortality, Paul asserts, "We do not wish to be unclothed but to be overclothed with our heavenly dwelling." ([Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Guzik** - Christians therefore **groan** because we see both the limitations of this body and superiority of the body to come. We are earnestly desiring (**longing**) our new bodies.. Many of us are not earnestly desiring heaven. Is it because we are so comfortable on earth? It isn't that we should seek out affliction, but neither should we dedicate our lives to the pursuit of comfort. There is nothing wrong with earnestly desiring heaven; there is something right about being able to agree with Paul, and saying "we groan." ([2 Corinthians 5](#))

**Longing** (epipotheo) **to be clothed** (ependuomai) **with our dwelling** (oiketerion) **from heaven** - **Longing** is present tense describing Paul's (and it should be ours - cf 1Co 11:1+) continual strong desire and yearning (as we should for the pure Word 1 Pe 2:2+) for a better body in a better place on that glorious day when faith will become sight and sin's penalty, power and presence becomes a distant memory! **Be clothed is** Paul is using the verb figuratively in reference to being clothed with our future resurrection body, **our dwelling from heaven**.

**Ray Pritchard** on **clothed** - When Paul says we long to be clothed, he uses an unusual Greek verb (ependuomai) that means something like "to be clothed upon." It has the idea of putting on an overcoat, which is literally a coat put over (or upon) the body.

**Guzik** - Paul is simply saying that in eternity, we will be clothed and not be naked—that is, we will not be bodiless spirits.. The Greek philosophers thought that a bodiless spirit was the highest level of existence. They thought of the body as a prison for the soul, and saw no advantage in being resurrected in another body.. To God, the body itself is not a negative. The problem isn't in the body itself but in these sin-corrupted, fallen bodies that we live in. Jesus approved the essential goodness of the body by becoming a man. If there was something inherently evil in the body, Jesus could never have added humanity to His deity. ([2 Corinthians 5](#))

**THOUGHT** - Beloved are you longing for your future resurrection body? If not it might reflect that you have become too comfortable in this present world which is passing away (1Jn 2:17)! How much more bearable are present afflictions when we truly cultivate a future focused mindset. Remember that what we are longing for will determine what we are living for because our heart always follows after what we treasure.

**Illustration** - A pastor once received a letter from a nine-year-old girl that said, "Dear Pastor, I hope to go to heaven someday, but later than sooner. Love, Ellen." Out of the mouths of babes! Ellen speaks for almost everyone. We all want to go to Heaven, but later as opposed to sooner. However, as we have come to expect, this isn't the way Paul thought. Paul hoped to get there sooner rather than later. ([2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness. Preaching the Word](#))

**2 Corinthians 5:3 inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked.**

**MH:** This presupposes, to be sure, that once we have put on this new dwelling, our spiritual body, we shall never experience disembodied nakedness. (Murray Harris' expanded paraphrase of 2Corinthians).

- **having put it on:** Ge 3:7-11 Ex 32:25 Rev 3:18 Rev 16:15

- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENT ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:3](#)**

## WHAT IS THE "INTERMEDIATE STATE"?

**inasmuch as we, having put it on (enduo), will not be found (heurisko) naked (gumnos)** - Paul has just stated believers will have a body in heaven and it will be a real, eternal, resurrection body. The statement **found naked** has given rise to the concept of an "intermediate state," (see table below) which is the period between death and reception of our resurrection body.

2 Corinthians 5:1-4 Simple Summary of Three Interpretations of What it Means to be "Naked"		
<b>Present Earthly, Mortal, Corruptible Body</b>	(1) Intermediate State: <b>No Body</b>	<b>Future Spiritual, Immortal, Incorruptible Body</b>
	(2) Intermediate State: <b>Temporary Body</b>	
	(3) Intermediate State: <b>Unknown Scripture Unclear</b>	
<p><b>Comment:</b> The "Intermediate State" is what some theologians have termed the time between a believer's death (at which time they go to be present with the Lord) and the time the Lord returns, resurrects the dead and gives believers their glorified, immortal, incorruptible bodies which will last throughout eternity. The table summarizes the possibilities of this "intermediate state" - no body, a temporary body and status of the current state of believers in heaven as unknown. I personally favor the last "interpretation", because Scripture makes no definitive statement regarding the "intermediate state", which suggests that speculation should be avoided. Admittedly, the fact that Moses and Elijah were recognized at the Transfiguration suggest some type of recognizable form.</p>		

**David Lowery** summarizes the two views of what a so-called intermediate state might be - **(1)** Dead (though conscious) believers are without a body while awaiting their resurrection bodies, or **(2)** dead (though conscious) believers receive an "intermediate body" that somehow differs from their forthcoming resurrected bodies. (According to either of these intermediate-state views, Paul was suggesting that he hoped to live till the return of Christ so that he would not experience an "intermediate state.") ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

Here is an example of **interpretation #1** (see table above) by a conservative writer **Dr Henry Morris** - If our earthly house is "dissolved" (2 Corinthians 5:1) before Christ returns, there will be an intermediate period "with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8) in which we shall neither wear our present body nor our future resurrection body. It was thus Paul's earnest desire and, surely ours as well, still to be living when Christ returns, and thus immediately to be "clothed upon" with our resurrection bodies. The latter would thus be put on over our old bodies as it were, and so still be recognizable (as was that of Christ after His resurrection), but with all aspects of their old "mortality" (pain, sin, etc.) immediately "swallowed up of life" (2 Corinthians 5:4). The period between one's death and resurrection, even though a time of blessed fellowship with the Lord (2Co 5:8), is compared to a state of nakedness, since the spirit/soul system is without its body, or "spiritual clothing," awaiting Christ's return to earth. ([clothed upon](#); [found naked](#))

**Richard Pratt** on **naked** - Nakedness here is a metaphor for being without a body. Literal nakedness brought shame to sinful Adam and Eve (Ge 3:7-10). God remedied their nakedness with clothing (Ge 3:21), covering their shame, and clothing remained a consistent requirement throughout the Scriptures. For this reason, Paul likened being without a body after death to the condition of nakedness. Ultimate salvation is not that disembodied souls enjoy eternal bliss in the heavenly realms, but that they are bodily resurrected (Ro 8:23; 1Co 15:12-57; Php 3:11; Heb 6:2) and inherit the new creation (2Pe 3:13; Rev 21:1-7). The Corinthians understood this so well that Paul did not even argue for it. He simply assumed they knew that the groaning of this life was a longing for glorified, resurrected bodies to be received on the day of Christ's return. The contrast here was not between physical and spiritual, but between present, mortal, physical bodies and future, immortal, physical bodies. ([Commentary](#))

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**QUESTION - [What is the intermediate state?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The “intermediate state” is a theological concept that speculates regarding what kind of body, if any, believers in heaven have while they wait for their physical bodies to be resurrected. The Bible makes it clear that deceased believers are with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:23). The Bible also makes it clear that the resurrection of believers has not yet occurred, meaning that the bodies of deceased believers are still in the grave (1 Corinthians 15:50-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). So, the question of the intermediate state is whether believers in heaven are given temporary physical bodies until the resurrection, or whether believers in heaven exist in spiritual/non-corporeal form until the resurrection.

[WATCH THE VIDEO ON "THE INTERMEDIATE STATE"](#)

The Bible does not give a great amount of detail regarding the intermediate state. The only Scripture that specifically, but indirectly, speaks to the issue is Revelation 6:9, “... I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.” In this verse John is given a vision of those who will be killed because of their faith during the end times. In this vision those believers who had been killed are under God’s altar in heaven and are described as “souls.” So, from this one verse, if there is a biblical answer for the intermediate state, it would seem that believers in heaven are in spiritual/non-corporeal form until the resurrection.

The heaven that ultimately awaits believers is the New Heavens and New Earth (Revelation 21-22). Heaven will indeed be a physical place. Our physical bodies will be resurrected and glorified, made perfectly fit for eternity on the New Earth. Currently, heaven is a spiritual realm. It would seem, then, that there would be no need for temporary physical bodies if believers are in a spiritual heaven. Whatever the intermediate state is, we can rest assured that believers in heaven are perfectly content, enjoying the glories of heaven and worshiping the majesty of the Lord. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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**QUESTION** - [What does the Bible say about soul sleep?](#)

**ANSWER: Soul sleep” is a belief that after a person dies, his/her soul “sleeps” until the resurrection and final judgment**  
The concept of “soul sleep” is not biblical. When the Bible describes a person “sleeping” in relation to death (Luke 8:52; 1Co 15:6), it does not mean literal sleep. Sleeping is just a way to describe death because a dead body appears to be asleep. The moment we die, we face the judgment of God (Hebrews 9:27). For believers, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:23). For unbelievers, death means everlasting punishment in hell (Luke 16:22-23).

Until the final resurrection, though, there is a temporary heaven—paradise (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:4) and a temporary hell—Hades (Revelation 1:18; 20:13-14). As can be clearly seen in Luke 16:19-31, neither in paradise nor in Hades are people sleeping. It could be said, though, that a person’s body is “sleeping” while his soul is in paradise or Hades. At the resurrection, this body is “awakened” and transformed into the everlasting body a person will possess for eternity, whether in heaven or hell. Those who were in paradise will be sent to the new heavens and new earth (Revelation 21:1). Those who were in Hades will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15). These are the final, eternal destinations of all people—based entirely on whether or not a person trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation.

Present-day defenders of soul sleep include the [Seventh Day Adventist church](#), [Jehovah's Witnesses](#), [Christadelphians](#), and others. (Source: [GotQuestions?](#))

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**QUESTION** - [What happens after death?](#)

**ANSWER** - Within the Christian faith, there is a significant amount of confusion regarding what happens after death. Some hold that after death, everyone “sleeps” until the final judgment, after which everyone will be sent to heaven or hell. Others believe that at the moment of death, people are instantly judged and sent to their eternal destinations. Still others claim that when people die, their souls/spirits are sent to a “temporary” heaven or hell, to await the final resurrection, the final judgment, and then the finality of their eternal destination. So, what exactly does the Bible say happens after death?

- [WATCH VIDEO](#)

First, for the believer in Jesus Christ, the Bible tells us that after death believers’ souls/spirits are taken to heaven, because their sins are forgiven by having received Christ as Savior (John 3:16, 18, 36). For believers, death is to be “away from the body and at home with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:23). However, passages such as 1 Corinthians 15:50-54 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 describe believers being resurrected and given glorified bodies. If believers go to be with Christ immediately after death, what is the purpose of this resurrection? It seems that while the souls/spirits of believers go to be with Christ immediately after death, the physical body remains in the grave “sleeping.” At the resurrection of believers, the physical body is resurrected, glorified, and then reunited with the soul/spirit. This reunited and glorified body-soul-spirit will be the possession of believers for eternity in the new heavens and new earth (Revelation 21-22).

Second, for those who do not receive Jesus Christ as Savior, death means everlasting punishment. However, similar to the destiny of believers, unbelievers also seem to be sent immediately to a temporary holding place, to await their final resurrection, judgment, and eternal destiny. Luke 16:22-23 describes a rich man being tormented immediately after death. Revelation 20:11-15 describes all the unbelieving dead being resurrected, judged at the great white throne, and then being cast into the lake of fire. Unbelievers, then, are not sent to hell (the lake of fire) immediately after death, but rather are in a temporary realm of judgment and condemnation. However, even though unbelievers are not instantly sent to the lake of fire, their immediate fate after death is not a pleasant one. The rich man cried out, "I am in agony in this fire" (Luke 16:24).

Therefore, after death, a person resides in a "temporary" heaven or hell. After this temporary realm, at the final resurrection, a person's eternal destiny will not change. The precise "location" of that eternal destiny is what changes. Believers will ultimately be granted entrance into the new heavens and new earth (Revelation 21:1). Unbelievers will ultimately be sent to the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15). These are the final, eternal destinations of all people—based entirely on whether or not they had trusted Jesus Christ alone for salvation (Matthew 25:46; John 3:36). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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#### Related Resources:

- [How does the Bible describe the glorified bodies we will possess in Heaven? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)
- [What kind of bodies will people have in hell? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)
- [Is it true that the bodies of some saints are incorruptible? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)
- [Will we have physical bodies in Heaven? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)
- [How will our resurrection body be different from our current body? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)
- [What will we look like in heaven? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)
- [Who will occupy the Millennial Kingdom? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**2 Corinthians 5:4 For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.**

- **we that:** 2Pe 1:13
- **Groan:** 2Co 5:2
- **but:** 2Co 5:3
- **mortal:** Isa 25:8 1Co 15:53,54
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Cor 5:2 **For indeed** in this house we **groan**, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,

Ro 8:23+ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves **groan** within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENT ON THIS VERSE CLICK** [2 Corinthians 5:4](#)

## GROANS AND BURDENS

Paul restates and adds to what he had said in 2Co 5:2. As Lenski says "A little more (καί) must be said in explanation (γάρ) of the previous statement about our groaning."

**For indeed** Paul is emphasizing the point of the believer's groaning (just noted in 2Co 5:2+),

**Lenski** writes "We are not Stoics, we feel the burden and we groan; not because we are cowards and just want to escape our burden, but because we want to put on the heavenly life. So both the groaning and the longing mentioned in v. 2 are further elucidated."

**While we are in this tent** (skenos), **we groan** (stenazo), **being burdened** (bareo) - The literal idea is "we groan, being weighed down" (as under a continual, oppressive, depressing burden). **Amplified** = "For while we are still in this tent, we groan under the burden and sigh deeply (weighed down, depressed, oppressed)". This is a repeat of 2Co 5:1 changing house to **tent** (picturing

transient existence, our life as "tent-like") and referring to our physical bodies exposed to afflictions on one hand (2Co 4:17), and at the same time groaning for our promised future glory. **We groan** (literally describes a deep, inarticulate sound of pain, displeasure or grief and whether literal or figurative in Paul's case is hard to determine, but probably figurative) is present tense describing continuous action. Groaning alludes to a condition which is unsatisfying and sorrowful (compared with our future hope of glory!). Groaning in a sense could represent Paul's cry for deliverance from our physical bodies and a desire for our new bodies.

**Lenski** feels the heavy burden is what he had described in 2Co 4:8-9 (afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed) which of course would burden anyone. ([Interpretation of 2 Corinthians](#))

**Hodge** - The burden meant may be the affliction by which Paul was overwhelmed; or the body itself; or the longing after a better world. As this passage is intimately connected with the preceding chapter, in which the apostle had spoken so freely of his sufferings, and as his experience in view of death was determined by those sufferings, it is perfectly natural to understand him to refer to the burden of sorrow. It was because he suffered so much that he groaned to be delivered, i.e. to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**Abernathy** summarizes how numerous commentaries (abbreviated in brackets) interpret **groaning** and **burdened** - The groaning is from suffering [Ho, Lns, SP, TH, TNTC], or from a feeling of oppression [TG]. It expresses aversion to the thought of being bodiless [HNTC, ICC1, My, NTC, SP]. It expresses Paul's aversion to the process of dying [ICC2]. It is a groaning from the burden that bodily existence entails [He]. It is a sigh of longing for better things [NCBC, NIC2], a yearning for the new spiritual body [WBC]. (**On Burdened**) = It is the apprehension concerning the bodiless state [HNTC, ICC1, My, NTC]. It is the burden of frailties and limitations [NIC1], or the mortal bodily existence [He]. It is the burden of his sufferings [Ho, ICC2, Lns, NCBC, NIC2, SP, TNTC, WBC] ([An Exegetical Summary of 2 Corinthians](#))

**MacArthur** says "It is the crushing burden of sin and affliction believers experience in their physical bodies that makes them yearn for their spiritual bodies." ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**Because we do not want (thelo) to be unclothed (ekduo) but to be clothed - Amplified** = "not that we want to put off the body (the clothing of the spirit) **but** rather that we would be further clothed." **Because** explains why we groan and are burdened and the reason is they we do not want to be unclothed (synonym for naked in v3) but clothed. **Unclothed** probably means to die before the return of Jesus.

**Plummer** says "The groaning is caused by the oppressive thought that death may come before the Lord returns, and may leave [gumnoi](#) without any bodies at all...We do not desire to be deprived of the body, but to be clothed with its immortality For then also there will be a body, but it will no longer be a burden, being no longer corruptible." ([2 Corinthians 5](#))

**Guzik** - As Christians, we have no earnest desire to be "pure spirit" and to escape the body. Instead, we are earnestly desiring to have a perfect, resurrected, body. We really don't know all that much about the state of our resurrected bodies. "If after that you desire to know more concerning this house, I can but give you the advice which was given by John Bunyan in a similar case. One asked of honest John a question which he could not answer, for the matter was not opened up in God's word; and therefore honest John bade his friend live a godly life, and go to heaven, and see for himself." (Spurgeon) ([2 Corinthians 5](#))

**Robertson** interprets it as "Paul does not wish to be a mere disembodied spirit without his spiritual garment." ([2 Corinthians 5](#))

**Kistemaker** - Paul desires to be covered with a resurrected body and the future glory that God already has prepared for him. ([2 Cor NTC](#))

**Guzik** has an interesting note that " In Medieval times, some Christians who had never been monks were buried in the clothing of a monk, hoping to do a little better on judgment day dressed like a monk. Jesus offers us a far better garment." ([2 Corinthians 5](#))

**So that what is mortal (thnetos) will be swallowed (katapino = figuratively to cause complete cessation of one state) up by life (zoe) - Amplified** = "what is mortal (our dying body) may be swallowed up by life [after the resurrection]." TLB = "so that these dying bodies will, as it were, be swallowed up by everlasting life." **Swallowed up** is a figurative description of one thing (**what is mortal** - our present life) totally being devoured by another thing (**life**). The picture is that the **mortal** ceases to exist in its current state and in some way is changed or transformed (see 1Co 15:51-55+) into an imperishable **life** and immortality. Normally one might expect Paul to say **swallowed up** by death, which in a sense is true for unbelievers, but for believers Paul can say our mortal existence will be **swallowed up by life** because death is **swallowed up in victory** (1Co 15:54+).

**Plummer** feels "Only what is mortal perishes; the personality, consisting of soul and body, survives." While believers will still be recognizable in eternity future, will they have the same personality? The Scripture is simply silent on details such as this. We do know that at the transfiguration of Jesus, Moses and Elijah were somehow clearly recognizable. (cf Mt 17:1-4)



Paul alludes to this mortal body being **swallowed up** by an immortal body writing

"Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed. in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed (**ED**: cf **swallowed up**). 53 For this **perishable** (**ED**: cf "**mortal**") must put on the **imperishable**, and this mortal must put on **immortality**. (**ED**: cf **life** in 2Co 5:4) 54 But when this **perishable** (**ED**: cf "**mortal**") will have put on the **imperishable**, and this **mortal** will have put on **immortality** (**ED**: cf **life** in 2Co 5:4), then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS **SWALLOWED UP** (SAME VERB AS 2Co 5:4 = katapino = figuratively to cause complete cessation of one state) in victory ([nikos](#))." (1Cor 15:51-54+)

**Kruse** feels Paul is showing "that it is not release from bodily existence for which he longs, but rather for a bodily existence which is permanent and heavenly. In the categories of Romans 8:23, it is the redemption of the body for which he hopes, or in the terms of Philippians 3:21, for the transformation of his body to be like Christ's glorious body." ([Full text of the Tyndale NT Commentary on 2 Corinthians](#))

**John MacArthur** comments that "It is the crushing burden of sin and affliction believers experience in their **physical** bodies that makes them yearn for their **spiritual** bodies. Repeating his disdain for soul nakedness, Paul emphasized again that he did not want to be unclothed as a disembodied spirit, but to be clothed with his glorified body. Then, what is mortal will be swallowed up by the fullness and perfections of eternal life, and believers will be like their risen Lord. Like John, they "know that when He appears, [they] will be like Him, because [they] will see Him just as He is" (1Jn 3:2-+). ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**R B Hughes** writes that "Paul foresaw the great event when, either by resurrection from the dead or by living transformation, "we shall all be changed" (1Co 15:51). Mortality must put on immortality, and "death will be swallowed up in victory" (1Co 15:54, quoting Isa. 25:8). Paul echoed these words almost verbatim in 2Co 5:4: "in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life." The present state of Paul and the church was that which is mortal. To **be swallowed up by life** is to put on the dwelling from heaven. Paul pictured the end of the age, when God will come for His own. ([Second Corinthians](#))

**Radmacher** (et al) helps us understand the meaning of the phrase **clothed with life** writing that "The believer's future experience is called **life**, meaning the full experience of eternal **life** in Christ. The **life** experience of the future is being determined by how we invest this life today (2Co 4:17-+). ([Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary](#))

**Ray Pritchard** - We think we're going from the land of the living to the land of the dying. But that is not true. We're going from the land of the dying to the land of the living.

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**ILLUSTRATION - THE VALUE OF BURDENS** - In 1938 a hurricane threatened the New England coast. People feared that the railroad bridge at White River Junction would be destroyed. The danger was averted when some thoughtful person backed a line of loaded freight cars onto the bridge. The bridge withstood the force of the winds because of the weight that it bore. The weight of your responsibilities may rest heavily upon you, but that weight may be the very thing that keeps you from being swept away by the storm of sin.

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**Spurgeon** - SWALLOWED UP. 2 Corinthians 5:4

While some of us rejoice in the prospect of heaven, the thought of death is sometimes surrounded with gloom. It cannot be an easy thing to go down to the chill darkness of the river, to have the soul separated from the body, to leave this earthly tabernacle behind. Death sometimes has a hideous appearance. Even the apostle Paul shuddered at it when he said, "For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life" (2 Cor. 5:4). Death seems a bitter pill, and unless it is swallowed up in a victory that takes away the sting of death (1 Cor. 15:54), the hour of death will be too bitter.

Would you agree that our thoughts of gloom about death arise from forgetting that Jesus will be there with us? If our faith could see Jesus making our bed in sickness and then standing by our side in the last solemn article, to conduct us safely through the iron gates, would we not look on death in a different light? You know how Isaac Watts put it:

Oh! If my Lord would come and meet,  
My soul should stretch her wings in haste,  
Fly fearless through death's iron gate,  
Nor feel the terrors as she passed.  
Jesus can make a dying bed

Feel soft as downy pillows are,  
While on His breast I lean my head,



And breathe my life out sweetly there.

## 2 Corinthians 5:5 Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.

- **prepared:** 2Co 4:17 Isa 29:23 60:21 61:3 Eph 2:10
- **pledge:** 2Co 1:22 Nu 13:23 24 25 26 27 Ro 8:23 Eph 1:13,14 4:30 1Jn 3:24
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

2 Corinthians 1:22+ (**HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR PLEDGE**) who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

Ephesians 1:13-14+ (**HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR PLEDGE**) In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

1 Corinthians 6:19+ (**HOLY SPIRIT INDWELLING BELIEVER'S**) Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

Romans 5:5+ (**HOLY SPIRIT INDWELLING BELIEVER'S**) and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Romans 8:9+ (**HOLY SPIRIT INDWELLING BELIEVER'S**) However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENT ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:5](#)**

## A DIVINE DOWN PAYMENT

How do we know our glorious future in a glorified body is guaranteed? How can we face death with confidence and without fear of what will follow our last breath? Paul's answer is that God has made "a Divine Down Payment," so to speak.

**Now He who prepared** (katergazomai - same verb "producing" in 2Co 4:17+) **us for this very purpose is God - Amplified** - "Now He Who has fashioned us [preparing and making us fit] for this very thing is God." **Prepared** is aorist tense indicating at a point in time in the past God prepared our future. Paul has been in essence speaking prophecy, telling us what the future holds for believers. What **purpose**? "**mortal... swallowed up by life**" = The reception of our glorified resurrection bodies which will endure throughout eternity. Stated another way God's ultimate **purpose** for believers is their glorification (cf "conformed to the image of His Son" in Ro 8:29+). With this statement Paul emphasizes that this crowning result of provision of resurrection clothing is all from God (cf Jn 6:37-40). As Paul explained in 1Co 15:49+ "Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly."

The somewhat free paraphrase in the Message conveys the essence of Paul's point - "The Spirit of God whets our appetite by giving us a taste of what's ahead. He puts a little of heaven in our hearts so that we'll never settle for less."

**MacArthur** sums up how God **prepared us** - In eternity past, God sovereignly chose believers for salvation; in time, he redeemed them; in the future, He will give them their glorified, resurrection bodies. The phrase **for this very purpose** emphatically states that believers obtain their glorified bodies in fulfillment of God's sovereign plan from all eternity, bound up in His elective decree (**Ed:** cp similar promise in Ro 8:28, 29, 30+)....God's glorious purpose for believers stretches from eternity to eternity. It was planned in eternity past and will be fulfilled in eternity future; time is but a fleeting moment in the middle. No matter what level of spiritual maturity they attain or how effectively they serve God, the divine purpose will only be fulfilled in a glorified body. ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**Guzik** - God is preparing us right now for our eternal destiny. Here, Paul connects the ideas of our light affliction and the eternal weight of glory (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). Our light affliction is (in part) how God has prepared us.

**Kruse** - It must not be overlooked that, in the light of 2Co 4:16-17, part of the process of preparation for the glorious future is

participation in present suffering (cf. Ro 8:17). But this idea must be complemented by that found in Ro 8:28–30, where God's election, calling and justification of sinners form the basis upon which he prepares his children for glory. Paul's hope rests not only upon the objective knowledge that it is God who is preparing him for a glorious future but also upon the subjective experience of the Spirit which he enjoys. The God who prepares is also the God who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. It was by the Spirit that Christ was raised from the dead with his resurrection body (Ro 8:11+). The same Spirit has been given to Christians as a guarantee that they too shall in their turn be raised up and clothed with a resurrection body. ([Full text of the Tyndale NT Commentary on 2 Corinthians](#))

**Who gave to us the Spirit (pneuma) as a pledge** (arrabon) - The gift of the Spirit was further confirmation (and assurance) that Paul (and all believers) could be fully confident in God's "final solution" when facing death. The Holy Spirit was promised by God the Father, sent by God His Son (Lk 24:49+) and became a reality at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4+) so that the disciples then (and now) might experience supernatural power for the work of God (Acts 1:8) (Who are you relying on for your work in ministry? Self or Spirit?) **Pledge** was used of the payment of part of a purchase price in advance like a "down payment" or "earnest money" guaranteeing the validity of His "contract" with us. Arrabon is used in modern Greece for an engagement ring, which is a beautiful thought as the Church is the Bride of Christ, anxiously awaiting the Bridegroom's return to sweep us off our feet (literally - aka rapture us!). In short God's bestowal of His Spirit is His irrevocable pledge to complete His purpose - we have been "fitted" for our heavenly suit and one day soon will receive that suit which we will "wear" forever and ever! Ponder the thought that if God has given His wonderful Holy Spirit as a down payment, the fulfillment of His gift in the future must be glorious beyond comprehension!

The **Spirit** in us as God's **pledge** and promise of future fulfillment reminds me of Philippians 1:6+ Paul writing that he was "confident of this very thing, that He Who began a good work (cf **He Who prepared us**) in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." Every believer can now wear the following button "PBPGIFWMY" an acronym meaning "Please Be Patient. God Isn't Finished With Me Yet." The gift of His Spirit underscores the [faithfulness](#) of our Father. One other point to recall is that it is the Spirit's work by which "our inner man is (present tense = continually) being (divine passive) renewed ([anakainoo](#)) day by day." (2Co 4:16+) That daily inner renewing is part of God's preparation **for this very purpose**. And as an aside, in view of the fact that believers have received this divine down payment of God's Spirit, it is foolish to think that one can lose their salvation.

**Utley** has a good summary of the Spirit - The giving of the Spirit is (1) the sign the New Age has dawned; (2) the evidence of personal salvation; (3) the means of ministry; (4) the means for maturity; and (5) the surety of heaven.

**Spurgeon** - "So the Holy Spirit is a part of heaven itself. The work of the Holy Spirit in the soul is the bud of heaven. Grace is not a thing which will be taken away from us when we enter glory, but will develop into glory. Grace will not be withdrawn as though it had answered its purpose, but will be matured into glory.

**Paul Barnett** makes an interesting point about the role of the Spirit in our present longing for future glory - Our **longing for the life of the new age** does not arise from within us. (ED: EXCELLENT POINT - IT IS THE SPIRIT WHO GIVES US THE DESIRE - SEE Php 2:13NLT+)...By the Spirit, who belongs to the new age, but whom God has given us now, we are being prepared for our new dwelling, our new apparel. **The presence of the Spirit within us is signified by the deep longing believers experience for their future with God. Our 'sighing' for it is inspired by the Spirit,** who, however, is not yet present in his fullness; that is reserved for the coming age. ([Bible Speaks Today - 2 Cor](#)) (Bolding added)

**Net Notes** - In the "already - not yet" scheme of the NT the possession of the Spirit now by believers ("already") can be viewed as a guarantee that God will give them the balance of the promised blessings in the future ("not yet").

**Matthew Poole** points out that God has "given us his Spirit to dwell and to work in us, and to assure us of what we speak of, viz. the house in the heavens, the building of God, that is not made with hands. The Spirit of grace given to the people of God, working and dwelling in them, is a certain pledge of that glory and life eternal, which he hath prepared for them.

Maybe it is "already - not yet", but it is as sure as the sun rising tomorrow because the Son rose for us and so we can sing...

[On that bright and cloudless morning when the dead in Christ shall rise,](#)

And the glory of his resurrection share;

When his chosen ones shall gather to their home beyond the skies,

And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

*There will be "victory on the last battlefield."*

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**Guzik** - A man in the middle of many painful trials took a walk in his neighborhood and saw a construction crew at work on a big church. He stood and watched a stone craftsman work a long time on a block but could not see where the block would fit, because the church appeared to be finished. He watched the man work on the block carefully and methodically, slowly shaping it into a

precise pattern. Finally, he asked, "Why are you spending so much time chipping and shaping that block?" The craftsman pointed up to the top of the nearly completed steeple and said, "I'm shaping it down here so it will fit in up there." The man in the middle of the trials instantly knew that was God's message to him: He was being prepared down here so that he would fit in up in heaven.

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**Charles R Swindoll** asks...

#### **How then does the Holy Spirit compare to the arrabōn?**

**First**, God is the giver of the pledge (2Cor. 1:22).

**Second**, it is a gift (2Co 1:22). We believing sinners do not receive the Holy Spirit by our efforts.

**Third**, God gives the Spirit as a guarantee only to "us," namely, believers (2Co 1:22). The unsaved do not possess the Spirit (Ro. 8:9).

**Fourth**, the Holy Spirit is Himself the guarantee, the pledge, the earnest, the deposit (2Co 1:22).

**Fifth**, God has placed the guarantee of the Spirit in our hearts (2Co 1:22). This act is the fulfillment of the promises made by God in the New Covenant (Ezek 36:26, 27).

**Sixth**, the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives is the divine guarantee that we will have immortal, incorruptible bodies in eternity, totally free from the effects of sin (2Co 5:5).

**Seventh**, the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our spiritual inheritance (Ep 1:14). Although the believer has already been blessed with bountiful spiritual gifts, he does not yet have the experience of the full enjoyment of all that Christ has graciously provided. The presence and witness of the Holy Spirit is God's pledge to us that we will one day have all that belongs to us because we are in Christ.

**Eighth**, the Holy Spirit will remain as the guarantee until the return of Christ and the rapture of the church, namely, the "redemption of the purchased possession" (Ep 1:14). The Greek word *peripoieō* ("purchased possession") is a noun based on the verb *peripoieō* ("to purchase"). Paul used this term to describe Christ's purchase of the church of God with His blood (Acts 20:28).

**Ninth**, our understanding of the blessed truth that the Holy Spirit is God's guarantee to us should cause us to praise the glory of His grace (Ep 1:14). God is truth; therefore He would never lie about the secure position of our personal salvation. ([Understanding Christian Theology](#))

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**Charles Spurgeon - EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT—the Pledge of Heaven** - IN the early times when land was sold, the owner cut a turf from the greensward and cast it into the cap of the purchaser as a token that it was his; or he tore off the branch of a tree and put it into the new owner's hand to show that he was entitled to all the products of the soil; and when the purchaser of a house received seizin (the law accounts as something to be possessed) or possession, the key of the door, or a bundle of thatch plucked from the roof, signified that the building was yielded up to him. The God of all grace has given to his people all the perfections of heaven to be their heritage for ever, and the earnest of his Spirit is to them the blessed token that all things are theirs. The Spirit's work of comfort and sanctification is a part of heaven's covenant blessings, a turf from the soil of Canaan, a twig from the tree of life, the key to mansions in the skies. Possessing the earnest of the Spirit we have received seizin of heaven. (Feathers for arrows)

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**F B Meyer writes** of the Spirit IS THE SEAL AND EARNEST OF OUR INHERITANCE...

Upon the yielded soul the blessed Spirit descends, bearing with Him the likeness of Jesus, which He imprints and fixes, as a stamp will leave its die upon the softened wax. Only melted gold is minted; only moistened clay is molded; only softened wax receives the die; only broken and contrite hearts can take and keep the impress of heaven. If that is thy condition, wait beneath the pressure of the Holy Spirit; He shall leave the image of Jesus upon thee, and change thee into his likeness, from glory to glory.

This gracious operation is God's seal of authentication. It is as though by an act that could not be mistaken, He said: This soul is mine--redeemed and appropriated for my own possession; and it shall be mine in the day when I make up my jewels. We place our seal on that which is unmistakably our own, and deem to be of value; so the likeness of Jesus wrought on us by the Spirit is the sign that God counts us his, and reckons us to be his peculiar treasure.

It is also the earnest of our inheritance. The love, and joy, and peace, which are wrought in us by the Blessed Spirit, are fragrant with the scent and beautiful with the hues of Paradise. They are the grapes of Eshcol; the peaches and pomegranates of the Homeland; the first notes of angelic symphonies; the first flowers of the everlasting spring; the herald rays of a morning that shall rise to the meridian glory of a nightless day. We know that there is a land of pure delight, because we have tasted its fruits; just as Columbus knew that he was drawing near land, when the land-birds alighted on his ship, and the drift of the waves told of human

habitations.

Nay, more: we know, as we experience the gracious work of the Holy Spirit, the quality, though not the infinite measure, of the blessedness of heaven. The Spirit's work is not only the pledge; it is the specimen of our inheritance.

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**INTEREST IN ADVANCE** - The Holy Spirit, who indwells every believer, gives us a foretaste of the coming glory of heaven. He is therefore called the "earnest" or **pledge** of the inheritance we shall receive by God's grace in eternity (Eph. 1:13,14). In biblical times, the word "earnest" was a trade term for the initial payment on a debt. It was made as a promise that full payment would be forthcoming. In principle, then, when an earnest was given, the final installment was guaranteed. Likewise, the joy we experience now through God's Spirit is just a kind of first installment of the rich blessings that His children will receive in eternity.

A wealthy man called his faithful assistant into his office one day and said, "I've put your name in my will, and someday you'll receive \$10,000. Since it may be a while before you get that legacy, I want to make you happy now by paying you the interest on that amount each year. Here is a check for \$600 as a starter." The surprised clerk was doubly grateful. The prospect of the inheritance was certainly good news, but the money he received in advance gave him complete assurance that someday the entire \$10,000 would be his. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**A MASTERPIECE IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE** - Several centuries ago, a Japanese emperor commissioned an artist to paint a bird. A number of months passed, then several years, and still the artist did not deliver the painting. Finally the emperor became so exasperated that he went to the artist's home to demand an explanation. Instead of making excuses, the artist placed a blank canvas on the easel. In less than an hour, he completed a painting that was to become a masterpiece. When the emperor asked the reason for the delay, the artist showed him armloads of drawings of feathers, wings, heads, and feet. Then he explained that he couldn't complete the painting until he had done exhaustive research and study.

In a sense, Christians are similar to that piece of art. We are "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Ep 1:13), and predestined by God "to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Ro 8:29). But the process takes time. The "artist" is the Holy Spirit—sent by the Lord Jesus at Pentecost to indwell believers. Slowly but surely He leads us to spiritual growth and maturity. Our transformation requires years of patience and will not be finished until we enter the presence of our King.

The day is coming when all Christians will be like Christ. But now we are growing and preparing. As we follow the Spirit's guidance through one experience after another, we become more and more like the masterpiece we will be someday in Glory (Ed: In the twinkling of an eye - 1Co 15:52). —D C Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**GOD'S PURPOSE FINISHED** - Every workman takes pride in a project completed and well-done. I thought of this recently when I visited the site of a new house my friend was building. The foundation had been laid, the walls erected, and the wiring and plumbing installed, but the structure still wasn't a house. It needed the finishers. Without the woodworkers, the cabinetmakers, the carpet layers, and the painters, the building was incomplete.

We as Christians need a "finisher" too. The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, which began at conversion, must continue until the One who began the transformation finishes it. And that can happen only by trusting and obeying Jesus, "the author and finisher of our faith," (Heb 12:2) the One to Whom we are being conformed.

God is not the architect of incompleteness. The Bible says, "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:6). Our part is to stay in fellowship with Him. He'll do the rest. —P R Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Keep in step with God.

He has planned every step of the way.

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**Guaranteed Future** - One day my friend Arthur Lewis, an expert in biblical Greek, was walking along the streets of Athens. Accompanying him was a professor who teaches Greek. They stopped occasionally to read the signs in shop windows. As they gazed into a jewelry store, they saw a sign with the word **arrabon** on it. When they entered and talked to the proprietor, he told them that in modern Greek the word **arrabon** means "**an engagement ring.**" The Greek professor thought for a moment, then commented, "How interesting! In the New Testament that's the term for 'a guarantee, a down payment.'" In Ephesians 1:13, 14, we are told that the Holy Spirit is given to believers as an **arrabon**, a down payment, a guarantee of heaven. The blessing of the Spirit's

presence in our hearts is a foretaste of the greater blessings we will enjoy when as the bride of Christ we are eternally united with our Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus. Now the Spirit lives in us to give us guidance and power to live for God (Jn 16:13; Gal. 5:22, 23-+). But someday we'll have even more: We will live in the very presence of God. With joyful anticipation we await that day--for our future is guaranteed! --V C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God's guidance and help that we need day to day  
Is given to all who believe;  
The Spirit has sealed us--He's God's guarantee  
That heaven we'll one day receive.  
--J D Brannon

**The greatest joy on earth is the sure hope of heaven.**

## 2 Corinthians 5:6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord--

- **always:** 2Co 5:8 Ps 27:3,4 Pr 14:26 Isa 30:15 36:4 Heb 10:35 1Pe 5:1 Rev 1:9
- **while:** 2Co 5:1 1Ch 29:15 Ps 39:12 119:19 Php 3:20,21 Heb 11:13 13:14
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

John 14:1 (REASON FOR GOOD COURAGE) **"Do not let your heart be troubled;** believe in God, believe also in Me.

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but **take courage;** I have overcome the world."

Matthew 28:20 (REASON WE CAN HAVE COURAGE) teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always (HIMSELF AND THE SPIRIT), even to the end of the age."

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENT ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:6](#)**

**Therefore (oun)** is a term of conclusion so we need to ask what is Paul bringing to conclusion (always pause and interrogate with the 5W/H'S)? In view of the truths just expounded in the previous 5 passages, 2Co 5:1-5, especially the truths that our mortal bodies will be **swallowed up by life** (i.e., believers will receive resurrection bodies 2Co 5:4+) and in the immediate context God's gift of the Holy Spirit (2Co 5:5+) both of these truths should undergird God's promise of a future glorified resurrection body, and thus we can be confident and courageous in this present life. In short the previous glorious truths were the foundation for Paul's confident conclusion of continual cheerful confidence and courage. This truth is in a sense a prophecy for it speaks of the future hope (not "hope so" but "hope sure," an absolute certainty of future good!) for all believers, a hope that will be fulfilled when our Blessed Hope appears (Titus 2:13+) at His return (Table comparing Rapture versus the Second Coming). This is the believer's firm foundation and solid rock on which we can stand come what may.

Truth received and believed about the future stabilizes confidence and courage in the present.

**Hodge** - This verse is introduced as a consequence of what precedes. "Having the deposit of the Spirit, **therefore** we are confident." This confidence is not a mere temporary feeling due to some transient excitement, but a permanent state of mind.

**Homer Kent** on **therefore** - "Therefore" (oun) indicates a logical connection with the preceding material. It was in view of Paul's possession of the Spirit who provided complete assurance of the future life and resurrection that he could say of himself and his associates "being always of good courage" (tharrountes oun pantote). It was not blind foolhardiness but knowledgeable confidence.

**Ray Stedman** explains **therefore** - Well, all through the account, of course, he has been talking about the power and activity and availability of God. That is the basis for Christian hope. That is the answer to flooding despair, the fact that God is going to do something, is doing something, and can be counted on to act. That is where the renewing of hope in an individual must arise. God is going to act both in the future beyond death, and he is going to act and is acting in the present, right amidst the threatenings and the dangers of life as we know it.



This cry of **good courage** is like a "victory chant" echoing through this section of the letter - "We do not lose heart," (2Co 4:1), "we do not lose heart" (2Co 4:16) and now "being always of good courage." (twice - 2Co 5:6,8) Not losing heart is clearly synonymous with being of good courage.

**Being always** (pantote) **of good courage** (tharrheo) - The first word in the Greek for emphasis is **being of good courage** and is in the present tense indicating this is Paul's continual attitude, his constant state of mind. The idea of **good courage** is to have confidence and firmness of purpose in the face of danger or testing, in this context in the face of the prospect of death. Paul could have this Spirit enabled confidence because he understood the basic principle of the Christ life - first the cross, then the crown.

Remember that believers can face death with boldness and confidence because our face is set toward heaven and the consummation of our union with our Savior and our reunion with the saints who have passed on before us. We can believe this **"always"** because God says it in His Word and He is the "non-lying" God (Titus 1:2+, 1Sa 15:29, Heb 6:18+)

**Paul's** confidence (good courage) is independent of his circumstances and is constant (**always**), an attitude only possible in one energized by the Holy Spirit Who in concert with the promises of God (Holy Word) transforms Paul from glory to glory (2Co 3:18+), even as he anticipates glory! **Hodge** agrees noting that "This confidence is not a mere temporary feeling due to some transient excitement; but a permanent state of mind...The ground of the boldness and confidence expressed by the word **tharrheo** is not any thing in the believer; it is not his natural courage, not the strength of his convictions; but it is a state of mind produced by the indwelling of the Spirit, and the natural consequence of his presence."

**Alan Carr** makes an interesting observation related to Paul's **being of good courage** -- "Look at the language Paul uses, "we know," 2Co 5:1+; "we have," 2Co 5:1+; "we are always confident," 2Co 5:6+; "we are confident," 2Co 5:8+. Paul is not talking about a hope that is a "*maybe so thing*," (ED: "hope so") but he is talking about a hope that is a "*know so thing*." (ED: "hope sure!") ([I Feel Like Traveling On](#))

**And knowing** (eido) **that while we are at home** (endemeo) **in the body** (soma) **we are absent** (ekdemeo) **from the Lord** (kurios) - **Knowing** is the same verb Paul used in 2Cor 5:1 (**we know**) indicating that the following statement is true "beyond a shadow of a doubt" and is based on the truths in the previous passages. Those truths are spiritual truths and Paul could not have come to know them unless the Holy Spirit had opened the eyes of his heart. **At home in the body** is a metaphor referring to our present bodies, that is, being alive physically. In this physical life we are away from the Lord. Stated another way, in this present life we are **at home** in our physical body, but it is a home which is not our true, final home, but a frail lodging to accommodate us until we reach our heavenly home (2Co 5:8). It is a **home** much like a soldier is at "home" at his base camp, but like soldiers, saints (we are "soldiers" for the Lord in a spiritual war in this present life) should be "homesick" to be with **the Lord**.

As **Kent** says "The proper and ultimate **home** for the believer is with Christ, and this fact should govern Christian attitudes on these issues. Of course, Paul is not denying the fact of the Lord's presence with believers in this life, but he is speaking of the more direct personal presence when we see Him face to face (cf. 1 John 3:2+)."

What a day that will be,  
When my Jesus I will see  
When I look upon His face,  
The One who saved me by His grace.  
When He takes me by the hand,  
And leads me through the Promised Land,  
What a day, glorious day, that will be.  
--Jim Hill

Heaven was not simply a destination for Paul: it was a motivation.  
-- Warren Wiersbe

**Warren Wiersbe** writes that "The people of God can be found in one of two places: either in heaven or on earth (Eph. 3:15). None of them is in the grave, in hell, or in any "intermediate place" between earth and heaven. Believers on earth are "**at home in the body**," while believers who have died are **absent from the body**." Believers on earth are **absent from the Lord**," while believers in heaven are **present with the Lord**." Because he had this kind of confidence, Paul was not afraid of suffering and trials, or even of dangers. This is not to suggest that he tempted the Lord by taking unnecessary risks, but it does mean that he was willing to "lose his life" for the sake of Christ and the ministry of the Gospel. He walked by faith and not by sight. He looked at the eternal unseen, not the temporal seen (2 Cor. 4:18). Heaven was not simply a destination for Paul: it was a motivation. Like the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11, he looked for the heavenly city and governed his life by eternal values. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

There are only two "addresses" for every NT believer, on earth and in heaven. Scripture promises that the moment you leave this life



you go to heaven. There is no "in between." There is no [Purgatory](#). There is no waiting place. Believers are either in the body and not in the personal presence of the Lord (of course, always under His watchful eye; always in His mighty hand, and always with God's "down payment" of the indwelling Spirit of Christ), or absent from the body and present with the Lord—not yet with the resurrection body, but as far as the conscious part of man, he is "present with the Lord" in conscious communion and fellowship, awaiting the grand resurrection day when we receive our incorruptible bodies (1 Cor 15:51-52+)!

**Gotquestions** - To be "absent" from one's body simply means to die because, at death, the spirit is separated from the body and moves into its eternal abode—either heaven with the Lord or hell, separated from God for eternity. In the same way, Christians are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the presence of God. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. When a born-again believer dies, his soul goes immediately into the presence of the Lord. There, the soul consciously awaits the resurrection of the body. ([What does it mean to be absent from the body?](#))

#### Related Resources:

- Murray Harris (author of 2 Corinthians in Expositor's Bible Commentary) - [Resurrection and Immortality - 8 Theses](#)
- [What does the Bible say about Purgatory?](#)
- [What is the repose of the soul?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about Limbo?](#)
- [Where did Old Testament believers go when they died?](#)
- [How can I overcome the fear of death? How can I stop being scared of dying?](#)
- [Who are the dead in Christ in 1 Thessalonians 4:16?](#)
- [What is the intermediate state?](#)
- [How can it be said that we have everlasting life when we still die?](#)

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**Vance Havner** - And there is but a step between me and heaven. As one grows old and the dearest of earth, the other half of one's life, goes on to the next world, things here lose their charm and we can hardly wait to see what lies beyond. To remain in the flesh is needful as long as God leaves us here, but we desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better—absent from the body—present with the Lord. A strange sense of being in two worlds at once possesses us. If we could break the barrier, we would have done it long before now! But until then we live next door to heaven.

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**Ray Pritchard** - A thing is not lost if you know where it is. Several weeks ago John died at the age of 91. When I heard the news, I remembered his prayer. My only response was to say, "Thank God." And then, "The battle is over, the victory won." "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints"(Psalm 116:15). So the Bible says and so we believe. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Sometimes when people die, we say, "I lost so-and-so." But a thing is not lost if you know where it is. Jesus said to the repentant thief, "Today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). We like to debate the meaning of certain words, and we want to know what "paradise" is like. We could speculate but our guesses would be only that. Just guesses. The most important part of that phrase is in the two little words—"with me." Today you will be "with me," Jesus said. Going to heaven is not simply going to a place, like going to Chicago or St. Louis. Going to heaven is going to a person. Heaven is where Jesus is. Everything else is just details.

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As **Spurgeon** says "The exile longs to return, the child pines for his father's house, and so do we pant for our own dear country beyond the river, and sigh for the bosom of Jesus."

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**Horatius Bonar** - How soon shall the present night be forgotten in the brightness of endless day! How quickly shall the curse give place to the blessing, barrenness be exchanged for fruitfulness, and all pollution be swept clean away!

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**Martin Luther** - I would not give one moment of heaven for all the joys and riches of the world, even if it lasted for thousands and thousands of years.

Beyond this vale of tears  
There is a life above;  
Unmeasured by the flight of years,  
And all that life is love.  
- James Montgomery

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## 2 Corinthians 5:7 for we walk by faith, not by sight--

- 2Co 1:24 4:18 De 12:9 Ro 8:24,25 1Co 13:12 Ga 2:20 Heb 10:38 Heb 11:1-26,27 1Pe 1:8 5:9
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- **FOR IN DEPTH COMMENT ON THIS VERSE CLICK** [2 Corinthians 5:8](#)

### Related Passages:

Galatians 2:20+ (**PAUL LIVED BY FAITH**) "I have been crucified with Christ; and 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 up for me.

Hebrews 10:38 (**HOW BELIEVERS ARE TO LIVE IN THIS PRESENT AGE**) BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE **SHALL LIVE BY FAITH**; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.

Hebrews 11:1+ (**NOT BY SIGHT**) Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Romans 8:24+ (**LIVING IN HOPE BY FAITH**) For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?

## MEANTIME LIVING

**For (gar)** - Here Paul explains the statement he had just made in verse 6. How could he always be full of courage? How could he live ("walk") here on earth knowing he was absent from the Lord? This verse instructs us on how to live in the [meantime](#), so I like to call it "[meantime living](#)" which is the time between one occurrence (temporary life on earth) and another (eternal life in heaven). Paul is explaining the nature of our present life during which we are absent from the physical presence of our Lord. Paul's point is during this present short (emphasize "short" - see [Chan's rope illustration](#)) earthly life (while absent from the Lord), "the blessed realities of the life to come must be accepted by faith." ([Kent](#)) In short, Paul explains that the entire Christian life is one lived **by faith, not by sight**.

**Kruse** says 2Co 5:7 is "A parenthetical statement following v. 6 before picking up the main stream of thought again in v. 8"

**Murray Harris** - This verse may be termed a parenthesis (in the technical sense), since it is complete in itself, is connected with the preceding statement by way of explanation (γάρ), and obstructs the grammatical flow of v. 6. This is confirmed by the repetition of ἄρα εἰ and the insertion of a resumptive δὲ in v. 8, measures which prevent the parenthesis from obscuring the flow of thought. ([NIGTC](#))

**Guzik** says it this way "Right now, the presence of God is a matter of faith. We are at home in the body so there is a sense in which we are absent from the Lord, at least in the sense of His immediate, glorious presence. So now, we must walk by faith, not by sight."

Paul lived in the reality of 2Co 4:18+ "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

**Plummer** has an interesting comment - "The Apostle seems to feel that **separate from the Lord** may cause perplexity, and he hastens to explain in what sense such an expression is true. 'It is through a world of faith that we walk here, not through a world of visible form'. In this life we have to walk under conditions of faith, not under conditions of what is seen. Belief, however strong, cannot be the same as sight; and from a Christ Whom we cannot see we are to that extent separated, just as a blind man is cut off from the world to which he nevertheless belongs. ([Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. 1915](#))

**Pratt** When the ultimate salvation of God's people becomes reality in the new creation, **faith** will no longer be required; all will be **sight** (compare Ro 8:24+). Until then, however, **faith** that God will bring about all he has promised is required from all who serve Christ.

When we live by faith, it glorifies God,  
witnesses to a lost world,  
and builds Christian character into our lives.

--Warren Wiersbe

**We walk** (peripateo) **by faith** (pistis), **not by sight** (eidos form, outward appearance = our future bliss has yet no visible appearance or form) - **Amplified** = ""we regulate our lives and conduct ourselves by our conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, with trust and holy fervor; thus we walk not by sight or appearance." **Walk** refers to one's conduct, one's whole life (cf Ro 6:4), the present tense speaking of Paul's habitual practice. How can we serve and fellowship with a Jesus we cannot see? Paul's answer is by faith, a strong confidence that God will do good to us in the future based on the firm foundation of His Word of Truth.

**THOUGHT** - How can believers continually walk by faith when the world seems to be catapulting toward the last of the last days? We need to continually recall our Source of enablement which Paul alluded to in 2Co 5:5+. We have the indwelling Holy Spirit. He is our Source of divine energy for this supernatural walk (cp Php 2:13NLT+) of faith. May God grant us daily (yea, even moment by moment) His transforming grace that we might be motivated and enabled to continually walk by His Spirit (Gal 5:16+), for then we shall be walking by faith. Is your faith at low ebb? See Paul's solution in Romans 10:17+.

**Faith** does not walk by focusing on the natural circumstances (what is seen) but by focusing on the supernatural Word of God, in this case the sure promise of future presence in glory with Christ. In context remember that Paul is explaining how he can be courageous and confident in his physical, mortal, decaying body (cp 2Co 4:11+, 2Co 4:16+). The answer is that he is walking not by what he sees (primarily referring in context to his mortal body) but by what he does not see but knows will come to pass (reception of the future glorified body). That is, Paul believes God's promise that He will swallow up our mortal bodies "by life" (referring to our glorified bodies).

**Kent** - We cannot yet look on their actual form (FUTURE BLESSED REALITIES) or appearance (eidous). Nevertheless, the ministry of Christ has been thoroughly witnessed and reported by reliable observers, and the Holy Spirit has brought inner conviction and assurance. To walk by faith, therefore, is reasonable for the person who knows God.

**Pratt** has an interesting comment that "When the Corinthians looked at Paul's life, they were not impressed. He did not have much to show for all of his effort. He had no money, power, or possessions, but only suffering and the appearance of failure. This was another reason he explained that his ministry had to be evaluated in terms of **faith** and **not sight**."

**Spurgeon** says "Those who **walk by sight** walk alone. Walking by sight is just this—"I believe in myself," whereas walking **by faith** is, "I believe in God."

**Hughes** comments that "Paul set his sight on the unseen. He focused on the coming "weight of glory" (2 Cor 4:17) rather than on his afflictions. He was not concerned that his outer man was wasting away because he saw the unseen—his inner nature was undergoing daily renewal. Paul's faith in the unseen beyond controlled his entire existence. ([2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness. Preaching the Word](#))

**Guzik** - To **walk by faith** (pistis), **not by sight** is one of the great—and difficult—principles of Christian living. It must amaze the angels that we live for, serve, and are willing to die for a God we have never seen. Yet we love Him and live for Him, living by faith, not by sight. To walk by faith means to make faith part of every daily activity. Walking is nothing remarkable in itself; it is one of the more mundane aspects of life. But God wants us to **walk by faith**. "That man has not yet learned the true spirit of Christianity who is always saying, 'I can preach a sermon by faith.' Yes, sir, but can you make a coat by faith? 'I can distribute tracts, and visit the district by faith.' Can you cook a dinner by faith? **I mean, can you perform the common actions of the household, and the daily duties which fall to your lot, in the spirit of faith?**" (Spurgeon). The day will come when we will no longer be absent from the Lord in the sense Paul means it here. On that day, we will not have to walk by faith, but we will see the glory and the presence of God by sight.

**Ray Stedman** - We do not see Him (JESUS), He does not come and sit down beside us and talk to us and put His arm around our shoulders and encourage us, but, nevertheless, we have His presence with us. That is the first great reason always for renewed vigor and courage. No circumstance we go through ever means that we are abandoned and left to ourselves.

**Wiersbe** approaches the walk of faith from another direction asking **'How do you walk by faith?** By claiming the promises of God (**ED: NOT JUST "CLAIMING" THEM BUT ACTUALLY LIVING IN LIGHT AND POWER OF THE PROMISES**) and obeying the Word of God, in spite of what you see, how you feel, or what may happen. It means committing yourself to the Lord and relying wholly on Him to meet the need. When we live by faith, it glorifies God, witnesses to a lost world, and builds Christian character into our lives. God has ordained that "the righteous will live by his faith" (Hab 2:4; Ro 1:17-+; Gal. 3:11; Heb 10:38+; 2Cor. 5:7); and when we refuse to trust Him, we are calling God a liar and dishonoring Him. ([Be Committed. An Old Testament Study. Ruth and Esther. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books](#))

**BRIDGE** "We live by faith," says the apostle, "and not by sight, or by sense." They are as two buckets—the life of faith, and the life of

sense; when one goes up, the other goes down; the higher faith rises, the lower sense and reason; and the higher sense and reason, the lower faith. That is true of the schools. Reason going before faith weakens and diminishes it; but reason following upon faith, increases and strengthens it. Luther says well, "If you would believe, you must crucify that question, Why?" God would not have us so full of wherefores. And if you would believe, you must go blindfold into God's command. Abraham subscribes to a blank when the Lord calls him out of his own country.

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**Spurgeon** - The apostle mentions here a great general principle. Walking implies the possession of life. We can make a dead person sit in a certain position, but to walk necessitates the possession of inward life. It is appropriate, therefore, to ask whether one has the life of God within. In the sense that the term "walk" is here used, the ungodly person does not walk at all. Walking is also a position that signifies activity. As genuine Christians we do not merely learn; we practice what we know. We are to be engaged in displaying to others the blessings we have received and are to exhibit in our daily actions the fruits we have gathered from communion with God. "We walk" is more than some can say. They can affirm, "we talk; we think; we experience; we feel"—but true Christians say, "We walk." Walking also implies progress. A person who walks makes some headway. True believers are always making advances; we are to be going from faith in its beginnings to faith in its perfections, waxing stronger and stronger. There is a progress to be made in every Christian grace. Persons who do not make any headway give cause for suspicion as to whether they know much about the divine life at all. Walking also implies perseverance. When a person only takes a step or two and then stops, we do not call that walking. The true Christian keeps on going. Further, walking is the ordinary manner of the Christian life. Running is not best for progress; it cannot be kept up for long; it fatigues and tires. But walking is that kind of progress in which a person continues hour after hour, and after a night's rest he rises again to walk on as before, until reaching the goal.

This text also contrasts two principles: walking by faith and walking by sight. We naturally walk by sight. But any child or fool can walk by sight. There is something exceedingly ignorant about believing only what can be seen. Even in common life, the eyes cannot see nine out of ten things that are the most wonderful. And this is most decidedly the case with regard to spiritual things. Further, walking by sight is a deceptive way of walking. The eyes do not see anything, and they often deceive. And again, the principle of sight is a changeable one. We can see well enough in the day, but what do we do in the night when we cannot see? The principle of faith does best in the dark. And those who walk by sight walk alone. Walking by sight is just this—"I believe in myself." Whereas walking by faith is this—"I believe in God." Lastly, a caution is implied in the text: we are never to mix the two principles—"We walk by faith, not by sight."

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**CARVING OUT DOWN HERE FOR UP THERE!** - (Illustration of walking by faith) One day, a preacher who had lost his family in a tragic fire was walking through town. His mind was troubled by questions related to faith. In fact, because of his tragedy, he was seriously thinking about quitting on the Lord. He wondered how a God, Whom he had thought was so good, could allow something so terrible to happen to him and his family.

As he walked, he passed a construction site where a huge cathedral was being built. As he watched the men work, he noticed one man carving a small triangle out of granite with a chisel and a hammer. The preacher called out to the stone mason and asked him what he was making. The workman stopped and pointed to a place near the top of that great cathedral. He said, "Do you see that tiny, open triangle near the top of the roof?" The preacher answered, "Yes." "Well, said the workman, "I am carving this out down here so that it will fit in up there." Then the preacher understood what God was doing. The Lord was merely carving him out down here so that he would fit in up there. Friend, our trials were not sent to destroy us, but to shape us for His glory (2Co 4:17-+, Ro 8:18-+, 1Pe 1:6, 7-+, 1Pe 4:12, 13-+).

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**WATER BUG WORLD** - A colony of small water-bugs living in a pond noticed that every once in a while one of their fellow bugs would climb up a lily stem and never be seen again. They agreed that if this should ever happen to one of them, they would return to tell the others about their journey. Sure enough, the day came when one of the bugs found himself going up the stalk and crawling onto the lily pad at the top. He fell asleep in the warm sunshine, and when he awakened he stretched himself, only to hear a crackling sound as his old outer coat fell off. He sensed that somehow he was larger, cleaner, and freer than ever before. Spreading his wings, he flew into the air as a beautiful green dragonfly. Suddenly he remembered his promise. But then he realized why none of the others had ever returned. He couldn't go back and tell his friends what to expect because he was no longer a part of their world. Besides, one day they too would experience the wonderful freedom he now enjoyed.

We naturally shrink from the mysterious thought of dying. But we need not fear. Nor do we need a message from a departed loved one. God has told us all we need to know. So let's "walk by faith" and wait in hope. —H. V Lugt ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**SEEING AROUND CORNERS** - We often wish we could see what lies around the corner in life. Then we could prepare for it, control

it, or avoid it. A wise person has said, "Though we can't see around corners, God can!" How much better and more reassuring that is!

Recently my 10-year-old granddaughter Emily and I were boiling eggs for breakfast. As we stared into the boiling water and wondered how long it would take to get the eggs just right, Emily said, "Pity we can't open them up to see how they're doing." I agreed! But that would have spoiled them, so we had to rely on guesswork, with no guarantee of results.

We began talking about other things we would like to see but can't--like tomorrow. Too bad we can't crack tomorrow open, we said, to see if it's the way we would like it. But meddling with tomorrow before its time, like opening a partly cooked egg, would spoil both today and tomorrow.

Because Jesus has promised to care for us every day--and that includes tomorrow--we can live by faith one day at a time (Mt. 6:33, 34).

Emily and I decided to leave tomorrow safely in God's hands. Have you? --J E Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Though I know not what awaits me,  
What the future has in store,  
Yet I know the Lord is faithful,  
For I've proved Him oft before.  
--Anon.

You're only cooking up trouble  
when you stew about tomorrow.

**2 Corinthians 5:8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.**

- **Prefer rather:** 2Co 5:6 12:2,3 Lu 2:29 Ac 21:13 Php 1:20-24 2Ti 4:7,8 2Pe 1:14,15 2Pe 3:11,12
- **present:** 2Co 5:9 Ps 16:11 17:15 73:23-26 Mt 25:21,23 Joh 14:3 17:24 1Th 4:17,18 1Jn 3:2 Rev 7:14-17 22:3
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENT ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:8](#)**

### **PAUL HAD FUTURE CONFIDENCE MIXED WITH "HEAVENLY HOMESICKNESS"**

**We are of good courage** (tharrheo - present tense - continually), *I say* - He repeats the fact that he has a cheerful, confident, courageous attitude in life toward death!

**Plummer** comments that "Even the possibility of being left *naked* (**ED**: NOT EVERYONE AGREES THAT WE WILL BE SPIRITS WITHOUT BODY IN THIS INTERMEDIATE TIME - [SEE TABLE](#)) for a time loses its terrors, when it is remembered that getting away from the temporary shelter furnished by the body means getting home to closer converse with the Lord. ([Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. 1915](#))

**And prefer** (eudokeo - present tense - continually take delight) **rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord** - Paul admits that although he is of good courage, his desire was that he would rather **beat home with the Lord**.

**THOUGHT** - Paul was "homesick for heaven"! All believers should have this same "sickness," for our time on earth as aliens and strangers is very fleeting ("[Tempus Fugit](#)")! We need to continually "Set (our) mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth, for (we) have died and (our) life is hidden with Christ in God." (Col 3:2-3+, cf "[Vertical Vision](#)") Our cry should continually be "[Maranatha!](#)", the watchword for the early church to urge them to always be prepared for the [imminent return](#) of [our Bridegroom!](#)

As [Kruise](#) says "**to be at home with the Lord** in the sense that then the Lord will be accessible to sight, and no longer accessible only to faith. In the words of 1 John 3:2, 'we shall see him as he is'.

The Christian's heaven is to be with Christ,

-- Charles Hodge

**McShane** - During our time in the body we live in dependence upon One we love, but have never seen. But once we leave the body, that view of Christ by faith will give way to seeing Him face to face. A grasp of this makes dying lose its terror and causes us to join with Paul to say, "I have a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better".

**Henry Morris** - Even though being "**absent from the body**" is not as good as being in the future resurrection body, it is still something to be anticipated by the Christian with joy, for "to depart, and to be with Christ ... is far better" (Philippians 1:23). "To die" for the Christian "is gain" (Philippians 1:21). In heaven with Christ, our spirits—though without physical bodies—will be distinct and recognizable, in some way still bearing our likenesses. This was true, for example, of the spirits of Samuel and Moses (1 Samuel 28:11-14; Matthew 17:3), and also, in Christ's parable, of the spirits of Abraham and Lazarus (Luke 16:22-25).

### **Absent from the Body, Present with the Lord**

When shadows fall and breath does cease,  
Our souls find rest, eternal peace.  
No fear, no pain, no earthly cord—  
For we are present with the Lord.

The body fades, its race is run,  
The spirit soars beyond the sun.  
A fleeting life, now fully restored,  
We're absent here, but with the Lord.

No more the weight of trials borne,  
No weary hearts, no spirits torn.  
A heavenly feast, a great reward,  
To dwell forever with the Lord.

The veil is torn, the path made clear,  
Our Savior's voice we'll finally hear:  
"Well done, my child, come now aboard,  
Your home is here, with me, your Lord."

The hope we hold, the faith we keep,  
Awaits the day we wake from sleep.  
Eternal joy, in love outpoured,  
Forever present with the Lord.

Let tears of sorrow turn to cheer,  
For heaven's gates are drawing near.  
From earthly strife to life's accord,  
We are with Christ, our risen Lord.

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### **QUESTION - [What does it mean to be absent from the body?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The phrase "**absent from the body**" is found in 2 Corinthians 5:6-8. Paul states that he is confident in his eternal destiny and longs for the day when he can be "**absent from the body**" and be present with the Lord he loves and serves. To be "absent" from one's body simply means to die because, at death, the spirit is separated from the body and moves into its eternal abode—either heaven with the Lord or hell, separated from God for eternity.

In the same way, Christians are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the presence of God. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. When a born-again believer dies, his soul goes immediately into the presence of the Lord. There, the soul consciously awaits the resurrection of the body. To the church at Philippi Paul wrote from a Roman prison:

"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you" (Philippians 1:21-24).

Paul's desire in life was to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. If he lived, he could continue to labor for the Lord. If he faced execution, he



would depart this life and be with Christ. He desired to be with his Savior, but if he remained on earth, he could continue to minister to others.

There are some who believe in [soul sleep](#), meaning that when a person dies, his body and soul sleep in the grave, awaiting the resurrection. But if this were true, why would Paul not want to live to minister as long as possible, rather than sleep in a grave? And if it were true that the body and soul are never separated, it would be impossible to ever be absent from the body and present with the Lord.

We conclude, then, that believers who die are indeed absent from their physical bodies and present with the Lord in conscious bliss awaiting that grand resurrection day! [GotQuestions.org](#)

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### **Spurgeon - WELL PLEASED. 2 Corinthians 5:8**

The time is coming when we will die unless the Lord descends from heaven with a shout (1 Thess. 4:16). "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and your staff, they comfort me" (Ps. 23:4).

Death is delicious to God's people because Jesus is near. Through death we escape death. It is not death to die. When Jesus meets His saints, the iron gate is passed through, for in a moment the believers close their eyes on earth and open them in glory. Beloved, you should not fear death. Christ is with His people on their bed of weakness and even in their descent to the grave. This has been a great joy to many departing saints.

Attended by a believing physician, a dying saint was whispering, so the physician placed his ear against the dying man's lips and heard these words again and again, "Present with the Lord, present with the Lord, present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8). When heart and flesh were failing, the departing one knew that God was the strength of his life and portion. So he chose for his soft, low, dying song, "Present with the Lord." "We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8):

Death may my soul divide  
From this abode of clay;  
But love shall keep me near Thy side  
Through all the gloomy way.

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### **Spurgeon - PRESENT WITH THE LORD. 2 Corinthians 5:8**

A dark shadow fell across my road, but I passed through it. I hardly realized it was there. Why? I had my eyes fixed on a strong light beyond, and I did not notice the distressing dark shadow.

So much can believers rejoice in the presence of their Lord and Master that they do not notice death's dark shadow. They can rest so sweetly in Jesus' embrace that when they pass from one world into another it is like going from England to Scotland; it is all one kingdom, and one sun shines in both lands. Railway travelers often ask, "When do we pass from England to Scotland?" There is no jerk in the train's movements and no broad boundary. You merely glide from one into the other and hardly know where the boundary lies. The believer's eternal life glides from grace to glory without a break.

We grow steadily from blade to ear and from ear to full corn. We will know when we arrive, but the passage may be so rapid that we will not see it. Earth to heaven may seem the greatest of journeys, but it ends in the twinkling of an eye. We shall pass death with no more than a glance. We shall go through the Jordan as if it were dry land. We will scarcely know that we have passed a river.

Our body is left behind, and we are a disembodied spirit, but we will not see death. All the life we need in our soul is supplied by being one with Jesus. Meanwhile, our spirit is expecting that at the trumpet of the resurrection our body will be reunited with our soul (1 Thess. 4:16). "We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8).

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**Rev. Carl Burnham**, beloved pastor of the Chapel on Fir Hill in Akron, Ohio, wrote in 1962, just prior to his Homegoing, "When I die, if my family wishes to inscribe anything on my gravestone, I would like it to be the promise of Jesus Christ in Hebrews 13:5, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." For in due season the springtime will arrive... Then, when the resurrection sings itself in the robin's glad song, and bursting buds defy the death grip of winter, and you walk upon the yielding earth near my grave—remember that my soul is not there, but rather it is absent from the body, present with the Lord. And somewhere, the atoms that make up my brain, my heart—my body—will be sending out resurrection radiations of a frequency too high for any earthly Geiger counter to record. But if you place the meter of God's Word alongside that cemetery plot and adjust the settings to Hebrews 13:5, you will receive this reading: "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

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**TRIUMPH IN DEATH** - recall that there was a good man of God by the name of Samuel Rutherford, whose witness shone like a star

in dark England in days gone by. He was a poet, an author, and a great preacher—a man who loved Jesus probably better than any man of his times. His convictions were unpopular and he was in trouble because he refused to conform his preaching to the dictates of the state church. When he was an old man, the officials decided to try him as a criminal because he would not submit to the rules of the state church. The date of his trial was set, and he was notified by Parliament that he must appear for trial.

Rutherford knew that he was on his deathbed and so he wrote a letter in reply. He said, "Gentlemen, I have received your summons, but before I got yours, I received one from a higher source. Before the day of my trial, I will be over there where very few kings and great men ever come. Farewell!" That was Samuel Rutherford, witnessing to all of England that an entire new chapter awaits the Christian when our Lord says, "Welcome home!"

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**MORE BEYOND - Alan Carr** concludes his sermon with this illustration - Years ago, men used to sail around the Mediterranean and within the Mediterranean, that great sea. It is called the Mediterranean because the word literally means "the middle of the earth." Well every now and then they would go to the Straits of Gibraltar, and they would venture out a little way into the open sea, and then they would come back into the Straits of Gibraltar and back into the Mediterranean. That great Rock of Gibraltar, rising up out of the sea, had some caves, and the mariners would go into the caves and rest for awhile. They chiseled on the rocks of Gibraltar these words in Latin: "**Ne plus ultra**" which means "*there is nothing beyond.*" As far as they knew, that was the stepping off place that was the end of the world. As far as they knew, their world ended with the Rock of Gibraltar.

Then one day a man by the name of Christopher Columbus set sail. Columbus sailed west, came to a brand new world, discovered the Americas, came back and told people what he had seen. Well some mariners went back up to the top of the Rock of Gibraltar and they chiseled off the "**Ne**" and simply left the words "**plus ultra.**" The inscription which before had read, "no more beyond," now simply said, "more beyond."

I want to tell you, for everyone who has received the Lord Jesus, when you come to the end of the journey, there is **more beyond**, more than you could ever dream, more than you could ever imagine. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1Co 2:9, 10)

(Carr adds that Our Future Home is a perfect place, a permanent place and a precious place - for exposition see full sermon) [I Feel Like Traveling On](#)

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**EAGER FOR HEAVEN?** (Philippians 1:21) After preaching about Heaven one night, a certain minister put this question to his congregation, "How many want to go to Heaven? If you do, stand right where you are." Without any hesitation, everyone in the auditorium jumped to his feet. The preacher then said, "And how many of you want to go right now?" Stunned by the thought of such an immediate departure, they all quickly settled back into their seats. Evidently they were not quite as anxious for Heaven as they thought.

Are not many Christians just like that? They sing the hymn "Jesus May Come Today" with great enthusiasm, but would really prefer that His return were delayed long enough to allow the completion of some cherished plan. They talk about the wondrous and appealing beauty of their "Heavenly Home," while laboring for the things of this world as though they were going to be here forever. They claim to be eager to meet the Savior face to face, but they tremble at the thought of being ushered into His presence empty-handed, with unfinished business, unconfessed sins, and broken fellowship with other believers.

Do you want to go to Heaven? Today? May we so live that with joy we can daily anticipate that moment when the summons will come, and we shall be transported from time to eternity and into the realms of Glory. If we are truly eager for Heaven, we can with sincerity join the great apostle in saying, "We are ... willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8). ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Father, perfect our trust,  
O give us faith to see  
That death is now the door to life,  
And shall but set us free!  
—G. W.

**It is impossible to have real joy in the hope of Heaven  
and still be deeply engrossed in the pleasures of earth.**

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The eighteenth-century English pastor Rowland Hill lived to a ripe old age. In fact, he outlived most of his friends. Missing them very much and anxious to join them on the other side, he grew more homesick for heaven with each passing day. It seemed so long



since some of them had gone to glory that he would often jokingly say with a wink, "Do you think they'll remember me?" It was not unusual for him to go to some other believer well along in years with this request: "If you should go before I do, give my love to everyone. Be sure to tell them that old Rowley, although staying behind a little while, is coming on as fast as he can."

For the Christian, death holds some wonderful blessings. It's a release from the pains, the heartaches, and the testings of this present life. It's the doorway to incomprehensible glory. And at the moment a Christian takes his last breath, faith is turned to sight as he enters the presence of the Savior Himself, for to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2Co 5:8). That's the greatest death benefit of all! —R. W DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**For the Christian,  
death is not gloom but glory.**

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**A FAREWELL SYMPHONY** - The young musicians hired to play for the Duke of Austria's summer festivities were ready to go home. Summer was over and they were tired, but the Duke kept them there.

The brilliant classical composer Franz Joseph Haydn was sympathetic and offered to help them. So he composed a unique symphony that began with full orchestra. As the symphony progressed, fewer instruments were included in the score. One by one, as their parts were finished, the musicians took their instruments and walked off the stage.

By the end of the composition, only two musicians remained—the first and second violinists playing a beautiful duet. The Duke got the point. Shortly afterward, he sent the grateful musicians home. To this day Haydn's Symphony No. 45 is known as [Farewell Symphony \(Play this beautiful piece and ponder that soon coming day when you will say "Farewell" and go into the eternal presence of your Lord\)](#)

God's people are part of another **farewell symphony**. One by one, God is calling His people home. And one day the trumpet of God will sound for all who believe on Him (cp 1Th 4:16-+). What a day of rejoicing that will be!—D C Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**At death, God's children  
don't say "Goodbye" but "See you soon"!**

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**Spurgeon - WELL PLEASED 2 Corinthians 5:8**

The time is coming when we will die unless the Lord descends from heaven with a shout (1 Th. 4:16). "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and your staff, they comfort me" (Ps. 23:4). **Death is delicious to God's people because Jesus is near.** Through death we escape death. It is not death to die. When Jesus meets His saints, the iron gate is passed through, for in a moment the believers close their eyes on earth and open them in glory. Beloved, you should not fear death. Christ is with His people on their bed of weakness and even in their descent to the grave. This has been a great joy to many departing saints. Attended by a believing physician, a dying saint was whispering, so the physician placed his ear against the dying man's lips and heard these words again and again, "Present with the Lord, present with the Lord, present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8). When heart and flesh were failing, the departing one knew that God was the strength of his life and portion. So he chose for his soft, low, dying song, "Present with the Lord." "We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8):

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**TAPS FOLLOWED BY REVEILLE!** - Winston Churchill (1874-1965), former British prime minister, made specific requests regarding his funeral service. He asked that it begin with the playing of "[Taps](#)" the traditional military signal played at the end of the day or the end of life. But when Churchill's funeral service was over, those in attendance were startled to hear trumpets play the familiar strains of "[Reveille](#)" the stirring call that awakens the troops at the beginning of a new day.

The end of life is in some ways like the end of a day. Life's journey is long. We get tired. We long for our labors to be finished and the suffering to be over. Ahead lies the night of death. But thank God, morning is coming! A wonderful life lies just ahead for the weary Christian traveler. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord forever. —D. C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**The end of the Christian's life  
is the beginning of a far better one!**

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**PLUCKED BY THE MASTER** - Jesus is the joy and glory of Heaven; therefore we long to reach that blissful abode only in proportion to our deep, heartfelt love for Him. Paul, who had been caught up to the paradise of God for special revelations (2Cor 12:1-7), knew the joy and rapture of that happy place. Therefore, he speaks with eagerness of his longing to depart and to be with Christ, "which is far better." Oh, that we might grow in grace so that our earnest desires, too, would coincide with that of the apostle. If we but understood a little of the wonderful "pleasures" of the Father's right hand (Ps 16:11-[±](#)), we would more readily rejoice through our tears at the passing of our saved loved ones.

A certain nobleman had a spacious garden which he left to the care of a faithful servant, whose delight it was to water the seeds, support the stalks of tender plants, and to do everything he could to make the estate a veritable paradise of flowers. One morning the gardener rose expecting to find his favorite blooms increased in loveliness. To his surprise and grief, he discovered that one of his choicest beauties had been rent from its stem. Looking around he missed from every bed the most beautiful of his flowers. Full of anxiety and anger, he hurried to his fellow servants and demanded who had thus robbed him of his treasures. He found no solace from his grief until someone told him, "The lord of the manor was walking in his garden this morning, and I saw him pluck them, and carry them away with a smile of joy." He realized then that he had no cause for sorrow. It was well that his master had been pleased to take "his own."

Has the Savior plucked some favorite "rosebud" or lovely "bloom" from your "garden" and transported it to His Home above? Rejoice that your dear one is now so radiantly happy. The Master has but taken His own which in grace He lent to you for a few fleeting hours.

**Faith looks beyond the darkness of earth  
to the brightness of heaven when the Master plucks a rose.**

Death to the Christian is "gain" (Php 1:21+)  
because it means Heaven, holiness, happiness, and Him  
— Hallelujah!  
— Hertel

**2 Corinthians 5:9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.**

- **we also have as our ambition** Joh 6:27 Ro 15:20 1Co 9:26,27 15:58 Col 1:29 1Th 4:11 \*Gr: 1Ti 4:10 Heb 4:11 2Pe 1:10,11 3:14
- **whether:** 2Co 5:6,8 Ro 14:8
- **pleasing:** Ge 4:7 Isa 56:7 Ac 10:35 Eph 1:6 Heb 12:28
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENT ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:9](#)**

### **OUR SUMMUM BONUM: TO PLEASE GOD**

**Summum bonum** "is a Latin expression meaning the highest or ultimate good, which was introduced by the Roman philosopher Cicero to denote the fundamental principle on which some system of ethics is based — that is, **the aim of actions, which, if consistently pursued, will lead to the best possible life.**" For a believer that summum bonum is to be pleasing to the Lord!

**Ambition** describes a strong desire to do or to achieve something, typically requiring determination and hard work. That is not a bad definition for believers, with the caveat that for us to "work hard" we daily surrender to the Spirit "working in (us), giving (us) the desire to obey Him and the power to do **what pleases Him.**" (Php 2:13NLT+). Another definition of **ambition** which is not so applicable to believers but is typically the way of the godless world exemplifies it is as "an earnest desire for some type of achievement or distinction, as power, honor, fame, or wealth, and the willingness to strive for its attainment."

**MacArthur** adds "**Ambition** has always had a bad reputation. The noble Puritan writer Thomas Brooks wrote, "Ambition is a gilded misery, a secret poison, a hidden plague, the engineer of deceit, the mother of hypocrisy, the parent of envy, the original of vices, the moth of holiness, the blinder of hearts, turning medicines into maladies and remedies into diseases. High seats are never but uneasy, and crowns are always stuffed with thorns" (cited in John Blanchard, Truth for Life [Welwyn: Evangelical Press, 1986], 179).

Blind ambition causes people to compromise their convictions, violate their beliefs, and sacrifice their character. Ambition is often associated with words like "unscrupulous," "self-centered," "proud," "driven," "insensitive," and "ruthless." Those negative modifiers reflect the carnage inflicted on family, friends, and principles abandoned in the wake of onrushing ambition. Ambition drives people to seek wealth, prestige, power, social prominence, popular acclaim, and dominance over others." The English word "ambition" derives from the Latin word *ambitio*, which comes from a verb that literally means, "to go around." The word was used by the Romans to refer to politicians who went around canvassing for votes to get themselves elected. It was used to describe those with no convictions, who sought promotion at any cost, doing anything to achieve selfish ends. Thus, to describe someone as ambitious was to comment on his or her character in a decidedly negative way. Expressing that negative connotation of ambition, Stephen Neill said, "I am inclined to think that ambition in any ordinary sense of the term is nearly always sinful in ordinary men. I am certain that in the Christian it is always sinful, and that it is most inexcusable of all in the ordained minister" (cited in J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, rev. ed. [Chicago: Moody, 1980], 14)...The Bible condemns sinful ambition. Speaking through the prophet Jeremiah, God said, "But you, are you seeking great things for yourself? Do not seek them" (Jer. 45:5). ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**Therefore** is a term of conclusion in which Paul is saying in view of the truths in 2Co 5:1-8 (and even continuing back to the previous chapter - eg 2Co 4:18+) concerning our guarantee (God's trustworthy pledge = 2Co 5:5+) of a future eternal glorified body we will receive after we leave our earthly body. Every religion, philosophy or creed other than Christianity has grappled **unsuccessfully** with the inevitability of death [and taxes], so this is quite a triumphant **therefore** sounded forth by the apostle Paul!

**THOUGHT** - May God grant each of us the fullness of His Spirit that we might shout "Therefore" and might be empowered to live "*therefore-focused lives*" (see [Redeem the Time](#)) in Christ Jesus our soon coming King of kings! Amen

**We also have as our ambition** (*philotimeomai* in present tense - continually) - We continually make it our aim. **Amplified** "we are constantly ambitious and strive earnestly" Our ambition is not the world's idea of desire for gold and wealth, but is to seek God's will in our life. Normally one would not think "**ambition**" a good thing in a life initiated and daily enabled by grace (undeserved divine favor and divine power- 2Co 12:9+), for as Thomas Adams once said "**Ambition**, like the grave, is never full." Paul however elevates the meaning of **ambition** from the normal selfish, fleshly ambitions that drive fallen men to seek to be number one (someone has well said the "number 1" is "next to nothing"! Pun intended!) and instead uses it to refer to a "holy ambition".

**THOUGHT** - Here are two good tests for us to follow as we seek to live a life pleasing to God. (1) Will it make others stumble? (2) Will I be ashamed if Jesus should return?

Tis' only one life,  
Will soon be past.  
Only what's done in Christ  
Will last!

**William MacDonald** - While his salvation is not dependent on works, his reward in a coming day will be directly proportionate to his faithfulness to the Lord. A believer should always remember that faith is linked with salvation, and works are linked with reward. He is saved by grace through faith, not of works; but once he is saved, he should be **ambitious** to perform good works (Eph 2:10+), and for so doing he will receive rewards. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

The pay may not be that good but you can't beat His retirement plan.

So many in the Western World (and yes, even genuine believers) bow to the god **Mammon**" (cp Mt 6:24KJV+) and have as their life **ambition** to achieve worldly riches (albeit transient) rather than the eternal riches found only in a knowledge of and relationship with Christ (Col 2:3+, Mt 6:21+), and will **one day** (believers = 2Co 5:10+) painfully, regretfully understand the truth of the proverb which says...

Do not weary yourself to gain wealth.  
Cease from your consideration of it.  
When you set your eyes on it, it is gone.  
For wealth certainly makes itself wings.  
Like an eagle that flies toward the heavens.  
--(Pr 23:4, 5)  
("Amen" or "O my!") (He 13:5+)

**Whether at home** (*endemeo*) **or absent** (*ekdemeo*), **to be pleasing** (*euarestos*) **to Him** - **Amplified** = "Therefore, whether we are at home [on earth away from Him] or away from home [and with Him]." In 2Cor 5:8 he Paul had just described being **absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord**. **Home or absent** contrasts the present life with the eschatological (future) existence

with Christ (ultimately in our new bodies). Paul's point is that whether alive on earth or standing before the Lord, he will seek a life of dedication, service and praise to His great God. In short, his life will be an unbroken anthem of purpose and praise from present to future designed to bring pleasure to the heart of His Lord. (See in depth discussion of how to be pleasing to the Lord).

[Ray Stedman](#) has an interesting note on **at home** - Notice what that says: Whether "**at home**" (that means with the Lord, because that is the last reference he has given to it), or "away" (from the Lord here in the body), either place, the purpose and aim of our lives to please God. That is an eternal principle. That is not something that is going to change when we leave this earth. The one real reason we have to be here on earth is to please God, to be a delight to him, to give his heart rejoicing as he watches us and works with us. As our children please us oftentimes so we are to please the Lord. That is the sole purpose for living, and that is what Paul is saying here.

**Spurgeon** - To be well-pleasing to God everywhere, in everything that we do, should be the one aim of a Christian

**THOUGHT** - Let us not play at Christianity as we would the popular game called "Trivial Pursuit", but let us devote ourselves, ambitiously, zealously to the cause of Christ! There is no better and more profitable way to pass our short time on this earth which John says is also passing away and even its lustful desires (1Jn 2:17+).

**Gromacki** picks up on the above definition commenting that "When a redeemed sinner perceives all that God has done for him and all that he is in Christ, then he will live and serve out of love for honor. He will want to honor his God and the name of Christ that he bears. ([Stand Firm in the Faith: An Exposition of 2 Corinthians](#))

Paul's **ambition** to please the Lord is a natural lead in to the subject of the day when all the saints will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and receive from Him the commendation they deserve for the deeds done in the body, those deeds that pleased Him.

**J. C. Ryle** (1816-1900) comments on Paul's zeal as evidenced in this section

"A zealous man in religion is preemiently a man of one thing. It is not enough to say that he is earnest,--hearty,--uncompromising,--thorough-going,--whole hearted,--fervent in spirit. He only sees one thing,--he cares for one thing,--he lives for one thing,--**he is swallowed up in one thing, and that one thing is to please God.** Whether he lives, or whether he dies,--whether he has health, or whether he has sickness,--whether he is rich, or whether he is poor,--whether he pleases man, or whether he gives offense,--whether he is thought wise, or whether he is thought foolish,--whether he gets blame, or whether he gets praise,--whether he gets honour, or whether he gets shame,--for all this the zealous man cares nothing at all. He burns for one thing; and that one thing is to please God, and to advance God's glory. If he is consumed in the very burning, he cares not for it,--he is content. He feels that like a lamp, he is made to burn, and if consumed in burning, he has but done the work for which God appointed him. Such a one will always find a sphere for his zeal. If he cannot preach, and work, and give money, he will cry, and sigh, and pray. Yes! if he is only a pauper, on a perpetual bed of sickness, he will make the wheels of sin around him drive heavily, by continually interceding against it. If he cannot fight in the valley with Joshua, he will do the work of Moses, Aaron, and Hur, on the hill. If he is cut off from working himself, he will give the Lord no rest till help is raised up from another quarter, and the work is done. This is what I mean, when I speak of zeal in religion."

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**QUESTION** - [What does the Bible say about ambition?](#)

**ANSWER** - Ambition is defined as "an intense drive for success or power; a desire to achieve honor, wealth or fame." To be ambitious, in the worldly sense, is essentially to be determined to have more than your neighbor. Its motto is "he with the most toys wins"; ambition strives to be number one. However, in the Bible, the word ambition takes on a whole new dimension: "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands ..." (1 Thessalonians 4:11; cf. Philippians 1:17; Ephesians 5:8-10).

Where the world teaches us to go all out to be the best, to have a bigger house, a fancier car, a larger paycheck than our neighbor, the Bible teaches us the opposite: "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself" (Philippians 2:3). The apostle Paul tells us, "Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him" (2 Corinthians 5:9 NASB). The Greek word for "ambition," *philotim*, means literally "to esteem as an honor." Being ambitious, in and of itself, is not wrong, it's what we esteem or honor that can be a problem. The Bible teaches that we should be ambitious, yet the objective is to be accepted by Christ, not by the world. Christ taught us that to be first in the Kingdom is to become a servant (Matthew 20:26-28; Matthew 23:11-12).

Paul once posed an insightful question: "Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men?" His answer: "**If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ**" (Galatians 1:10+). Later, Paul reiterated: "On the

contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are **not trying to please men but God**, who tests our hearts” (1 Thessalonians 2:4+). Paul is affirming a truth proclaimed by Jesus Himself: “How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?” (John 5:44).

We must ask, what is our ambition: to please God or to please man?

Scripture clearly teaches that they who seek honor and esteem from men cannot believe in Jesus (Matthew 6:24; Romans 8:7; James 4:4). Those whose ambition is to be popular with the world cannot be true, faithful servants of Jesus Christ. If our ambition is to seek the things of the world (1 John 2:16; Romans 13:14), in truth, we are self-seeking and denying Christ and His sacrifice (Matthew 10: 33; Matthew 16:24). But if it is our ambition to seek and honor Christ, we are assured of His profound promise: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you” (Matthew 6:33; cf. 1 John 2:25). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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#### QUESTION - [What does it mean to be absent from the body?](#)

**ANSWER** - The phrase “absent from the body” is found in 2 Corinthians 5:6-8. Paul states that he is confident in his eternal destiny and longs for the day when he can be “absent from the body” and be present with the Lord he loves and serves. To be “absent” from one’s body simply means to die because, [at death](#), the spirit is separated from the body and moves into its eternal abode—either heaven with the Lord or hell, separated from God for eternity.

In the same way, Christians are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the presence of God. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. When a born-again believer dies, his soul goes immediately into the presence of the Lord. There, the soul consciously awaits the resurrection of the body. To the church at Philippi Paul wrote from a Roman prison:

“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you” ([Philippians 1:21-24](#)).

Paul’s desire in life was to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. If he lived, he could continue to labor for the Lord. If he faced execution, he would depart this life and be with Christ. He desired to be with his Savior, but if he remained on earth, he could continue to minister to others.

There are some who believe in [soul sleep](#), meaning that when a person dies, his body and soul sleep in the grave, awaiting the resurrection. But if this were true, why would Paul not want to live to minister as long as possible, rather than sleep in a grave? And if it were true that the body and soul are never separated, it would be impossible to ever be absent from the body and present with the Lord.

We conclude, then, that believers who die are indeed absent from their physical bodies and present with the Lord in conscious bliss awaiting that grand resurrection day! [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**

- **we must all appear:** Ge 18:25 1Sa 2:3,10 Ps 7:6-8 9:7,8 50:3-6 96:10-13 98:9 Ec 11:9 Eccl 12:13-14 Eze 18:30 Mt 25:31-46 Ac 10:42 17:31 Ro 14:10-12 1Pe 4:5 Jude 1:14,15 Rev 20:11-15
- **recompensed:** 2Co 7:3 1Ki 8:32,39 Job 34:11 Ps 62:12 Isa 3:10,11 Mt 16:27 Ro 2:5-10 1Co 4:5 Ga 6:7,8 Eph 6:8 Col 3:24,25 Rev 2:23 20:12 Rev 20:13 22:12
- **for his deeds in his body:** Ro 6:12,13,19 Ro 12:1,2 1Co 6:12-20
- [Tested by fire](#) - book that be borrowed - by Kroll, Woodrow Michael - (1991) 130 pages. This is a study of the Christian's Heavenly rewards. You do not want to be ignorant of this truth! Chapter titles - (1) It's Too Late Now, (2) Salvation versus Rewards, (3) The Courtroom, (4) The Evaluation, (5) The Criteria, (6) The Rewards, (7) The Loss of Reward, (8) Diversion: A Devilish Device.
- [The Treasure Principle](#) by Alcorn, Randy [525 ratings](#)
- [Money, possessions, and eternity](#) by Alcorn, Randy [369 ratings](#)
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries





## Bema Seat Ruins in Corinth

### Related Passages:

Psalm 16:11 You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (**DO YOU FEAR GOD?**) The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: **fear God** (cf 1Pe 1:17+, 2Co 7:1+) and **keep His commandments** (cf Jn 14:15), because this applies to every person. 14 **For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.**

Matthew 6:1+ (**A SOBERING WARNING - MOTIVE CHECK!**) "**Beware** of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have **no reward with your Father Who is in heaven.**

1 Corinthians 4:2+ In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

1 Corinthians 4:5+ (**A SOBERING WARNING - MOTIVE CHECK!**) Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and **disclose the motives of men's hearts**; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

Revelation 22:12+ "Behold, I am coming quickly, and **My reward is with Me**, to render to every man **according to what he has done.**

Matthew 5:10-12+ (**FUTURE BLESSINGS FOR PRESENT PERSECUTIONS FOR CHRIST'S SAKE!**) "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12 "Rejoice and be glad, for **your reward in heaven is great**; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Luke 6:35+ "But **love** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) your enemies, and **do good** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) , and **lend** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)), (**MOTIVE CHECK**) expecting nothing in return; and **your reward will be great**, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.

Luke 19:17+ (cf Mt 25:21, 23) "And he said to him, '**Well done, good slave**, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.'

Romans 8:17+ (**THE GREATEST REWARD - SHARING HIS GLORY**) and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

2 John 1:8 **Watch** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves (QUIT JUDGING OTHERS! JUDGE YOURSELF BY LOOKING IN THE MIRROR OF GOD'S WORD - James 1:23-25+), that you do not lose what we have accomplished, **but that you may receive a full reward** (cf 1Cor 3:14-15)

1 Corinthians 9:18+ What then is my **reward**? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27+ (**RUN TO WIN! YOU ONLY HAVE ONE RACE!**) Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? **Run in such a way that you may win.** 25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; 27 but **I discipline my body and make it my slave** (cf Col 3:5+ - KILL SIN!), so that, **after I have**

**preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.** (Play [Run Like Heaven](#) and then RUN!)

1 Timothy 4:7-8+ (**DISCIPLINE IN PRESENT AFFECTS ETERNITY!**) But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, **discipline yourself** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) for the purpose of godliness; 8 for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but **godliness is profitable for all things**, since it holds promise for the present life and also **for the life to come**.

Colossians 4:17+ (**MINISTERS, LISTEN UP!**) Say to Archippus, "**Take heed** ([blepo](#) in [present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

1 Cor 3:9-15+ (**WILL YOU SMELL LIKE SMOKE IN HEAVEN? v15**) For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. 15 **If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.**

Romans 14:10-12+ But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we **will all** stand before the **judgment seat of God**. (cf Jas 5:8-9+) 11 For it is written, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD." 12 So then **each one** of us **will give an account of himself to God**

**FOR MUCH MORE IN DEPTH COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:10](#)** (about 31 pages of notes and quotes)

**The Judgment on the Gabbatha by James Tissot, c. 1890**

## THE BEMA SEAT OF CHRIST

The painting above by [James Tissot](#) shows Jesus before Pilate as described in John 19:13 (cf Mt 27:19) "Therefore when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on **the judgment seat** ([bema](#)) at a place called **The Pavement**, but in Hebrew, **Gabbatha**." [Wikipedia](#) has this note on **Gabbatha** - "The name "**Gabbatha**" is an Aramaic word, the language spoken commonly at the time in Judea. It is not a mere translation of Lithostrotos, which properly means the tessellated or mosaic pavement where the judgment-seat stood, but which was extended to the place itself in front of Pilate's praetorium, where that pavement was laid. This was proved by the practice of St. John, who elsewhere gives Aramaic names as distinctly belonging to places, not as mere translations of the Greek. This is proved also because "Gabbatha" is derived from a root (meaning 'back', or 'elevation') which refers not to the kind of pavement, but to the elevation of the place in question." ([More on Gabbatha](#))

**THOUGHT** - Is this not absolutely amazing! Jesus was **condemned** at the Bema Seat in Jerusalem so that we might stand before Him at His Bema Seat in Heaven **uncondemned** (Ro 8:1+), not for [retribution](#) but for **reward!** Amazing grace that saved a wretch like me!

**Samuel Hoyt** - The judgment seat of Christ might be compared to a commencement ceremony. At graduation there is some measure of disappointment and remorse that one did not do better and work harder. However, at such an event the overwhelming emotion is joy, not remorse. The graduates do not leave the auditorium weeping because they did not earn better grades. Rather, they are thankful that they have been graduated, and they are grateful for what they did achieve. To overdo the sorrow aspect of the judgment seat of Christ is to make heaven hell. To underdo the sorrow aspect is to make faithfulness inconsequential. (Samuel Hoyt, "The Judgment Seat of Christ in Theological Perspective," Part 2, Bibliotheca Sacra, electronic media, p. 131.)

**Murray Harris** adds that "'Appearance before Christ's tribunal is the privilege of Christians. It is concerned with the assessment of works and, indirectly, of character, not with the determination of destiny; with reward, not status." ([Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**For** - Paul explains why his highest goal in life is to be pleasing to the Lord (and why it should be every believer's highest goal!)

**We must** ([dei](#)) **all appear** ([phaneroo](#)) **before the judgment seat** ([bema](#)) **of Christ** - Let's break this great passage down word by word. **We...all** means Paul and every believer **must** make this appearance. **Must** means it is a mandatory meeting, not an option we can opt out of! **Appear** primarily means "to make visible", to cause to become visible, to be made known, to be clearly reveal, to be manifested or caused to be seen. And so it won't be just our exterior (our "good looks"), but our interior, especially our character (our



"good works") which will be exposed to full view of our Righteous, Just, Judge (Jn 5:22, 1Co 4:5+, 2Ti 4:1+)! **Appear** is in the passive voice so more literally it is **being made manifest**. The New English Bible gives a vivid, accurate picture of this momentous day = "We must all **have our lives laid open before** the tribunal of Christ." It is one thing to appear in a doctor's office and quite another thing to be X-rayed by him! The piercing gaze of Jesus' omniscient eyes of fire (Rev. 1:14+; Rev 19:12+) will "x-ray" our entire life! **The Judgment Seat** is only for believers. Even we can stand at the **bema** only because Christ "stood" in our place at **Gabbatha** (also means raised place, height, ridge) as our Sinless Substitute effecting eternal Atonement of our sins!

If this truth does not put a holy fear of the Lord in you beloved (cp 1Pe 1:17+, 2Co 7:1+), I don't know what will! Jesus (Whose eyes are like a flame of fire! Rev 1:14+) will be our "Fruit Inspector", looking beyond the quantity of our works to the quality of our works... Gulp!

A question we should all ask ourselves in every decision of life, whether large or small is...

"What difference will this make in 10,000 years?"

--Vernon Grounds

**So that** ([hina](#) - purpose) **each one** ([hekastos](#)) **may be recompensed** (komizo) **for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done** ([prasso](#)), **whether good** (agathos) **or bad** (phaulos) - **So that** expresses the purpose for the Judgment Seat of Christ. **Each one** ([hekastos](#)) means every single one. Not a single saint will be exempted. We will all give an account for our thoughts, words and deeds, not to men but to the Omniscient, Holy, Righteous God! **May be recompensed** refers to receiving back as reward for oneself (middle voice). Some Bible translations have "to receive what one **deserves**." While that may be accurate, we do well to keep in mind the meaning of the English word **deserve** which conveys the idea of that which one is entitled to or is worthy of, that which one earns or merits. The only reason we deserve anything other than Hell is because of sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only One truly Worthy as exclaimed in Heaven in the future "**Worthy is the Lamb** that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." (Rev 5:12+). **Good** refers to deeds initiated by the Spirit and supernaturally enabled by the Spirit, deeds produced by "branches" continually abiding in the Vine (John 15:5, see [Good Deeds](#)) **Bad** is translated "evil" in the KJV because the [Textus Receptus](#) has a different word [kakos](#) meaning "evil, wicked, etc" Modern manuscripts have the Greek word phaulos which means worthless, indicating the impossibility of any true gain ever coming forth. So they are not sinful deeds, but simply deeds that were carried out by "branches" who were not abiding in the Vine (to use that metaphor).

**THOUGHT** - The certainty of the Bema Seat of Christ occurring at a specific point in time in eternity in the life of **each** individual believer, should serve as a strong motivator, causing us to forget what lies behind (Php 3:13+) and like the runner determined to win the race and receive the coveted prize, to press on toward the goal (Php 3:14+), laying aside every encumbrance (Heb 12:2+), lunging toward and fixing one's eyes on the finish line (Heb 12:1+), coming out from the world, not even touching what is unclean (2 Cor 6:17+), abstaining from even things with the "form" of evil (1 Th 5:22+), living in holy conduct and godliness (2 Pe 3:1+), and all the more as we see the day drawing near (Heb 10:25+).

You are writing a Gospel,  
A chapter each day,  
By the deeds that you do  
And the words that you say.

Men read what you write,  
Whether faithful or true:  
Just what is the Gospel  
According to you?  
-Author unknown

I like Ray Stedman's prayer (in his comments on the Bema in Ro 14:1-12) "Thank you, our Father, for these searching words **which make us all feel a bit guilty**. We have all been guilty of this, whether strong or weak. We have judged our brother, and condemned him. Forgive us for that, Lord. Help us to see that we have been usurping Your place, Lord Jesus, in doing so. Help us to stop that, and to begin to answer only for ourselves before Your throne, and upholding and praying for our brother or sister if we feel they need it. Grant to us, Lord, that illuminating understanding of truth that sets us free. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen."

**Daniel Webster** had a healthy **outlook** ("*uplook*") as shown by his answer to the question as to what was the greatest thought to ever enter his mind - "The greatest thought that has ever entered my mind is that one day I will have to stand before a holy God and give an account of my life." (Ro 14:12+)

**William MacDonald** - The judgment seat of Christ will reveal our lives of service for Christ exactly as they have been. Not only the

amount of our service, but also its quality, and even the very motives that prompted it will be brought into review. Although sins after conversion will have an effect on our service, a believer's sins, as such, will not be brought into review for judgment at this solemn time. That judgment took place over 1900 years ago, when the Lord Jesus bore our sins in His body on the tree. He fully paid the debt that our sins deserved, and God will never bring those sins into judgment again (John 5:24). The judgment seat of Christ has to do with our service for the Lord. It will not be a matter of whether we are saved or not; that is already an assured fact. But it is a matter of reward and loss at that time. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** asks "**Is the desire for reward a proper motive for service?** The fact that God does promise rewards is proof that the motive is not a sinful one, even though it may not be the highest motive. Just as parents are happy when their children achieve recognition, so our Lord is pleased when His people are worthy of recognition and reward. The important thing is not the reward itself, but the joy of pleasing Christ and honoring Him. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#)) (Bolding added)

**Barclay** writes that "some day we shall await the verdict of God. When we remember that, life becomes a tremendous and a thrilling thing, for in it we are making or marring a destiny, winning or losing a crown. Time becomes the testing ground of eternity."

**Ray Stedman** - This is not a judgment to settle destiny. This is a personal evaluation given to each individual by the Lord himself of what his life has really been like. It is as though you and the Lord walked together back through all the scenes of your life and he pointed out to you the real nature of what you did and what you said and what was behind it all. The primary characteristic of the "judgment seat" is that it is a time of disclosure to us of what has been hidden in the silent, inner reaches of our own hearts. And not only a disclosure to us, but also to others. In fact, the word that is used here is a very interesting one. It says, "we shall all appear." Literally it is, "we shall all be manifested," "we shall all be unveiled," in a sense, at the judgment seat of Christ, in the eyes of everyone. That is the point. This is the moment Jesus spoke of when he said, "Whatever is spoken in the secret places shall be shouted from the housetops." And it is described for us in the First Corinthian letter, Chapter 4, where Paul says, "Therefore, do not pronounce judgment before the time before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart," (1 Corinthians 4:5 RSV). That is what he is talking about. God's concern is not, as we often think, with what we do so much as why we do it. There are, of course, some things that we are not to do that would bother him if we did them. There are certain clear-cut areas of sin that are always sin. They are mentioned everywhere in the Scripture -- murder, adultery, lying, stealing, etc. These are always and invariably wrong, and to do them means to displease the Lord. But also there are a great many things that are apparently right that you can do and still be displeasing to the Lord. If the reason you do them is to gain glory or fame for yourself or to get even with somebody else or to establish some wrong, inordinate relationship of which God does not approve, they are wrong. Your motive is important. And more than that, as we have been learning from this passage, what you count on, your resource, is important to God. On what do you count for success -- your ability, your education, your training, your background, something coming from you? Or do you count on the God who indwells you to do the work and to carry it through to success, in his eyes if not in the eyes of men? That is what pleases God.

**Howard Hendricks** gives great advice regarding rewards - Only two things this world are eternal—the Word of God and people. It only makes sense to build your life around those things that will last forever.

**THOUGHT:** Are you spending serious, focused time in God's Word like Job (Job 23:12+)? Are you looking for opportunities to share the Gospel with those who are spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins (Gal 6:7+, Gal 6:8+, Gal 6:9, 10+)? Are you encouraging your brethren in Christ day by day as long as it is still called today, so that none are hardened by the the deceitfulness of sin (Heb 3:13+)? If not, why not? What is more important in time and eternity than redeeming the time now and storing up for yourself treasure in heaven (Eph 5:15, 16+, Mt 6:20, 21+)

## TWO JUDGMENTS COMPARED

<b>2Cor 5:9,10</b>	<b>Rev 20:11,12, 13, 14, 15</b>
Judgment Seat of Christ	<a href="#">Great White Throne Judgment</a>
Only believers	Only unbelievers
After the Rapture	After the 1000 year reign of Messiah
Before the Millennium	Before the New Heaven and Earth
Determines rewards for service	Determines amount/degree of eternal judgment

FOUR MAJOR JUDGMENTS IN SCRIPTURE				
Name	Sheep and Goats	Judgment of Jews	Bema Seat	Great White Throne
Scripture	Mt 25:31-46	Ezek 20:33-44	2Co 5:10, 1Co 3:10-15	Rev 20:11-15
Place	Earth	Earth - Wilderness	Heaven	? See Rev 20:11
Audience	Gentile Tribulation Survivors	Jewish Tribulation Survivors	Church Believers Age	All the Unsaved of all time
When	After Tribulation	After Tribulation	After Rapture	After Millennium
Purpose	Saved Gentiles enter Millennial kingdom	Saved Jews enter Millennial kingdom	Rewards	Degree of punishment in Hesel
Evaluation	Treatment of Christ's brethren	Passing Under Shepherd's rod	Works Taken Through Fire	Name not written in book Judged by books

#### Related Resources:

- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Gabbatha](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Gabbatha](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Gabbatha](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Gabbatha](#)
- American Tract Society [Gabbatha](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Gabbatha](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Gabbatha](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Gabbatha](#)
- Hitchcock Bible Names [Gabbatha](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Gabbatha](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Gabbatha](#)
- Morrish Bible Dictionary [Gabbatha](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Gabbatha](#)

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**Adoniram Judson** -- "A life once spent is irrevocable. It will remain to be contemplated through eternity. The same may be said of each day. When it is once past, it is gone forever. All the marks which we put upon it, it will exhibit forever. Each day will not only be a witness of our conduct, but will IMPACT our ETERNITY. How shall we then wish to see each day marked with usefulness! It is too late to mend the days that are past. The future is in our power. Let us, then, each morning, (enabled by God's Spirit) resolve to send the day into eternity in such a garb as we shall wish it to wear forever. And at night let us reflect that one more day is irrevocably gone, indelibly marked."

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**ILLUSTRATION** - Canadian Missionary J. Goforth gives a beautiful illustration of what every believer wants to hear someday: When he was fifteen years of age his father put him in charge of their second farm, which was twenty miles from the home farm. "Work hard," said his father. "At harvest I'll return and inspect." In later years Goforth stirred many an audience as he told of his arduous labors that summer, of his father's return in the fall and of how his heart thrilled when his father, after inspecting the fields of beautiful waving grain, turned to him and smiled. "That smile," he would say, "was all the reward I wanted. I knew my father was pleased. So will it be, dear Christians, if we are faithful to the trust our Heavenly Father has given us. His smile of approval will be our blessed reward."

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Who does God's work will get God's pay,  
 However long may seem the day,  
 However weary be the way;  
 Though powers and princes thunder "Nay,"

Who does God's work will get God's pay.  
He does not pay as others pay,  
In gold or land or raiment gay;  
In goods that vanish and decay;  
  
But God in wisdom knows a way,  
And that is sure, let come what may,  
Who does God's work will get God's pay.  
— Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations

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**ILLUSTRATION** - Several years ago the Mercedes Benz automobile company ran some ads describing a brand-new brake technology they had developed and patented. Although they owned the rights to the technology, they freely shared it with other car companies in the interest of promoting safety. The tag line of the ad contained these sobering words: Some things in life are too important not to share. As Christians, we have been given the best news (The Gospel) in all the world. It's too important not to share with others. May God help us to invest our lives in the things that will last forever. (Amen) (Ray Pritchard - [Heavenly Rewards](#))

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**ILLUSTRATION** - **C H Spurgeon** was once addressed by a young preacher once complained to Spurgeon that he did not have as big a church as he deserved. Spurgeon's replied with a question "How many do you preach to?" to which the young preacher replied "Oh, about a hundred". And what did Spurgeon say to him? Solemnly Spurgeon said "That will be enough to give account for on the day of judgment."

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**A W Tozer** - God has given us in His Holy Spirit every gift, every power, every help we need to serve Him. We do not have to look around for some other way. The most solemn aspect of this is our individual responsibility. The Bible teaches that a day is coming when we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. At that time everyone faces a review of the things done in his or her body, whether good or bad. In that day we will be fully exposed, and the things that we have done in our own strength and for our own glory will be quickly blown away like worthless hay and straw, forever separated from the kind of deeds and ministries that are Spirit-wrought and described as eternal treasures in the sight of God—gold and silver and precious stones that the fire cannot harm. In that day all that is related to the work of the flesh will perish and pass away, and only that which has been wrought by the Spirit of God will remain."

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**Robert Ketcham** wrote: "What our eyes looked on, what our ears listened to, what our hearts loved, what our minds believed, what our lips said, what our hands did, where our feet walked, our secrets, our motives, and our decisions all come out under the fire of His holy eye. We will tell Him all, not only what we did but why we did it! In the light of that record we will receive 'good' or 'bad.'"

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## THE PURPOSE OF THE BEMA

It is not punitive. It is not to judge believers for sin of any kind, confessed or unconfessed. "Scripture teaches that for the believer God's justice has already been fully and forever satisfied at the Cross in relation to the believer's sins. If God were to punish the believer judicially for his sins for which Christ has already rendered payment, He would be requiring two payments for sin and would therefore be unjust. Such a concept (punishment for sin) erroneously disparages the all-sufficiency of Christ's death on the cross."<sup>13</sup> Christ paid the penalty for the believer's pre- and post-conversion sins. The believer will forfeit rewards which he could have received, but he will not be punished in the judicial sense of "paying" for his sins. Scripture teaches that all sins, both confessed and unconfessed, have been forgiven and taken care of by the work of Christ on the Cross so the Christian will never face those sins again at the judgment.

The following verses demonstrate the basic principle of the complete and finished nature of Christ's work: Hebrews 10:14 Romans 5:19 Colossians 2:10 These verses state the complete results or conclusion: Hebrews 8:12 Hebrews 10:17-18 Isaiah 44:22 Psalm 103:12 Micah 7:19 Isaiah 38:17 These verses show we cannot come into judgment. Why? Because Christ has born our judgment by being made a curse in our place: Romans 5:1 Romans 8:1 John 3:18 John 5:24

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**Jonathan Edwards**, at the tender age of twenty, wrote the following words in his diary, words that surely reflect his understanding of the certainty and solemnity of his appearance one day in eternity future before the Lord Jesus Christ at His Judgment Seat.

*Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humbly entreat Him, by His grace, to enable me to keep these Resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to His will.*

**1 - Resolved**, that I will do whatsoever I think to be most to the glory of God, and my own good, profit, and

*pleasure... To do whatever I think to be my duty... for the good and advantage of mankind in general.*

**4 - Resolved**, *Never to do any manner of thing, whether in soul or body less or more, but what tends to the glory of God...*

**5 - Resolved**, *Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can*

**6 - Resolved**, *To live with all my might, while I do live*

**7 - Resolved**, *Never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life*

**28 - Resolved**, *To study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly, and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive, myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.*

**43 - Resolved**, *Never, henceforward, till I die, to act as if I were any way my own, but entirely and altogether God's.*

**46 - Resolved**, *Never to allow the least measure of any fretting or uneasiness at my father or mother*

**70 - Resolved**, *That there be something of benevolence in all I speak*

(Edwards resolved to read these resolutions over once a week!).

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### Here are 10 principles that for wise spiritual investing in light of eternity...

1. Invest in the lives of those who minister the word. (Gal 6:6, 7)
2. Minister to those in need. (Lk 10:42)
3. Sacrifice to follow Christ. (Lk 19:27, 28, 29)
4. Give without fanfare. (Mt 6:1, 3, 4)
5. Be willing to suffer for the sake of Christ. (Mt 5:11, 12)
6. Pray in Secret (Mt 6:5, 6)
7. Engage in spiritual activity without fanfare. (Mt 6:16, 17, 18)
8. Love your enemies by being willing to help them. (Lk 6:35)
9. Give beam service to the Lord and not just to please men. (Col 3:23, 24)
10. Entertain those who cannot repay you. (Lk 14:12, 13, 14)

([Going for the Gold - Joe, L Wall](#) Recommended)

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### QUESTION - [What is the Judgment Seat of Christ / Bema Seat of Christ?](#)

**ANSWER** - Romans 14:10–12 says, “For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat. . . . So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God” (ESV). 2 Corinthians 5:10 tells us, “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” In context, it is clear that both passages refer to Christians, not unbelievers. The judgment seat of Christ, therefore, involves believers giving an account of their lives to Christ.

The judgment seat of Christ does not determine salvation; that was determined by Christ’s sacrifice on our behalf (1 John 2:2) and our faith in Him (John 3:16). All of our sins are forgiven, and we will never be condemned for them (Romans 8:1). We should not look at the judgment seat of Christ as God judging our sins, but rather as God rewarding us for our lives. Yes, as the Bible says, we will have to give an account of ourselves. Part of this is surely answering for the sins we committed. However, that is not going to be the primary focus of the judgment seat of Christ.

At the judgment seat of Christ, believers are rewarded based on how faithfully they served Christ (1 Corinthians 9:4-27; 2 Timothy 2:5). Some of the things we might be judged on are how well we obeyed the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), how victorious we were over sin (Romans 6:1-4), and how well we controlled our tongues (James 3:1-9). The Bible speaks of believers receiving crowns for different things based on how faithfully they served Christ (1 Corinthians 9:4-27; 2 Timothy 2:5). The various crowns are described in 2 Timothy 2:5, 2 Timothy 4:8, James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:4, and Revelation 2:10. James 1:12 is a good summary of how we should think about the judgment seat of Christ: “Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.” [GotQuestions.org](#)

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## QUESTION - [What is the purpose of rewards in heaven?](#)

**ANSWER** - The Bible mentions **rewards** in [heaven](#) multiple times (Matthew 5:12; Luke 6:23, 35; 1 Corinthians 3:14; 9:18). But why are rewards necessary? Won't being in heaven with God be enough? Experiencing Him, His glory, and the joys of heaven will be so wonderful, it's hard to understand why extra rewards would be needed. Also, since our faith rests in Christ's righteousness instead of our own (Romans 3:21–26), it seems strange that our works would merit reward.

God will give rewards in heaven at the bema, or the **judgment seat of Christ**, based on our faithfulness in service to Him (2 Corinthians 5:10). The rewards will show the reality of our sonship (Galatians 4:7) and the justice of God (Hebrews 6:10). God will give rewards in heaven in order to fulfill the law of [sowing and reaping](#) (Galatians 6:7–9) and make good on His promise that our labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58).

One reason for the rewards in heaven is the fact that Jesus shares His reward with us. Paul said, "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Our lives are "hidden" with Christ, who is seated at the right hand of God (Colossians 3:1–4). We die with Him and we live with Him and we share in His joy (Romans 6:8; Matthew 25:21). In heaven we will dwell with Him (John 14:1–3). Our lives are inextricably linked with Christ's (**ED: [THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF COVENANT](#)**). The reward He receives is shared with all of us: "If we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and [co-heirs with Christ](#), if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (Romans 8:17).

Our rewards in heaven depend on the goodness and power of God. Through Christ's resurrection we gain an inheritance in heaven; on earth our faith is tested and results in praise and glory and honor when Christ is revealed (1 Peter 1:3–9). The things we do in this life are only permanent (that is, carried with us into heaven) if they are built on the foundation, which is Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11–15).

The rewards we gain in heaven are not like the rewards we earn here on earth. We tend to think in material terms—mansions, jewels, etc. But these things are only representations of the true rewards we will gain in heaven. A child who wins a spelling bee treasures the trophy he receives not for the sake of the trophy itself but for what that trophy means. Likewise, any rewards or honor we gain in heaven will be precious to us because they carry the weight and meaning of our relationship with God—and because they remind us of what He did through us on earth.

In this way, rewards in heaven glorify God and provide us with joy, peace, and wonder as we consider God's work in us and through us. The closer we were to God during this life, the more centered on Him and aware of Him, the more dependent on Him, the more desperate for His mercy, the more there will be to celebrate. We are like characters in a story who suffer doubt, loss, and fear, wondering if we will ever really have our heart's desire. When the happy ending comes and desire is fulfilled, there comes a completion. The story would not be satisfying without that completion. Rewards in heaven are the completion of our earthly story, and those rewards will be eternally satisfying (Psalm 16:11). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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### Related Resources:

- Criteria Used to Assess Eternal Rewards
- [The Judgments - \(Past, Present, and Future\)](#) - Hampton Keathley III
- [What is the Great White Throne Judgment? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What do I need to do to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant" when I arrive in heaven? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Does God reward us for being obedient to His Word? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What are the five heavenly crowns that believers can receive in Heaven? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does it mean that without faith it is impossible to please God \(Hebrews 11:6\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does it mean that blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can we store up treasures in heaven? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What things in this world have a true eternal value? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the verse about casting our crowns before the feet of Jesus? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Births, Deaths, and Resurrections](#) - Tony Garland
- [What are the different judgments in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#) - excellent summary of past, present and future judgments
- Christ as Judge - 2 Timothy 4:1
- [What happens at the final judgment? | GotQuestions.org](#)



hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.

- **The fear:** Ge 35:5 Job 6:4 18:11 31:23 Ps 73:19 76:7 88:15,16 90:11 Isa 33:14 Na 1:6 Mt 10:28 25:46 Mk 8:35, 36, 37, 38 9:43-50 Lk 12:5 Heb 10:31 Jude 1:23 Rev 20:15
- **We persuade:** 2Co 5:20 6:1 Lk 16:31 Ac 13:43 18:4,13 19:26 20:18-27 26:26 28:23 Ga 1:10 Col 1:28,29 2Ti 2:24, 25, 26
- but: 2Co 1:12-14 2:17 4:1,2 1Co 4:4,5 1Th 2:3-12
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### RELATED PASSAGES:

2 Corinthians 7:1+ Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in **the fear of God**.

Acts 9:31+ (HOW SHOULD A CHURCH GROW?) So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the **fear of the Lord** and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit (NOTE BALANCE - FEAR/COMFORT), it continued to **increase** (GROW).

Philippians 2:12+ So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) your salvation **with fear and trembling**;

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:11](#)**

### URGENCY MOTIVATED BY HEALTHY FEAR OF FUTURE JUDGMENT

**Therefore** is a **term of conclusion** - based on the personal accountability of his future appointment at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Based on a wholesome, healthy reverential awe of Christ as Paul's Judge, as the divine Sifter of his every thought, motive, word and deed. Based on this truth, Paul sought to appeal, persuade or convince men that Jesus was the Way, the Truth and the Life and that no man could come to the Father but through Him (Jn 14:6).

**Knowing** (eido) **the fear** (phobos) **of the Lord** (kurios) - **Murray Harris'** paraphrase - "We are fully aware, then, of our accountability to the Lord as our judge, and so we regard him with reverential awe." Believers have an absolute certainty that we will one day stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ which should stimulate a holy **fear of the Lord**, a fear which in turn serves as motivation to minister with integrity and a sense of urgency. The idea of **fear** in this passage is a deep awe and reverential sense of the coming day of reckoning and accountability before the Lord Jesus Christ at His Judgment Seat. Believers are not to be terrified at the thought of standing before Christ. On the other hand unbelievers should feel a terror of having to stand before Him at the [Great White Throne Judgment](#) to be sentenced to eternal separation from His presence for all eternity (Rev 20:11-15+). And so clearly it is not the latter type of fear which Paul is referring to in the present passage. **Fear of the Lord** is a healthy spiritual attitude which on one hand is an awe of God's greatness and glory and on the other hand is a deep and reverential sense of accountability to Christ and even somewhat of a dread of the discipline we will reap for violating His holy nature. Such fear involves self-distrust, a sensitive conscience, and being on guard against temptation.

There is in my life a plant I call Reverence.

It needs to be watered about once a week.

-- Oliver Wendell Holmes

[Ray Stedman](#) - Knowing this about God, Paul says, "It motivates me to be honest and faithful in the work he has given me to do, that of persuading men..

**Lightfoot** explains **phobos** as that fear which should be in every believer as "a nervous and trembling anxiety to do right." (cp 2Co 5:9) Because of Christ's victory on the Cross, Christians are not to fear people (Pr 29:25) or persecution or even Satan. However, they are called to show proper reverence and awe toward God. Indeed, one of the most common commands of Jesus to His little flock was "**fear not**" (see Mt 10:28KJV+, Lk 12:4,5).

**John Calvin** in describing the **fear of the Lord** related to contemplation of the Bema Seat of Christ as a motivating influence writes that "the man who seriously considers this (Standing one day before Jesus) must of necessity be touched with **fear**, and shake off all negligence (All contempt and all carelessness) (Paul) declares, therefore, that he discharges his apostleship faithfully and with a pure conscience, (2Ti 1:3) as one that walks in the fear of the Lord, (Acts 9:31) thinking of the account to be rendered by him (at the Bema seat).



**Paul Apple - Fear of God** Makes Us Urgent Transparent Persuaders...Nothing worse than persuasion that is crafty manipulation and exploitation ([2 Corinthians](#))

**We** (present tense - continually) **persuade** (peitho) **men - Amplified** = "we seek to win people over [to persuade them]." **Murray Harris'** paraphrase - "So we endeavor to persuade everyone of the truth of the gospel and of our integrity as messengers of the gospel." And so empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8+) and the intrinsic power of the Gospel (Ro 1:16+), Paul sought to see all men come to a saving knowledge of His Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. But he is not coercing, manipulating, twisting their arms or trying to force them to believe in Jesus. He is simply persuading. Our English word **persuade** is defined in one dictionary as "Persuade means to win someone over, as by reasoning or force of personality." While Paul was trying to win souls to the Gospel and even by reasoning with them from the Scriptures, he was not trying to overwhelm them with slick rhetoric or a powerful personality. Paul knew full well that only the "wind" of the Spirit (John 3:8+) could sweep in and save a sinners hard, rebellious heart.

**Guzik - We persuade men:** This should be the heart of everyone who presents the gospel, whether it is in a pulpit or anywhere else. We intend to persuade men. We are not simply casting out ideas without caring how men respond to them. We should be like Paul, who passionately desired that men and women come to Jesus. We must intend in our hearts and our words to persuade men. ([2 Corinthians 5](#))

**Michael Andrus** - Persuade them of what? Well, the whole context concerns the Gospel, the truth that Jesus died and rose again, thereby paying the penalty for our sin. Paul wants to persuade men that they need to repent and to turn to Christ for forgiveness. But how is the fear of the Lord a motive for doing that? Two weeks ago I spoke on the Judgment Seat of Christ. Look again at verse 9, 10: "So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it (whether dead or alive). For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." We talked about the fact that this judgment is not only comforting but also sobering. A healthy fear of the Lord and of his searching judgment of our lives ought to cause us to carefully examine how we are building God's church. Back in 1 Cor. 3 Paul said that "fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames." Are our lives, our words, our attitudes, our actions drawing people to the Savior or turning them away? No wonder Paul says, "Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men." Please understand that Paul's reminder here of God's coming judgment is not an attempt to scare unbelievers into heaven; rather it is given to believers as a means of spurring them on in faithful sharing of their faith.

**But we are made manifest** (phaneroo - clearly revealed) **to God - Murray Harris'** paraphrase - "What we are and what our motives are have always been open to God's scrutiny." God is omniscient so every motive, word and action Paul did (and we do) is clearly visible and fully known to God. **Made manifest** is in perfect tense which pictures Paul as fully known to God at a point in time in the past and still fully known to Him. In other words Paul is saying in essence "all along we have been open to God's view." There was no point when they had not had "full disclosure" of their ministry motives and methods before God. As **Plummer** says the perfect tense shows that Paul's "*character has been, and still is, laid bare*." God saw no hidden motives, no deception, no personal agenda in Paul's ministry of the Gospel.

**THOUGHT-** Beloved follower of Christ can you say the same with a clear conscience before the one Who sees all? When we constantly keep the image of the **Judgment Seat of Christ** in our mind (aka "**knowing the fear of the Lord**"), we will continually seek to minister in a way that brings God the glory. Our motive for service to God should be not because we feel "obligated" but because we are in awe of the Lord and desire to do all you do for His glory (1Co 10:31+)!

The eyes of the LORD are in every place,  
Watching the evil and the good.  
-- Proverbs 15:3+

**And I hope that we are made manifest** (phaneroo - clearly revealed) **also in your consciences** (suneidesis) - **Murray Harris'** paraphrase - "I hope these things are abundantly clear to your consciences as well." **Hope** usually signifies the expression of absolute certainty of future good. In this passage however Paul uses **hope** to express his wish or desire not with the idea of absolute certainty but of a desire that his readers would recognize that the goal of his ministry was not to misrepresent the Lord but to glorify the Lord. **Made manifest to your consciences** - Paul desired to be clearly revealed to the Corinthian's sense of moral goodness, the place where every man assesses what is right or good versus wrong or bad. Paul wanted to be brought to the light in their consciences, so that they might commend him from their heart of hearts not as bad but as good in regard to his ministry.

**Plummer** writes that Paul appealed to "Their **conscienses**, rather than their intellects, on which they prided themselves...; "**conscience** goes deeper than criticism" (Calvin). ([2 Corinthians 5 A Critical and Exegetical Commentary](#))

**R. Kent Hughes** adds that "Deep down, the Corinthians were aware of the character of Paul's ministry from when he was with them

and how he proclaimed not himself but Christ as Lord and himself their servant (cf. 4:5), calling them to "be reconciled to God" (5:20) with sincerity and integrity (cf. 2Co 1:12, 13, 14; 2:17; 4:2). He hoped, therefore, that the moral faculties of their consciences would connect the dots and that he would become known and remain known to them as the man of integrity that he truly was. ([2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness. Preaching the Word](#))

**Ray Stedman** - He is saying, "Knowing that God will deal honestly and squarely and faithfully and yet lovingly with me, I want every moment of my life to count. I do not want to waste my life. I do not want to spend it pretending to be something I am not. I want to be honest and open and genuine about all that I say and do." That is why he says, "Whatever I am is known to God, and I hope you see it to

**Denney** - The meaning of the words "**we persuade men**" is not at once clear. Interpreters generally find in them a combination of two ideas — we try to win men for the Gospel, and we try to convince them of our own purity of motive in our evangelistic work. The word is suitable enough to express either idea; and though it is straining it to make it carry both, the first is suggested by the general tenor of the passage, and the second seems to be demanded by what follows. "We try to convince men of our disinterestedness, but we do not need to try to convince God; we have been manifested to Him already; and we trust also that we have been manifested in your consciences." ([Expositor's Bible: The Measure of Christ's Love](#))

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#### Related Resources:

- [How is the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does the Bible say about fear? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**2 Corinthians 5:12 We are not again commending ourselves to you but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have an answer for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart.**

- we: 2Co 3:1 6:4 10:8,12,18 12:11 Pr 27:2
- give: 2Co 1:14 11:12-16 12:1-9
- appearance: Gr. the face, Ga 6:12-14
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENT ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:12](#)**

### NO PATTING OURSELVES ON THE BACK

**Kenneth Chafin** writes that "it continues to amaze me that so magnificent a passage of the Bible was written by the apostle Paul in answer to his critics and in defense of his ministry....it is difficult for us to imagine that there was a time when he was accused of being a crazy, self-appointed peddler of the gospel. Enough people took the criticism seriously that Paul felt it necessary to defend himself. ([Vol. 30: The Preacher's Commentary Series, 1, 2 Corinthians](#))

**We are not again commending** (sunistemi/sunistao) **ourselves to you** - Paul was not "patting himself on the back," not bragging, not trying to glorify himself, not trying to make himself look good to the Corinthians.

**William MacDonald** has an interesting comment - Immediately Paul realizes that what he has just said might be misinterpreted as self-praise. He does not want anyone to think that he is indulging in that! And so he adds, we do not commend ourselves again to you. This does not mean that he ever had commended himself to them, but he had been accused of doing so time and again, and he here seeks to disabuse their minds of any such idea. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Later in this same letter Paul addresses the commendation we should all long for and seek explaining that "When people boast about themselves, it doesn't count for much. But when the Lord commends someone, that's different!" (2Co 10:18NLT)

**But are giving you an occasion** ([aphorme](#) - opportunity) **to be proud** ([kauchema](#) in a good sense) **of us** - **Murray Harris'** paraphrase = "On the contrary, we are affording you with a solid and suitable basis for taking real pride in us and championing our cause." **Wuest** = "but [are writing these things] as giving you a base of operations from which to glory about us." Paul wanted the Corinthians to be proud (in the right sense) of him. He then goes on to give the purpose for them being proud of him.

**so that** ([hina](#) - purpose) **you will have an answer for those who take pride** ([kauchaomai](#) - present tense - continually "self-glory") **in appearance** ([prosopon](#) - EXTERNAL) **and not in heart** ([kardia](#) -INTERNAL) - **Murray Harris'** paraphrase = "So that you may

have ample "ammunition" against our opponents who constantly pride themselves on position and privilege rather than on the state of the heart. If the Corinthians had a right sense of pride in Paul and his ministry, they would be enabled to speak to and refute Paul's adversaries. **Pride in appearance and not in heart** - Paul denounced his accusers as hypocrites whose external "religiosity" did not match their internal depravity of their **heart**. They prided themselves on the outward, "showy" things, those things which would impress others, but lacked a genuine **heart** for God and His glory. It was all "about them". And they undoubtedly knew that the Corinthians like all men look "at the outward appearance" but Paul reminds them that these men had a "heart deficiency", the very place where God looks for integrity and character (1Sa 16:7b). Paul does not state specifically in this passage what the "showy" things were but he does give us some insights later (2Co 11:6, 12:1, 12).

**William MacDonald** adds that Paul "realized that he was being sharply criticized by the false teachers in the presence of the Corinthian saints. He wanted the believers to know how to answer these attacks on him, and so he was giving them this information that they might be able to defend him when he was condemned in their presence. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

## 2 Corinthians 5:13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you.

- **We are beside:** 2Co 11:1,16,17 12:6,11 Ac 26:24,25 1Co 4:10, 11, 12, 13 1Th 2:3-11
- **it is to God:** 2Sa 6:21,22
- **Sober:** Ac 26:25 Ro 12:3
- **for you:** 2Co 7:12 Col 1:24 1Th 1:5 2Ti 2:10
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### RELATED PASSAGES:

Mark 3:21+ (**ACCUSATIONS AGAINST JESUS**) When His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, "**He has lost His senses.**"

Acts 26:25-26+ (**ILLUSTRATION OF "BESIDE OURSELVES" AND "SOUND MIND"**) And while Paul was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, "Paul, you are **out of your mind** (Greek = [mania](#) meaning insanity, madness)! Your great learning is **driving you mad.**" But Paul said, "I am not **out of my mind** ([mainomai](#) = to be mad, to rave), most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober [sophrosune](#) truth."

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:13](#)**

### "CRAZY FOR CHRIST!"

**For if we are beside** (existemi) **ourselves, it is for God** - Undoubtedly Paul was called "crazy Paul" by his adversaries and here he defends his affect and actions. **It is for God** could mean it is for the glory of God, that whatever he did in ministry was for God.

**D L Moody** was known as "Crazy Moody" because of his zeal to see lost souls come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Lord, may his tribe increase! Amen

**William MacDonald** - It would seem from this verse that the apostle had even been accused of insanity, of fanaticism, of various forms of mental disturbances. He does not deny that he lived in what Denney has called a state of "spiritual tension." He simply says that if he is beside himself, it is for God. Anything that might seem like insanity to his critics was really his deep-hearted devotion for the Lord. He was consumed with a passion for the things of God. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Joseph Beet** on **if we are beside** (Gone-out-of-our-mind or become mad). These strange words can be accounted for only as being actually spoken by his enemies. The relatives of Christ said (Mk 3:21+) the same of Him. ([2 Corinthians 5](#))

**if we are of sound mind** (sophroneo) **it is for you** - This most likely describes times when Paul was simply teaching in a calm manner. His goal was to edify and equip the saints at Corinth.

In sum, if things I do look insane to some, I am doing them for God. If other things I do look sane and sober minded, I am doing those things for your sake. Paul is showing that there is a place for defending yourself in ministry -- If it is done for God's glory and if it is done for the benefit of the saints.

**MacDonald** - If, on the other hand, he was of sound mind, it was for the sake of the Corinthians. What the verse says, in short, is that all of Paul's behavior could be explained in one of two ways: either it was zeal for God, or it was for the welfare of his fellow

believers. In both cases, his motives were entirely unselfish. Could his critics say that of themselves? ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Constable** summarizes the difficulties as follows - What Paul meant by the charge of being beside himself, and its opposite, being of sound mind, could and probably does include all the following possibilities. Some critics apparently attacked him for his teaching that differed from mainstream Judaism, his ecstatic experiences, and his ceaseless service. To this his response was, "That is for God to judge" (cf. 2Co 5:9-11). Other critics may have thought him crazy for speaking in tongues and having visions (cf. Acts 22:17-21). For Paul, that was a matter between him and God (cf. 1Co 14:2). Occasionally Paul may have appeared carried away with his emotions, but that conduct only resulted in God's glory. His self-commendation may have looked like lunacy to some in Corinth, but Paul was only defending God's cause. To the Jews the apostle's conversion marked him as a madman, but that change of mind was a totally rational decision. Jesus' critics had misjudged Him too. ([2 Corinthians Expository Notes](#))

**MacArthur** explains it this way "Paul says, "Look, if I acted like an insane man it's because I'm dealing with divine truth. It's for God because God has put this truth in me to proclaim." And the world will always render this assessment that the person who preaches with power and boldness and courage and conviction is out of his mind as an egomaniac, as a fool. Then on the other hand, he says, "If we're of sound mind it's for you" What does he mean? Sophroneo, be of sound mind, means to be sober minded, to be in complete control, to be moderate. This is cool communication as opposed to hot communication. If we are calm, cool, collected, meek, humble, dispassionate, restrained, it's for you....When I am restrained and humble and selfless, it's to come down to your level and be patient and kind and gentle in moving you along the path. There are times when I have to be sober minded and moderate and come to you with cool communication....I think Paul is just taking both sides. He's saying, "Look, if I...if I appear to be a man insane, do you understand that I am dealing with a stewardship from God? And if you see me as a cool and calm and patient and gentle man, it's because I'm trying to deal with you. But in the end the matter that is at stake here is the truth. So, I'll defend myself because I want to be able to continue to propagate the truth." ([A Ministry of Integrity, Part 2](#))

**Spurgeon** - And men said that these apostles had gone out of their minds. Festus said to Paul, "thou art beside thyself, much learning doth make thee mad;" so Paul says, "Whether we be beside ourselves,"

**F. B. MEYER** - Ah! Love, what canst thou not do? Thou canst make the timid brave, and the weak strong. The martyr, the patriot, the hero have learned of thee the secret of finding beds of down on stones, and gardens of flowers on barren sands. Thou didst bring the King Himself from the midst of His royalties to the cross, and He counted all things but loss that He might redeem the church on whom He had set His heart. Then self will be dethroned, the cross of daily-dying will be robbed of its bitterness, the furnace floor will become a flower-enamelled pathway, if only thou shalt reign in us supreme!... The love that can expel self is not the vague love of a principle or theory, but of a person. It is the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. "I saw," says George Fox, "a sea of light and a sea of ink; and the sea of light flowed into the sea of ink, and swept it away forever."

## 2 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;

- **the love:** 2Co 8:8,9 Song 1:4 8:6,7 Mt 10:37,38 Lk 7:42-47 Jn 14:21-23 Jn 21:15-17 1Co 16:22 Eph 3:18,19 6:24 Heb 6:10 1Pe 1:8
- **Controls:** Job 32:18 Lk 24:29 Ac 4:19,20
- **Having concluded:** Ro 2:2 1Co 2:14
- **one:** Isa 53:6 Mt 20:28 Jn 1:29 11:50-52 1Ti 2:6 Heb 2:9 1Jn 2:1,2
- **Therefore:** 2Co 3:7,9 Lk 15:24,32 Jn 5:25 11:25 Ro 5:15 14:7-9 Eph 2:1-5 Col 2:13 1Ti 5:6 Titus 3:3 1Jn 5:19
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:14](#)**

## CHRIST'S LOVE FOR US CONTROLS OUR LOVE FOR HIM

**For (gar)** is a term of explanation. Always stop and ask "What is being explained?" (Or "Why is it being explained?" or "When... ?" or "To whom... ?", in other words, interrogate the "for" with the 5W/H questions). Let's keep the context in mind and remember that Paul is defending his apostleship against false apostles and false teaching. Recall that Paul has just described being beside himself (2Co 5:13), which is another way of saying that the impression he gave many was that he had "lost his marbles" and was out of his mind.

**G. Campbell Morgan** told about a Christian woman who was struggling with being "beside herself" for Jesus. - The woman said to Morgan, "I know I will have to do all the things I most dislike, but I am determined to be a real Christian." A year later, Morgan was

visiting in her town and spoke with her again. "Do you recall," she inquired, "What I said to you when I dedicated my life to Christ?" He told her he did. As she looked at him, the light of God appeared to be on her face. She exclaimed, "But it's been so different, Dr. Morgan! I began to follow Christ, feeling that I would have to do all the things that were contrary to my desires, but now I do what I want every day because God has made me pleased with the things that please Him!"

**The love** (agape) **of Christ** ([Christos](#)) **controls** (sunecho/synecho - present tense - continually) **us** - **Controls** describes Christ's love pressing in on us and in a sense compelling us. As **Murray Harris** paraphrases it "the example of Christ's love controls our actions and leaves us no choice but to serve God and you." The Greek allow this to be interpreted as either the **love** we have for Christ (so called "objective genitive") or the **love** that Christ has for us ("subjective genitive"), but without doubt the context favors the Christ's love for us. Context is always "king" for accurate interpretation and here context favors the interpretation that the love of Christ is His love for us. Paul says "**one died for all**" which clearly speaks of the Cross, the supreme manifestation of Christ's (and the Father's) love for sinners. God so loved us that He gave Christ, His only begotten Son, to die in our place, to die the death we deserved to die (Jn 3:16). There is no higher love for Jesus said "Greater **love** has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." (Jn 15:13) John adds that "We know **love** by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (1Jn 3:16) Notice that in 1Jn 3:16 Christ's love for us serves as a "constraining" or "motivating" influence to urge us onward as His followers to imitate Him and to demonstrate to others His love for us. Christ loving others through us is the beautiful picture, the incredible privilege for His followers!

**Murray Harris** explains **sunecho** this way - Ever since his conversion, Paul had felt "**hemmed in**" or without an option; he must expend himself in the service of others for Christ's sake (2Cor 4:11, 12; 12:15).

**Henry Morris** - It is not our love for Christ that constrains us, for our love is variable at best. But His great love for us, the love that took Him to the cross in our place, is the greatest motivating factor for our love and service for Him.. ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

**Spurgeon** - "The apostles laboured much, but all their labour sprang from the impulse of the love of Jesus Christ. Just as Jacob toiled for Rachel solely out of love to her, so do true saints serve the Lord Jesus under the omnipotent constraint of love."

**Guzik** - To say, "the love of Christ constrains us," is to say that the love of Christ has power. It has a force that can bind us and influence us. "The love of Christ had pressed Paul's energies into one force, turned them into one channel, and then driven them forward with a wonderful force, till he and his fellows had become a mighty power for good, ever active and energetic." (Spurgeon) ([2 Corinthians 5](#))

**William MacDonald** - No one who studies the life of the apostle can fail to wonder what made him serve so tirelessly and unselfishly. Here, in one of the greatest sections of all his letters, he gives the answer—the love of Christ. Does the love of Christ here refer to His love for us or to our love for Him? There can be no question that it is His love for us. The only reason that we love at all is because He first loved us. It is His love that compels us, moves us along, as a person is moved along in a crowd of Christmas shoppers. As Paul contemplated the marvelous love which Christ had shown to him, he could not help but be moved along in service for his wonderful Lord. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Stephen Olford** writes that "it is not our love to Christ that is in view here, but rather it is the **love of Christ** working in us—mastering, driving, and compelling us. It is the love of God "poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Ro 5:5). Such compelling love never flags, never falters, never fails. It is "[the expulsive power of a new affection \(click for sermon\)](#)" (Anointed Expository Preaching)

### [May the Mind of Christ, My Savior](#)

May the mind of Christ, my Savior,  
Live in me from day to day,  
By His love and power controlling  
All I do and say.

**Having concluded** ([krino](#)) **this, that one died** (apothnesko) **for all, therefore all died** - Christ died on the Cross for those who believe in Him. He is not speaking of Christ's death for all humanity in this context. While there is not total agreement on this interpretation, I feel that the "all" that have died is those who have died with Christ vicariously.

**William MacDonald** - In dying for all, Jesus acted as our Representative. When He died we all died—in Him. Just as Adam's sin became the sin of his posterity, so Christ's death became the death of those who believe on Him (Rom. 5:12–21; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22). ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Guzik** - How did Jesus die for all? In the sense that His death is able to save all who will come to Him and is a demonstration of God's love to all; but not in the sense that all are saved because Jesus died (which is the [false doctrine of universalism](#)). However, it



is probable that in this context Paul means "all the saved" when he says all. There is no doubt that there is a sense in which Jesus died for the whole world: And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world (1 John 2:2). But the all Paul mentions here is probably "all the saved," because he also writes then all died. It can only be said that those who join themselves to Jesus by faith have spiritually died and risen again with Him (Romans 6:1–6). ([2 Corinthians 5](#))

Here is a short insight into the incredible power of the **compelling love of Christ** on **Henry Martyn**, Christ's ambassador to India in the early 1800's ([Glimpse](#)) ([Wikipedia](#))... Though several attractive, lucrative vocations were open to him, he said, "Here I am, Lord: send me to the ends of the earth. Send me even to death itself if it but be in Thy service and in Thy kingdom!" When he fell deeply in love with a girl named Lydia, he told her of his call from God to live and minister in India. Was this agreeable to her? he asked, and pleaded that it might be. But it was not. If he would stay in England, he could have her as his bride; if he went to India, he must do without her. The question came like a drumbeat in his brain—India or Lydia? Lydia or India? Henry Martyn was a mastered man... **constrained** by the love of Christ. The mastery was his in a crisis involving a crucial choice. 'My dear Lydia and my duty call me different ways, yet God has not forsaken me. I am born for God only, and Christ is nearer to me than father or mother or sister.' So he went to India to 'burn out for God.' " ([2400 Scripture Outlines, Anecdotes, Notes and Quotes Archibald Naismith](#))

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**CONSTRAINING LOVE** - The Lord loves us first, and we in turn love Him. Because we do, we should serve Him out of devotion—not duty. This is the law of love. A husband and wife didn't really love each other. The man was very demanding, so much so that he prepared a list of rules and regulations for his wife to follow. He insisted that she read them every day and obey them to the letter. Among other things, his "do's and don'ts" indicated such details as what time she had to get up in the morning, when his breakfast should be served, and how the housework should be done.

A few years after the husband died, the woman fell in love with another man, one who dearly loved her, and they were married. This husband did everything he could to make his new wife happy, continually showering her with tokens of his appreciation. One day as she was cleaning house, she found tucked away in a drawer the list of commands her first husband had written for her. As she looked it over, she realized that even though her new husband hadn't given her any kind of list, she was doing everything her first husband's list required. She was so devoted to this man that her deepest desire was to please him out of love, not obligation. Doing things for him was her greatest joy.

So it should be with us in our relationship to Christ. Because He loves us, we love Him and want to serve Him. That's the law of love.—R W DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Serving Christ under law is duty.  
Under love it's delight**

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**THE CONSTRAINING POWER OF CHRIST'S LOVE** - WHEN asked to tell an incident that showed he was different because of his faith in Jesus, a recently converted truck driver replied,

"Well, when somebody tailgates my truck, I no longer drive on the shoulder of the road to kick gravel on him."

That driver's experience illustrates an important truth: Those who are in Christ are indeed new creations. They do things differently because they are not the same as before they trusted Jesus. This doesn't mean they will not fall into sin nor that they become mature overnight. But a miraculous transformation has taken place.

Theologian Lewis Sperry Chafer pointed out several changes that happen at conversion. We are joined with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Ro 6:3-+, Ro 6:4, 5-+, Ro 6:6-+); made alive (Ep 2:1-+, Ep 2:5-+); made children of God (1Jn 3:1-+, 1Jn 3:2-+, 1Jn 3:3-+); justified before God (Ro 5:1-+); forgiven (Col 1:14-+); delivered from the powers of darkness (Col 1:13-+); loved by God (Eph 2:4-+); indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1Co 6:19-+); and made the objects of Christ's intercession (Heb 7:25+).

Yes, to know Christ makes us brand new people. How does that difference show in our lives? J D Brannon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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### **James Smith - THE GREAT CHANGE. 2 Corinthians 5:14-21**

The experiences of a Christian may not all be Christian experience. Experiences may be as varied as Christians themselves. But there are some radical and fundamental experiences that lie at the root of every real Christian life. Here are some of them. We shall note—

#### **I. The Change Needed.**

"If One died for all, then were all dead" (2Co 5:14). "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12). "The

wages of sin is death." Sin separates from God, and to be separated from God is spiritual death. A change is needed, not in God, but in the condition of the soul that is already lost to Him because of sin.

## II. The Change Wrought.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation" (2Co 5:17). To be in Christ is to be trusting Him so entirely that God is pleased in grace to reckon the righteousness of His Son as for us. In this new creation old things have passed away. No man can create himself. We are His workmanship. "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Ephesians 2:10). The change is so great that "all things become new," both in us and around us, because the heart is renewed and the eyes are enlightened.

## III. The Divine Method in Accomplishing this Change.

"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (v. 19). Yes, in Jesus of Nazareth this lowly Man of Sorrows, God was seeking to reconcile a world at enmity with Himself. In Christ we meet with this seeking and forgiving God, finding salvation and newness of life, being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24). "By grace are you saved through faith." "It is of faith that it might be by grace" (Romans 4:16).

## IV. The Evidence of this Change.

"He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them" (2Co 5:15). The evidence that we have of being redeemed and transformed is a changed attitude towards ourselves and our Lord. It is not "I" now, but "Christ." He gave Himself that He might redeem us. Now henceforth it must be ourselves for Him. This new purpose in life is surely what is expected from a new creature. Let the time past suffice for the love of self, the will of the flesh, and the pride of place. The grace of God that saved us now teaches us to deny worldly lust and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Titus 2:12). For God has called us unto holiness (1 Th 1:7).

## V. The Responsibilities Connected with this Change.

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ" (2Co 5:20). We are Christ's representatives in the world, both as to His character and His purpose. In Christ's stead we are to beseech men to be reconciled to God. Having been reconciled to God by Jesus Christ, there is committed unto us "the ministry of reconciliation" (v. 18). Thank God, it is not the ministry of hopeless damnation. God is not waiting to be reconciled to men, but to reconcile men to Himself. As ambassadors, we are not left to our own resources. We are workers together with Him (2Co 6:1). Out of His fullness are we all to receive. Let us labor and pray that souls may be won for Christ and His Kingdom

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### Related Resource:

- [What does it mean that the love of Christ compels us \(2 Corinthians 5:14\)?](#)

**2 Corinthians 5:15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.**

- **that they:** 2Co 3:6 Eze 16:6 37:9,14 Hab 2:4 Zec 10:9 Jn 3:15,16 5:24 6:57 Ro 6:2,11,12 8:2,6,10 14:7,8 1Co 6:19,20 Ga 2:20 5:25 Eph 5:14 Col 2:12 3:1 1Pe 4:6 1Jn 4:9
- **No longer:** 2Co 5:16 2Ki 5:17 Ro 6:6 Eph 4:17 1Pe 1:14,15 4:2-4
- **live:** Lk 1:74 Ro 6:13 12:1 14:7-9 1Co 6:20 10:33 Ga 2:19 Php 1:20,21 Col 3:17,23 1Th 5:10 Titus 2:14 Heb 13:20,21 Rev 1:18
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### RELATED PASSAGES:

Romans 6:6+ (**CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST**) knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

Galatians 2:19-20+ (**CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST**) "For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God. 20 "I **have been crucified with Christ**; and 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 up for me.

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:15](#)**



## HE DIED THE DEATH WE DESERVED THAT WE MIGHT GAIN A LIFE WE DID NOT EARN

**And He died** (apothnesko) **for all so that** ([hina](#) - purpose) **they who live** ([zao](#)) **might no longer live** ([zao](#)) **for themselves** - Christ died for all is not saying He died for all mankind that all mankind would be granted salvation (that's the false teaching of [universalism](#)), but for the "all" who would believe in Him which is most in keeping with the following phrase (Remember to always keep context "King" in order to arrive at the most accurate interpretation). This next phrase describes those who **no longer live for themselves** which is clearly a reference to those who have been born again and are new creatures in Christ (2Co 5:17) who (indwelt by the Spirit of Christ) now possess a new desire and power (cp Php 2:13NLT+) to **live** not **for themselves** but for others (cp Paul's charge to believers in Php 2:3+). Non-believers live for self so the **"all"** that Jesus died for in this passage is **"all"** who believe in Him. To state it another way, Christ **died for all** and we died with Him on the Cross. While we cannot begin to plumb the depths of the mystery of our co-crucifixion with Christ, every believer can confidently state that when He died on the Cross, "I died with Him." **They who live** are those who now have a new source of life and are spiritually alive in Christ as energized by the Spirit of Christ. Notice the

As **Warren Wiersbe** explains Christ's death so that we (believers) might live "is the positive aspect of our identification with Christ: we not only died with Him, but we also were raised with Him that we might "walk in newness of life" (Ro 6:4). Because we have died with Christ, we can overcome sin; and because we live with Christ, we can bear fruit for God's glory (Ro 7:4). He died that we might live through Him: "God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1Jn 4:9). This is our experience of salvation, eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. But He also died that we might live for Him, and not live unto ourselves (2Co 5:15). This is our experience of service. It has well been said, "Christ died our death for us that we might live His life for Him." If a lost sinner has been to the cross and been saved, how can he spend the rest of his life in selfishness? ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

[Michael Andrus](#) - The implication is also simple: we should not live for ourselves but for Him...." Those who have died to themselves receive new life in Christ. But that new life is not given to us so we can live self-focused, narcissistic lives, but rather so we can live for Him! Our lives should be devoted to the One who gave the ultimate sacrifice for us and then rose from the dead, and now sits at the right hand of the Father interceding for us. Friends, any Gospel that isn't grounded in the Cross and any Gospel that doesn't result in a transformation of life is not worth the breath it takes to proclaim it.

**But for Him who died** (apothnesko) **and rose again** ([egeiro](#)) **on their behalf** - Notice **Died... died** - Paul encloses his charge to live for Christ in the bookends of Christ's willingness to die for us. That being true, why would we not be willing to live for Him rather than ourselves. In short, why would we want to live for self and time alone when we can live for eternity in this short time called life. **Rose again** is (divine passive) indicating the Source of the raising was God. The resurrection was confirmation of the Father's acceptance of the Son's substitutionary death (cf. 1Co 15:1-7+). It is worth noting that all three persons of the Trinity were active in Christ's resurrection: the Father—Acts 2:24; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 33, 34, 37; 17:31; the Spirit—Ro 8:11 and the Son—John 2:19, 20, 22; 10. **On their behalf** (in our place, as our Substitute) is one preposition [huper](#), that is used in a number of passages as a "shorthand" for the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus for believers (e.g., Titus 2:14 = "gave Himself **for** us", 1 Cor 11:24)

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**Illustration** - In 1858, **Frances Ridley Havergal** visited Dusseldorf, Germany where she saw a copy of Sternburg's great painting "The Crucifixion" which depicts Christ, wearing His crown of thorns as He stands before Pilate and the mob. A which had a subtitle associated the picture asking...

"All this I did for thee;  
what has thou done for Me?"

Inspired by this probing question, she wrote her famous poem, "I Gave My Life for Thee." As the story goes Frances was not pleased with the poem but a strong downdraft blew the paper out of the fire and onto the hearth. Feeling that this might have been Providential, she took the slightly-scorched paper, folded it, and sent it to her father in England, who composed a tune to match the words and had it published. Years later by Phillip Bliss wrote the more familiar tune of this now great hymn...

### [I Gave My Life for Thee](#)

I gave My life for thee,  
My precious blood I shed,  
That thou might'st ransomed be,  
And quickened from the dead;  
I gave, I gave My life for thee,

What hast thou given for Me?

**Kenneth Osbeck** records a slightly different version of the preceding story (which is the true story is uncertain) -- A vivid painting of Christ, wearing His crown of thorns as He stands before Pilate and the mob, is displayed in the art museum of Dusseldorf, Germany. Under the painting by Sternberg are the words, "This have I done for thee; what hast thou done for Me?" When Frances Havergal viewed the painting during a visit to Germany, she was deeply moved. As she gazed at it in tears, she scribbled down the lines of this hymn text on a scrap of paper. After returning to her home in England, she felt the poetry was so poor that she tossed the lines into a stove. The scorched scrap of paper amazingly floated out of the flames and landed on the floor, where it was found by Frances' father, Rev. William Havergal, an Anglican minister, a noted poet, and a church musician. He encouraged her to preserve the poem by composing the first melody for it. The present tune was composed for this text by the noted American gospel songwriter, Philip P. Bliss, and was first published in 1873. (Amazing Grace : 366 inspiring hymn stories for daily devotions) ([See yet another variation of the story of this hymn](#))

**2 Corinthians 5:16 Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer.**

- **know:** Dt 33:9 1Sa 2:29 Mt 10:37 12:48-50 Mk 3:31-35 Jn 2:4 15:14 Ga 2:5,6 5:6 Php 3:7,8 Col 3:11 1Ti 5:21,22 Jas 2:1-4 3:17
- **yet:** Jn 6:63
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:16](#)**

**Disclaimer:** This is a difficult verse and has been subjected to a variety of interpretations which will not be addressed in these notes. Be a Berean even as you read these notes for they are not infallible! One author says that 2Co 5:16 "*has prompted numerous scholarly articles, all of them seeking to unpack Paul's compressed language.*"

**Therefore** ([5620](#)) (**hoste**) usually means so that, and serves as a marker of result, thus Barclay begins his sentence with the phrase "the result is that." In other words, in view of the death and resurrection of Christ, Paul says "we" (see below) no longer estimate or regard or judge or evaluate anyone by the world's standards, from a purely human point of view, from external standards or based on their outward lives. Stated another way, because of the radical effect that the **love of Christ** has had on him, Paul has ceased making superficial personal judgments on people based on their external appearance (including ethnicity, sex, social status, etc)

**From now on** - "Since the great event, the Death of Christ." (Alford) "From the time that we gained this view of Christ's death for us." (A T Robertson) "From the time that the love of Christ has engaged [has pre-occupied] our minds." (Bengel) For Paul the truth of the death and resurrection of Christ has forever obliterated all human distinctions. Now that he sees everyone with "Jesus vision" so to speak, with eyes fixed on eternity, that future time which will separate every soul either into the presence of God or away from His glorious presence (2Th 1:7, 8, 9).

**We recognize** (eido) **no one** ([oudeis](#) - absolutely no one) **according to the flesh** (sarx); **even though we have known** ([ginosko](#)) **Christ** ([Christos](#)) **according to the flesh, yet now we know** ([ginosko](#)) **Him in this way no longer** - Murray Harris' paraphrase = "The death and resurrection of Christ have produced two further results. First, for the future, we refuse to estimate anyone by the external standards of the world. Indeed, even if before our conversion we thought of Christ from the standpoint of the world as a mere human being and as a messianic pretender, now we no longer view him that way." **Plummer** thinks according to the flesh means "According to external distinctions, by what he is in the flesh" To know Christ "**according to the flesh**" means to know Him only as a human being in history, but not to know him as Savior and Lord. Many people say He was a good man but not God, which is their way of recognizing Him **according to the flesh**.

**John MacArthur** explains 2Co 5:16, 17 - These two verses define when Paul's burden for the lost began. The conjunction **hoste** (**therefore**) points back to 2Co 5:14, 15, which describe salvation. After his conversion, the way Paul viewed people changed radically. From then on, he did not recognize (oida; lit. "know," or "perceive") anyone according to the flesh; he no longer evaluated people based on external, worldly standards, as the false teachers did (cf. 2Co 5:12; Gal. 6:12). The proud Pharisee, who once scorned Gentiles, and even those Jews outside of his group (cf. Jn 7:49), now looked beyond mere outward appearances. His prejudice and hatred gave way to a love for all, including "Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman" (Col 3:11). ([MacArthur, J: 2Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**Henry Morris** - Before our conversion and further enlightenment by the Holy Spirit through His Word, we judged men according to worldly standards, even including Christ in our worldly method of evaluation. Now, however, our concern and judgment is spiritually

motivated and guided. Paul says this was true of himself, and it should be true of us as well. ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

**W A Criswell** - Paul's emphasis is placed upon his intention to know and to judge no man according to the flesh; i.e., he will not form opinions about a man based upon any outward distinctions (i.e., race, sex, or nationality), but rather his judgments will be based upon spiritual life and qualities. Once Paul had made his judgments about Jesus on strictly human bases. Now, however, his thinking focuses on spiritual realities. (Believer's Study Bible)

**Charles Swindoll** Just as we all once regarded Jesus as any other man, "according to the flesh," once we have accepted that He is the God-man who "died and rose again" on our behalf (2Co 5:15), our whole outlook changes and we view people as sinners who can be saved by the gospel of Jesus. This radically alters our perspective: we now view our own purpose in life as Christ-centered in response to divine grace.

**Michael Andrus** - "So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view." What does he mean? Well, we all know how easy it is for us to measure people by worldly standards. If they are rich, powerful, beautiful, or popular, we have a great tendency to defer to them. On the other hand, if they are poor, weak, uneducated nobodies, we can easily dismiss them. Paul even admits he once treated Christ and His followers this way. Ray Stedman writes perceptively, "But," he (Paul) says, "no more. We've learned to look at people differently. We now see Christ for who he was, the Lord of Glory, the King of the Ages, the Prince of Life, God himself become a man." Paul's great Christological passages come to mind at this point. He says, "We don't regard him that way anymore, and we don't regard other people that way either. We see them for who they are, men and women made in the image of God but fallen from it. We see them as victims of the devil's lies, bound by the power of Satan. But they are important, significant people because God's image is in them. . . ." The message Paul has learned is this: The ground is level at the foot of the Cross. Everyone has to come to God the same way—humbly acknowledging his sin and trusting in the sacrifice of the Savior. . When you're standing here in the auditorium and you happen to be near Brad Snapp or Dave Bernstorf or Merle Shofner, those guys look like giants! But if we were all out in the parking lot and you were in a hot air balloon, you wouldn't be able to distinguish those guys from anyone else. From that perspective size is indistinguishable, as is IQ or good looks, or almost any other standard. You see, in comparison to God we are all dots on the landscape, or to use a more biblical analogy, grasshoppers. We're all sinners, all of us have fallen short of God's standards, and therefore we all need a miracle from God Himself in order to have our sins forgiven and to become what God intended for us to be. And God has done just that!

**Wiersbe** explains that because of our new birth, our new life in Christ, this "spiritual revolution" brings about a new relationship to other human beings "We no longer look at life the way we used to. To know Christ "after the flesh" means to evaluate Him from a human point of view. But "the days of His flesh" are ended (Heb 5:7+) because He has ascended to heaven and is now glorified at the Father's right hand. Adam was the head of the old creation, and Christ (the Last Adam, 1Co 15:45) is the Head of the new creation. The old creation was plunged into sin and condemnation because of the disobedience of Adam. The new creation means righteousness and salvation because of the obedience of Jesus Christ. (See Ro 5:12-21+ for the explanation of the "two Adams.") Because we are a part of the new creation, everything has become new. For one thing, we have a new view of Christ. It is unfortunate that too great an emphasis is given in music and art on Christ "after the flesh." The facts about the earthly life of Jesus are important, because the Christian message is grounded in history. But we must interpret the manger by the throne. We do not worship a Babe in a manger; we worship a glorified Saviour on the throne. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.**

- **is in:** 2Co 5:19,21 12:2 Isa 45:17,24,25 Jn 14:20 15:2,5 17:23 Ro 8:1,9 Ro 16:7,11 1Co 1:30 Ga 3:28 5:6 Eph 1:3,4 Php 4:21
- **he is:** Ps 51:10 Eze 11:19 18:31 36:26 Mt 12:33 Jn 3:3,5 Ga 6:15 Eph 2:10
- **old:** 2Co 5:16 Isa 43:18,19 65:17,18 Mt 9:16,17 24:35 Ro 6:4, 5, 6 7:6 8:9 Ro 8:10 1Co 13:11 Eph 2:15 4:22, 23, 24 Php 3:7, 8, 9 Col 3:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 Heb 8:9, 10, 11, 12, 13 2Pe 3:10, 11, 12, 13 Rev 21:1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:17](#)**

## **EXTREME MAKEOVER THE JESUS WAY**

**2 Corinthians 5:17** is a very special verse to me because it serves as a continual reminder of my **new life in Christ**, a life which is still "new" and amazing, even though my body is beginning to "decay" (cp 2Co 4:16-note). Thirty years ago I choose to quote 2Cor 5:17 as my personal testimony at my baptism (baptizo), for it was a fitting summary of how God had so miraculously delivered me

from the darkness and grafted me into Christ (My Testimony).

**Irving Jensen's** comments are convicting - Contrasts abound in 2 Corinthians: glorying and humiliation, life and death, sorrow and consolation, sternness and tenderness. **One is very much aware in reading 2 Corinthians that for Paul the Christian life means going all out for Christ, or it is not real life at all. The color gray cannot be detected in this book.** ([Jensen's Survey of the New Testament. Chicago: Moody Press](#)) (Bolding added)

**Therefore** ([hoste](#)) is used to introduce independent clauses and is often translated *so, for this reason* or *therefore* expressing consequence or result. Paul's conclusion in 2Co 5:17 is based on the preceding truths in 2Co 5:14, 15, 16 specifically the truths concerning Christ's Death, Resurrection and Supernatural Life (In essence the truths about the "**Gospel**" -1Co 15:1+, 1Co 15:2+, 1Co 15:3, 4, 5+).

**UBS Handbook** comments that "The precise function of the word **Therefore** which begins this verse is not clear. Is Paul drawing out the consequences of what he has said in 2Co 5:16, or does the word **Therefore** go back to 2Co 5:14 and 2Co 5:15? If, as seems most likely, 2Co 5:16 and 2Co 5:17 are parallel in thought, then both verses draw out the consequences of what Paul has written in 2Co 5:14 and 2Co 5:15. ([The United Bible Societies' New Testament Handbook Series](#))

**Hughes** adds that Paul's conclusion "grows out of the first: Paul does not relate to people according to fleshly evaluations, but according to their newness as creations in Christ. This perspective has its source in the Spirit realities of the New Covenant.

**If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature- IF** introduces a first class conditional statement which is assumed to be true (i.e., "since..."). And in context since the first clause is true, then the conclusion is true. **Anyone** is any sinner, no matter how awful, despicable, depraved, disgusting (and the list could go on and on) who repents and believes in Christ is placed **in Christ** wherein he or she is a brand new creature/creation, regardless of how corrupt and decadent the old creature was in Adam. **In Christ** means in the sphere of Christ (see locative of sphere) or "in the atmosphere" of Christ so to speak. **In Christ** includes the ideas of oneness with Christ, union with Christ, communion with Christ, being in covenant with Christ.

**C F D Moule on in Christ** - In the Pauline epistles there are numerous occurrences of the preposition  $\nu$  ("in") followed by a name of Jesus, and with a great range of nuances (instrumental, circumstantial, etc.) But four or five are difficult to interpret otherwise than in a **locative sense** (Ro 16:7; 2 Cor. 5:17; etc.); which means that Jesus Christ is known as the **area**, the **'environment'** in which the Christian people of God find their existence and in which they have been placed by the powerful rescue-operation of God, and that Jesus the Lord constitutes the **realm of authority** in which their allegiance places them. (Forgiveness and Reconciliation - Biblical and Theological Essays) (Bolding Added)

**Bob Utley - In Christ**" (a LOCATIVE of sphere) is Paul's most common way of identifying believers. For life, true life, abundant life, believers must remain in vital union with Christ by faith (cf. John 15:5). (**ED**: The idea of "remain" speaks of our practice, for we are positionally in Christ forever. Sadly our practice [ED: aka progressive sanctification] often does not match our position!)

**Alan Carr** adds this note on locative of sphere in the phrase "**in Christ**" - In the Greek, this phrase is known as a 'locative of sphere.' A "**locative**" tells us where something is. The "**sphere**" speaks of one thing's location in relationship to other things. So, when the Bible says that we are "in Christ," it means that we live within the sphere of Christ. In other words, Jesus Christ is the One Who surrounds us. No matter where we go, we cannot step out of Jesus. You can step out of a circle, but you cannot step out of a sphere. A sphere surrounds all that is within it. In like manner, Jesus Christ totally surrounds all those who are in Him. When you consider our location with regards to the area of our security, we are eternally safe because we cannot step out of the sphere of Christ (**ED**: HE IS SPEAKING POSITIONALLY, NOT EXPERIENTIALLY). No matter where we run we still within His sphere and we cannot escape from Him. When we consider our **position** within the sphere of Christ with regards to our daily walk, it reminds us that every step occurs within the sphere of our relationship to Jesus Christ. Every action, every thought, every deed should be considered in the light of who we are, Whose we are and where we are. Because we are "in Christ," that is ever within the sphere of His presence, His influence and His will, we conform every area of our lives to His will. Simply stated, because we are "in Him," we should live like (**ED**: EXPERIENTIALLY - EMPOWERED BY HIS SPIRIT TO CONTINUALLY PRACTICE OUR POSITION) we are "in Him."

Paul expounded on the idea of a believer's new identity, using the phrase **in Christ** or its synonyms (over 160 times in some form - in Him, in the Beloved, in Christ, in Christ Jesus, in the Lord - [study the references here](#)). **In Christ** summarizes the profound truth that believers are now and forever in an unbreakable, irrevocable, indissoluble spiritual **union** with the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, considering the prevalence of **in Christ** and its synonyms in Paul's writings, this mysterious spiritual truth is surely one of the most significant teachings in the New Testament.

**R David Rightmire** - There are some occurrences, however, that use the formula "**in Christ**" in a locative sense, denoting the idea of incorporation (Rom. 8:1; 16:7; 1 Cor. 15:22; 2 Cor. 5:17; Phil. 3:8-9). In this sense, Christ is depicted as the locus of the believer's

life. If the preposition (en) is interpreted in a local, spatial sense, and Christos is understood mystically as the Spirit of the glorified Lord, then close union of Christ and the Christian is meant (**2Co 5:17**). "In Christ" is an expression of intimate interrelatedness, analogous to the air that is breathed: it is in the person, yet at the same time, the person is in it. Thus, Paul's use of the phrase is similar to his concept of being baptized "into Christ" (Gal. 3:27), with connotations of intimate spiritual communion with Christ. Those who have been baptized into Christ are "in him." There are, however, eschatological dimensions of the phrase that indicate a dynamic influence of Christ on the Christian who is incorporated into him. (Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology)

**Theodore Epp on in Christ** - Every believer's "new life is life **in Christ**." The word **"in"** does not in this connection speak of location, such as "in an automobile," but carries the idea of **union**. On the resurrection side of this experience we have His life. He has come to live in us. It is this that marks the real difference between the old life prior to our salvation and the new life now that we are saved. It is necessary before the believer can enjoy victory in Christ for the power of the old life to be broken. This is accomplished through **union with Christ** in His crucifixion. **This is not an experience that we must struggle to enter into now.** It was accomplished for us in the past. The King James Version is not clear on this point. The American Standard Version of 1901 will help us here. The expression "I am crucified with Christ" is translated in the ASV: "I have been crucified with Christ." God got rid of the old self-life by crucifying it. We were separated from the old self-life when we died with Christ."

**Charles Swindoll** has an interesting comment stating that "Most people do not realize that Paul is alluding to a very important Old Testament passage, Isaiah 65:17: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind." The Isaiah text refers specifically to the renewal of creation that will come about after Christ returns and perfects this world, cleansing it from its wickedness and radically restoring and surpassing its original intention. Peter writes, "According to His promise [in the Old Testament Scriptures] we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" (2Pe 3:13). In Revelation 21–22, we catch a marvelous glimpse of this new condition. In 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul applies this imagery to the redeemed believer, indicating the stunning, radical, dramatic transformation that God designed to take place when a believer says "I do" to Jesus Christ. When Christ invades a life, He performs a miraculous act of re-creation, analogous to the extreme overhaul of creation itself that He will perform at the Second Coming. He brings into being something new. When this new life is born in us by the work of the Holy Spirit, not by human works (Gal. 6:15), we will be transformed from the inside out, changing our priorities, our relationships, and our actions. Only God can do this work in us, but once He has done it, we participate in living out the inner working (Phil. 2:12–13)."

**The old things** (archaios) **passed away** ([parerchomai](#)); **behold** (idou - an imperative), **new** ([kainos](#)) **things have come** - When sinners believed in Jesus and were delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to the Kingdom of light, from their old position in Adam (under the domain of Satan) to their new position in Christ (Christ as King), a supernatural birth transpired, a radical change in our "makeup." The **old things** refers to our former way of thinking (living, speaking, etc) in the flesh. **Passed away** ([parerchomai](#)) is in the aorist tense indicating that this event "passing away" transpired at a point in time in the past, at the moment we, by grace through faith (Eph 2:8, 9+), accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior and were born again, regenerated by the Holy Word (Gospel) and the Holy Spirit. (cf Ro 10:9, 10+)

**Thomas Constable** has an interesting comment on what is **new** and what is **old** in believers - Obviously there is both continuity and discontinuity that takes place at conversion (justification). Paul was not denying the continuity. **We still have the same physical features, basic personality, genetic constitution, parents, susceptibility to temptation** (1Co 10:13+), **sinful environment** (Gal 1:4+), etc. These things do not change. He was stressing the elements of discontinuity: perspectives, prejudices, misconceptions, enslavements, etc. (cf. Gal 2:20+). God adds many new things at conversion including new spiritual life, the Holy Spirit, forgiveness, the righteousness of Christ, as well as new viewpoints (2Co 5:16-+). ([Expository Notes](#)) (Bolding added)

**Spurgeon on behold** - "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

**THOUGHT** - Dear reader, have you experienced this "Behold" in your life? If not, then read Acts 4:12, 16:31, Romans 10:9, 10, John 1:12, 13, Ephesians 2:8,9,10 so that you too might "Behold" the glory of the risen Son in your life (see the following comment) and experience a brand new life in Christ.

**Michael Andrus** - What a statement of the transforming power of Christ! If we receive Him as our personal Savior, we don't just adopt a new philosophy of life; we don't just get a new set of friends; we don't just have a new destination. We actually become a new creation. We are born again and everything changes—our actions, our thoughts, our habits, our goals, dreams, our attitudes, everything! And if it doesn't, i.e. if there is no difference in our lives since we made a profession of faith, the conclusion must follow (how can you escape it?) that the profession was not real, that we are not, in fact, "in Christ." I was convicted by the words of Robert Yarbrough, one of our profs at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School: *Where . . . (life change)...is lacking, there is good reason to*



suppose the heart still languishes in unbelief. There may be assent, there may be emotional affirmation, there may be selective obedience to gospel imperatives. There may even be impressive displays of religious activity . . . But when Jesus called for taking up the cross and following him, he probably had something more radical in mind than motoring to an air-conditioned sanctuary, amending the show, and returning to the real life of Sunday TV and family fun. Friends, we must not minimize the powerful, effective, life-changing nature of a true conversion experience! But when this metamorphosis happens, do we get any credit for it? No!

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**Abernathy** summarizes how numerous commentaries (abbreviated in brackets) - **What is meant by  $\nu$  Χριστ 'in Christ'?** It means to be in union with Christ [Ho, TG, TH; REB, TEV]. It speaks of the personal unity of the believer with Christ [ICC2], or of participation in Christ [SP]. It is to be a member of Christ or of his body [EBC, Ho, ICC1, NTC], existing in intimate fellowship with him [NTC]. It means to be in union and communion with Christ in a living spiritual connection with him [Lns]. It is a union between Christ and a believer in which both remain distinguishable persons but bound inseparably in dying and living together, as well as a union with the body of Christ the church [Stagg]. It means someone who has become a Christian [NLT], who belongs to Christ [CEV], or who has experienced the spiritual death and resurrection described in 5:14–15 [NIC2]. It is an eschatological reality which objectively means being drawn under the rule of his love, and subjectively means a total reorientation of values and principles [AB]. It is someone who has experienced conversion and experienced the eschatological reality of being transferred from the present age to the age to come [HNTC]. 'In Christ' is a summation of the meaning of redemption [NIC1]. ([An Exegetical Summary of 2 Corinthians](#))

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COLEY One of Goethe's tales is of a rude fisherman's hut which was changed to silver by the setting in it of a little silver lamp. The logs of which the hut was built, its floors, its doors, its roof, its furniture,—all was changed to silver by this magic lamp. The story illustrates what takes place in the home when Christ comes into it. Everything after that is different. The outward conditions and circumstances may be the same, but they shine now with a new beauty.

Just as the sun gleams over the palace, and into the cottage, flushing alike with its splendor the council-chamber of the monarch and the kitchen of the peasant; as the all-pervasive light fills the vast dome of the sky, and the tiny cup of the flower; so religion illumines at once the heaven of our hopes, and the earth of our cares. Secularities become hallowed; toil brightens with the smile of God; business becomes crystalline; light from God comes through it to us; glances from us go through it to God.

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Below are the words of **R H McDaniel's** hymn which poignantly expresses what transpired in each of our hearts on that glorious day when we were transferred by the Spirit from the domain of darkness and into the Kingdom of light of His beloved Son (Col 1:13+, 1Pe 2:9, 10+, Acts 26:18). Consider taking a moment to read the words of this hymn, allowing them to prompt a time of praise to **El Shaddai, God Almighty**, for redeeming us and miraculously making each of us new creations in Christ. Hallelujah!...

### [Since Jesus Came into My Heart](#)

What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought  
Since Jesus came into my heart!  
I have light in my soul for which long I had sought,  
Since Jesus came into my heart!

#### **Refrain**

**Since Jesus came into my heart,  
Since Jesus came into my heart,  
Floods of joy o'er my soul  
Like the sea billows roll,  
Since Jesus came into my heart.**

I have ceased from my wandering and going astray,  
Since Jesus came into my heart!  
And my sins, which were many, are all washed away,  
Since Jesus came into my heart!

#### **Refrain**

I'm possessed of a hope that is steadfast and sure,  
Since Jesus came into my heart!  
And no dark clouds of doubt now my pathway obscure,  
Since Jesus came into my heart!

#### **Refrain**



There's a light in the valley of death now for me,  
Since Jesus came into my heart!  
And the gates of the City beyond I can see,  
Since Jesus came into my heart!

**Refrain**

I shall go there to dwell in that City, I know,  
Since Jesus came into my heart!  
And I'm happy, so happy, as onward I go,  
Since Jesus came into my heart!

**Refrain**

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**RESTORED ARTWORK** - A woman who restores valuable paintings says many works of art that seem hopelessly damaged can be saved by an expert. Rebecca McLain has brought color and life back to dulled oil paintings by carefully removing dirt and discolored varnish. But she has also seen the damage done when people attempt to clean their own soiled art with oven cleaner or abrasive powders. Her advice? If you value the art, take it to an expert in restoration. The same need exists in lives soiled by sin. Our efforts at ridding ourselves of the guilt and defilement of sinful actions and attitudes often end in frustration and despair. In our attempts to get rid of guilt, we sometimes blame others. Or we simply give up, thinking that we cannot be any different.

When it comes to cleansing the canvas of our souls, we cannot do it ourselves. But Jesus our redeemer is the expert who can restore the most damaged and discouraged person. Call on Him today for expert restoration. Only God can transform a sin-stained soul into a masterpiece of grace. —D. C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**FROM BLOT TO BEAUTY** - A handkerchief made of very valuable material was ruined by an indelible ink blot. The owner could no longer proudly display her prized possession, so she sadly showed it to English art critic and painter John Ruskin. He took it, and with remarkable skill made that ugly ink blot the center of a beautiful design. The woman's handkerchief was then far more valuable than before.

God our Maker faced a situation something like that of the artist, except that the problem was immeasurably greater. Adam was God's supreme creation, but he had ruined himself by sin. With his original perfection stained and disfigured, he was fit only to be eternally discarded. But by the amazing strategy of the cross, our gracious God, the Supreme Artist, took ruined sinners and recreated them to reflect the beauty of Christ's holiness.

When we put our faith in the crucified Savior, we are not only completely forgiven, but God's Holy Spirit transforms us, making us into the Creator's prized possession. As the apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Ephesians, we will be displaying throughout eternity "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Ep 2:7+).—Vernon C. Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Dear Lord, take up the tangled strands,  
Where we have wrought in vain,  
That by the skill of Thy dear hands  
Some beauty may remain. —Burroughs  
© 1920 Homer A. Rodeheaver.

Only God can transform a sin-stained soul  
into a masterpiece of grace.

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**Robert Morgan - A Transformed Man**

Pictures of Mel Trotter (1870–1940) show a distinguished gentleman with serious face, slight smile, silver hair, wire glasses around perceptive eyes. His favorite verse was 2 Corinthians 5:17, and for good reason.

Trotter's father, a bartender, taught Mel the trade at an early age. Despite the earnest prayers of his mother, Mel followed his dad headlong into runaway drinking, smoking, and gambling. When he married, his habits reduced his family to poverty. Mel sold the family possessions from under his wife's nose to replenish his drinking money, then he resorted to robbery to satisfy the craving for

more booze.

One day Trotter staggered home to find his young son dead in his mother's arms. Over the boy's casket, Mel promised to never touch another drop of liquor as long as he lived, a resolve that barely lasted through the funeral.

Shortly afterward, Mel, age 27, hopped on a freight car for Chicago. It was a bitterly cold January night, but he sold his shoes for some drinking money. After being evicted from a bar on Clark Street, he headed toward Lake Michigan to commit suicide. Somehow he ended up at the Pacific Garden Mission so drunk the doorman had to prop him against a wall so he wouldn't fall off his chair.

Despite his inebriation, at the close of the service, Trotter raised his hand for prayer and trusted Christ as his Savior. The change was instant and remarkable. Mel Trotter became a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5:17 became his testimony verse, and he began sharing it everywhere. His wife came to Chicago to join him, and in time Mel Trotter became one of the most sought-after preachers, speakers, soul-winners, and rescue workers in America.

"The greatest day I ever lived was the 19th of January, 1897," he once said, "when the Lord Jesus came into my life and saved me from sin. That transaction revolutionized my entire life. Don't call me a reformed drunkard. I am a transformed man, a child of God." (From this Verse)

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### QUESTION - [What does it mean to be in Christ?](#)

**ANSWER** - Galatians 3:26-28 gives us insight into the phrase "in Christ" and what it means. "In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Paul is speaking to the Christians in Galatia, reminding them of their new identity since they placed their faith in Jesus Christ. To be "baptized into Christ" means that they were identified with Christ, having left their old sinful lives and fully embracing the new life in Christ (Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23). When we respond to the Holy Spirit's drawing, He "baptizes" us into the family of God. First Corinthians 12:13 says, "For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."

Several places in Scripture refer to the believer's being "in Christ" (1 Peter 5:14; Philippians 1:1; Romans 8:1). Colossians 3:3 says, "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." God is perfect justice. He cannot simply overlook or excuse our sin; that would not be just. Sin had to be paid for. All the wrath God holds toward evil was poured out on His own Son. When [Jesus took our place](#) on the cross, He suffered the punishment our sin deserves. His last words before He died were, "It is finished" (John 19:30). What was finished? Not merely His earthly life. As He proved three days later, that was not finished (Matthew 28:7; Mark 16:6; 1 Corinthians 15:6). What He finished on the cross was God's plan to redeem His fallen world. When Jesus said, "It is finished," He was stating that He had successfully paid in full for every act of rebellion, past, present, and future.

To be "in Christ" means we have accepted His sacrifice as payment for our own sin. Our rap sheets contain every sinful thought, attitude or action we have ever committed. No amount of self-cleansing can make us pure enough to warrant forgiveness and a relationship with a holy God (Romans 3:10-12). The Bible says that in our natural sinful state we are enemies of God (Romans 5:10). When we accept His sacrifice on our behalf, He switches accounts with us. He exchanges our list of sins for His perfect account that is totally pleasing to God (2 Corinthians 5:21). A Divine Exchange takes place at the foot of the cross: our old sin nature for His perfect one (2 Corinthians 5:17).

To enter the presence of a holy God, we must be hidden in the righteousness of Christ. To be "in Christ" means that God no longer sees our imperfections; He sees the righteousness of His own Son (Ephesians 2:13; Hebrews 8:12). Only "in Christ" is our sin debt cancelled, our relationship with God restored, and our eternity secured (John 3:16-18, 20:31). [Gotquestions.org](#)

- See also - [in Christ](#)

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### RELATED RESOURCES ON IN HIM or IN CHRIST:

- [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)
- [How does God see me in Christ?](#)
- [How should we live our lives in light of our identity in Christ?](#)
- [Covenant: The Oneness of Covenant](#)
- [Covenant: Oneness Notes](#)
- [The Believer's Position in Christ - Iain Gordon](#)
- [Oneness With Christ - Ruth Paxson](#) - chapter from [Called Unto Holiness](#)
- [Rivers of Living Water - Studies on believer's possessions in Christ by Ruth Paxson](#)

- [The Mystical Union with Immanuel - Abraham Kuyper \(index to Work of the Holy Spirit\)](#)
- [Vital Union with Christ - A T Pierson](#)
- [What Does God Think of Me Now? - 33 page booklet on believer's position in Christ](#)
- [Union with Christ - Charles Simeon](#)

**2 Corinthians 5:18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,**

- **all:** Jn 3:16,27 Ro 11:36 1Co 1:30 8:6 12:6 Col 1:16,17 Jas 1:17
- **who:** Lev 6:30 Eze 45:15 Da 9:24 Ro 5:1,10,11 Eph 2:16 Col 1:20,21 Heb 2:17 1Jn 2:2 4:10
- **Gave us:** 2Co 5:19,20 Isa 52:7 57:19 Mk 16:15,16 Lk 10:5 24:47 Ac 10:36 13:38 Ac 13:39 Eph 2:17 Col 1:20
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Genesis 3:7-9 (**SIN CAUSED THE BROKEN COMMUNION BETWEEN GOD AND MAN**) Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. 8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" (Play "[Adam Where Are You?](#)")

Isaiah 59:2 (**NEED FOR RECONCILIATION**) But **your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God**, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.

Hebrews 2:17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Romans 5:10-11+ (**THROUGH CHRIST**) For if while we were enemies **we were reconciled** to God **through the death of His Son**, much more, **having been reconciled**, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only this, but we also exult in God **through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom** we have now received the **reconciliation**.

**Cranfield** comments on Paul's change from [justification to reconciliation](#): Justification is a judicial term used in the law courts. A judge may acquit an accused person without ever entering into any personal relationship with the him or her. He just announces the verdict, not guilty. The accused hardly expects to be invited over for dinner by the judge, and probably hopes that he will never see him again. (**ED:** In reconciliation it is in fact as if the Judge enters into a personal relationship with the justified sinner, who is now, as it were, "invited over to dinner!")

Colossians 1:20+ (**SINNERS WERE AT WAR WITH GOD**) For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him (CHRIST), 20 and **through Him to reconcile all things to Himself**, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENT ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:18](#)**

### **CHANGED FROM GOD'S ENEMIES TO GOD'S FRIENDS**

**Now all these things are from God** - What **things**? Clearly Paul is pointing back to the supernatural work of God including the believer's death and resurrection in Christ and especially the the new creation of sinners into new creatures in Christ. Some commentators restrict the "things" to the new creation of the preceding verse, but others (Bengel, et al) take this as an allusion that goes back to 2Co 5:14. From God indicates God is the Source, the Agent, the Initiator of reconciliation. The supernatural transformation just described (2Co 5:17) is **from God** (cf Paul's great doxology Ro 11:33, 34, 35, 36+, cp 1Cor 8:6). God is the "driving force" behind the redemption and reconciliation of all mankind. He acts "unilaterally."

**Spurgeon** explains that "**all things** of the new creation are of God..."What**things**?" do you say again. We answer, **all things** that refer to the new nature—all **things** that refer to our new privileges and to our new actions—whatsoever**things** refer to the new nature are of God. ([High Doctrine - And All Things Are of God - 2Co 5:18](#))

[Michael Andrus](#) - " If He did not act first, we would remain His eternal enemies. But He did act first; He sent His Son to the Cross, and at the Cross Jesus satisfied God's wrath toward sin, taking our sin upon Himself. Jesus made it possible for God to declare us His friends instead of His enemies. The tendency of religious people everywhere is to try to earn God's friendship by showing Him how much we love Him or how faithful we are. But that is backward. The Gospel does not call us to do something for God that He might save us; rather it announces what God has done to save us in order that we might trust Him.

For **from Him** and **through Him** and **to Him** are **all things**.

To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

-- Romans 11:36+

**Who reconciled** (katallasso) **us to Himself through Christ** (Christos) (see [Related Passages above](#)) **Who** is God the Father. **Reconciled** (katallasso) is aorist tense which defines a completed action in the past, specifically effecting the exchange of enmity to a friendly relationship.. Active voice indicates it was a choice of His divine will! Amazing grace indeed! Note God was not **reconciled** to us but we were **reconciled** to Him **through** the blood of Christ that paid the redemption price and gave us entree to God the Father (Ro 5:1-2+). As someone has well said "*Religion is man's feeble effort to be reconciled to God*" The critical feature is **through Christ** (which Paul goes on to explain this truth in 2Cor 5:21), always through Him, for He is our Great High Priest, Who mediates between the holy ones (saints) and the Holy One, God the Father. Reconciled is katallasso has the root idea of an exchange and was used of exchanging coins of equal value which later was applied to a change of relationships from one of enmity to one of peace.

[Michael Andrus](#) - There is a very real sense in which the most important message we can possibly convey to people is 6 that God wants to be their friend....the message of reconciliation is that God wants to be friends, and He is willing to go so far as to give His most precious possession, His one and only Son, in order to establish that friendship.

**Vincent's** note on **katallasso** is illuminating...

"The verb (**katallasso**) means primarily to exchange, and hence to change the relation of hostile parties into a relation of peace; to reconcile. It is used of both mutual and one sided enmity. In the former case, the context must show on which side is the active enmity. In the Christian sense, the change in the relation of God and man effected through Christ. This involves

(1) a **movement of God toward man** with a view to break down man's hostility, to commend God's love and holiness to him, and to convince him of the enormity and the consequence of sin. It is God who initiates this movement in the person and work of Jesus Christ. See Ro 5:6+, Ro 5:8+; 2Cor 5:18, 19, Eph 1:6-+; 1 Jn 4:19). Hence the passive form of the verb here: we were made subjects of God's reconciling act.

(2) a corresponding movement on man's part toward God; yielding to the appeal of Christ's self-sacrificing love, laying aside his enmity, renouncing his sin, and turning to God in faith and obedience.

(3) a consequent change of character in man: the covering (cp "atonement"), forgiving, cleansing of his sin; a thorough revolution in all his dispositions and principles (as summarized in 2Co 5:17).

(4) a corresponding change of relation on God's part, that being removed which alone rendered Him hostile to man, so that God can now receive him into fellowship and let loose upon him all His Fatherly love and grace (1Jn 3:1+). Thus there is complete reconciliation. **AMAZING DIVINE GRACE AND MERCY INDEED!**

The flames of God's judgment can never touch me,  
For Jesus has borne all God's wrath on the tree;  
I now stand secure in the burned-over place,  
A sinner, unworthy, yet saved by His grace!  
—Bosch

Jesus died in our place to provide a place of safety.

**And gave us the ministry** (diakonia) **of reconciliation** - This statement may be the clearest expression of his calling and mission in all his writings. **Gave** is in the aorist tense signifying at a point in time in the past (when we were born again) there was a divine bestowal based on a divine decision and unmerited by the recipient. In short the ministry of reconciliation is a gift of God's amazing grace to reconciled sinners who are now to seek other sinners to be reconciled. **Ministry** is the word diakonia (gives us "[deacon](#)") which was not a dignified word in secular Greek but was a "*waiting on tables*" word in Greek indicating our ministry (His ministry to and through us) is not to be "flashy." The **ministry of reconciliation** consists primarily of a proclamation of what God has done or accomplished through the death of Christ to make possible sinners at "war" with God, to be brought into His family a condition of favor with God. When Adam sinned, man was immediately estranged and at enmity with God and in need of a way to be brought back into fellowship and communion as it was in the Garden of Eden. **Reconciliation** assures believers of the future bliss of eternal

life. The guarantee or proof of reconciliation is the resurrection of Christ. In **reconciliation** God changes sinners from enemies to family, from foe to friend, from aliens to adopted.

The Greek word for **reconciliation** is *katallage* which describes the change from a state of enmity between persons to one of friendship as a result of supernatural reestablishment of a broken relationship. **Reconciliation** refers to an objective state of peace with God, not simply a feeling of peacefulness.

**R Kent Hughes** adds that "The **ministry of reconciliation** is not telling people to make peace with God, but telling them that God has made peace with the world. "At bottom, the gospel is not good advice, but good news" ([Denney](#))...We are not called to make peace with God—that is God's work! The method of reconciliation is reckoning, God "not counting their trespasses against them" (2Co 5:19, which will be explained in 2Co 5:21). There is a reckoning of sins. But they are reckoned not to the sinner but to Christ. ([2 Corinthians Power in Weakness - Preaching the Word - Crossway Books](#))

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#### **QUESTION - [What is Christian reconciliation? Why do we need to be reconciled with God?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Imagine two friends who have a fight or argument. The good relationship they once enjoyed is strained to the point of breaking. They cease speaking to each other; communication is deemed too awkward. The friends gradually become strangers. Such estrangement can only be reversed by reconciliation. To be reconciled is to be restored to friendship or harmony. When old friends resolve their differences and restore their relationship, reconciliation has occurred. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 declares, "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation."

The Bible says that Christ reconciled us to God (Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18; Colossians 1:20-21). The fact that we needed reconciliation means that our relationship with God was broken. Since God is holy, we were the ones to blame. Our sin alienated us from Him. Romans 5:10 says that we were enemies of God: "For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"

When Christ died on the cross, He satisfied God's judgment and made it possible for God's enemies, us, to find peace with Him. Our "reconciliation" to God, then, involves the exercise of His grace and the forgiveness of our sin. The result of Jesus' sacrifice is that our relationship has changed from enmity to friendship. "I no longer call you servants ... Instead, I have called you friends" (John 15:15). Christian reconciliation is a glorious truth! We were God's enemies, but are now His friends. We were in a state of condemnation because of our sins, but we are now forgiven. We were at war with God, but now have the peace that transcends all understanding (Philippians 4:7). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### **QUESTION - [What is the ministry of reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5:18?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The ministry of reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5:18 refers to the work believers have been given to do and the message they declare: you can have a restored relationship with God through Jesus. The verse says this: "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation."

The **ministry of reconciliation** involves the proclamation of the [gospel](#) and its assurance that forgiveness of sin is available in Christ. Sin prevents us from having a relationship with God, but Jesus' perfect sacrifice on the cross made atonement for sin (Hebrews 2:17) and brought harmony to mankind's relationship with Him. Jesus reconciled us to God. Now we can proclaim that people can repent of their sin and be right with God again through faith in Jesus (Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:20-21).

We need reconciliation with God because our relationship with Him was broken. God is holy and righteous, and our sin separates us from Him (Isaiah 59:2). Sin made us His enemies (Romans 5:10). On the cross, Jesus took our sin upon Himself, satisfying God's justice. Jesus' death made it possible for us to have peace with God, as 2 Corinthians 5:19 says, "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them." Now we can be called God's "friends" (John 15:15) and Jesus' "brothers and sisters" (Hebrews 2:11). Those who have been justified through faith (Romans 5:1) by Jesus' blood (Romans 5:9) no longer have their sins counted against them. They are reconciled with God.

God has given believers the ministry of reconciliation; that is, He uses us to tell the world that they can be reconciled to God through Christ. In this way, we become "Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us" (2 Corinthians 5:20). Verse 19 describes this ministry of reconciliation as proclaiming "the *message* of reconciliation." The message we are to share with the world is this: "Be reconciled to God" (verse 20). We are to tell people of the wonderful opportunity they have to be made right with God through Jesus. We implore them to believe in Christ. Sins do not count against those who are reconciled to God through Christ, because "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (verse 21).

This ministry of reconciliation is a big responsibility. God is “making his appeal through us” (2 Corinthians 5:20). The ministry we’ve been given to turn hearts toward God is urgent and it is vital—it’s truly a matter of life and death. Jesus paid the price for our reconciliation because God loves us (John 3:16), so we must share this message of reconciliation in love, and our lives need to reflect our message (Ephesians 4:1). Jesus is the One who saves, and the Holy Spirit is the One who convicts the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment (John 16:8), yet we have been given the privilege of being ambassadors for Christ.

Every believer plays a part in this ministry of reconciliation. One plants; one waters, and God brings growth (1 Corinthians 3:7). As we proclaim the gospel, we act as peacemakers, and God blesses such (Matthew 5:9). We tell and live out His message of reconciliation, lives are changed, and God gets the glory. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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#### Related Resources:

- A W Pink - [The Doctrine of Reconciliation 31 chapter book!](#);
- [Reconciliation - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)

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**Make Peace** - It was a dramatic story of forgiveness. In December of 2000, on the Battleship Missouri Memorial, a dozen American survivors of the attack on Pearl Harbor embraced three of the Japanese pilots who had flown attacking planes. The reconciliation ceremony had been arranged by the American-Japan Friendship Committee.

That moving scene is only a dim reflection of what God’s grace does for us. Although we are sinful, we can be brought into a relationship with God through simple faith in Jesus. Because He died on the cross in our place, God blots out the record of our sins and makes us right with Him.

The Lord in His amazing love has not only forgiven us but has also given to us “the ministry of reconciliation” (2Cor 5:18). We have the honor of sharing the good news with others so that they too can be at peace with God. And when we are right with God, we are also to do what we can to live at peace with everyone (Ro 12:18).

Have you accepted God’s offer of forgiveness in Christ? Are you telling others about His love? And are you an agent of God’s grace in your relationships? Start today—make peace. — by Vernon C. Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God has a purpose and plan for your life  
When from your sin He has given release;  
You’re an ambassador for Jesus Christ—  
Go and tell others of His perfect peace.  
—Hess

**When we experience peace with God,  
we can share His peace with others.**

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**Is Your "Bell" Sounding the Good News of Reconciliation?** - There’s a story about a bell that hung in the belfry of an old church. When some visitors tried to ring it, nothing happened. So they investigated and discovered something most unusual. The bottom of the bell was plugged with wood. Stranger yet, a door had been cut in the side of the bell and a padlock had been used to secure the door. The church was using the old bell as a strongbox in which to store money. This was a clever idea, but it certainly wasn’t what the bell was designed for.

Just as a bell is made for ringing, Christians are meant to sound out the good news of salvation. But many remain silent and keep the precious message of reconciliation with God to themselves. Think carefully about your own life. Do you keep your knowledge of Scripture and your joy of knowing God locked up inside? Sound out the Gospel story! —Paul R. Van Gorder.

**If Christianity is worth having,  
It’s worth sharing.**

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**Illustration of Reconciliation** - The story is told that Britain’s Queen Victoria and her husband, Prince Albert, had a spat not long after they were married. Albert went away and angrily locked himself in their private residence at the palace. The queen pounded furiously on the door, and when Albert asked who was there, the answer was, “The Queen of England, who demands admittance.” But the door did not open. Victoria knocked again, and again Prince Albert asked who was there. The answer was the same: “The Queen of England.” But the prince would not open the door. Finally, the story goes, Victoria knocked in a more restrained way, and



when asked who was there, responded, "Your wife, Albert." The door opened immediately and the royal couple was reconciled. (as told by Tony Evans)

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**John Henry Jowett** has the following devotional on 2Cor 5:14-21:

**HERE is a new constraint!** "The love of Christ constrains me." The love of Christ carries me along like a crowd. I am taken up in its mighty movement and swept along the appointed road! Or it arrests me, and makes me its willing prisoner. It lays a strong hand upon me, and I have no option but to go. A gracious "necessity is laid upon me." I must!

**And here is a new world.** "Old things are passed away." The man who is the prisoner of the Lord's love will find himself in new and wonderful scenery. Everything will wear a new face—God, man, self, the garden, the sky, the sea! We shall look at all things through love-eyes, and it is amazing in what new light a great love will set familiar things! Commonplaces become beautiful when looked at through the lens of Christian love. When we "walk in love" our eyes are anointed with "the eye-salve" of grace.

**And here is a new service.** "We are ambassadors ... for Christ." When we see our Lord through love-eyes, and then our brother, we shall yearn to serve our brother in Christ. We shall intensely long to tell the love-story of the Lord our Saviour. What we have seen, with confidence we tell.

**2 Corinthians 5:19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.**

- **God:** Mt 1:23 Jn 14:10,11,20 17:23 1Ti 3:16
- **reconciling:** Ro 3:24-26 11:15 1Jn 2:1,2 1Jn 4:10
- **not:** Ps 32:1-2 Isa 43:25 Isa 44:22 Ro 4:6-8
- **word:** 2Co 5:18
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENT ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:19](#)**

## COMMISSIONED WITH THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION

**Namely** - most conservative writers (and translations) render it with words like "that is" ("in other words" - NET, "namely") which explains that "God is bringing the world back into forgiven relationship with Himself, and He is doing this by means of a **'word'** entrusted to the apostles." (Barnett)

Note that this is the message of ambassadors of Christ - we do not work reconciliation between other people and God, but rather tell others that God reconciled the world to Himself in Jesus Christ. He has made provision for their salvation by grace through faith.

**That God was in Christ** (present tense - continually involved in) **reconciling** (katallasso) **the world** (kosmos) **to Himself - God was in Christ** is somewhat confusing and it is better translated in Christ God was reconciling. (NIV, NET, ESV) **God** is again the subject of two supernatural acts (1) reconciling the world to Himself and (2) not counting their trespasses against them. Stated another way, **God** is the "Initiator" of reconciliation in behalf of those who are His enemies. Even in the Garden of Eden God demonstrates this persistent, pursuing grace in which He takes a personal interest to restore the broken relationship with sinful mankind. **Reconciling the world to Himself** was the Father's heart desire to continually (present tense) choose (active voice - divine volitional choice) to carry out the gracious supernatural act of reconciling sinful men and women to Himself throughout the ages beginning in the Garden of Eden (cf Ge 3:15+). **The world to Himself** does is not describing salvation of the entire human race ([universalism](#)), but in context only those who have believed in Christ as their Substitute and been born again. As **Puritan Thomas Watson** wrote "Christ's blood has value enough to redeem the whole world, but the virtue of it is applied only to such as believe."

In Romans 5 **Paul** explains that...

as through the one man's (Adam's) disobedience **the many** (everyone descended from Adam) were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One (Christ Jesus) **the many** (those in "the world" who by faith receive God's gracious offer of reconciliation) will be made righteous (justified, declared righteous) (Ro 5:19+).

The use of **kosmos** or **world** corresponds to the **"all"** who are mentioned three times in the preceding context...

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one (Christ) died for **all** (cp "**the world**"), therefore **all** died (all who believed in Him); and He died for **all**, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. (2Co 5:14, 15+)

Rationale for rendering it **in Christ God was reconciling** -- In other words these translations emphasize the idea of "**in Christ**" depicting Christ as the instrument of the reconciliation (cp the closely related doctrine justification in Ro 3:24+). "**In Christ**" is also analogous to Paul's preceding description of "**through Christ**" (2Cor 5:18). Finally note that in context Paul had just used the phrase "**in Christ**" in 2Cor 5:17. In summary, it was **in** and **through** Christ's death and resurrection that God accomplished the reconciliation of the world to Himself. The fact that Paul goes on to describe that the debts of trespasses are no longer counted against them is a truth that is more compatible with emphasis on Christ's death (which wrought payment of the penalty for sin) rather than His incarnation.

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,  
In my place condemned he stood;  
Sealed my pardon with his blood:  
Hallelujah! what a Saviour!  
--Philipp Paul Bliss

**Not counting** (logizomai - putting on their "spiritual bank account") **their trespasses** (paraptoma - figuratively their "false steps") **against them** (referring only to believers) - **Not counting** means not reckoning, imputing or not placing (their trespasses) on their "spiritual bank account" so to speak. **Not counting their trespasses** is one result of reconciliation. Instead of on the sinner's "account" the **trespasses** are imputed or placed on the "account" of Christ, the sinner's substitutionary Sacrifice. The idea in this passage is that God's reconciliation of sinners results effectively in the canceling of the debts they owed God because of their trespasses. **Not counting their trespasses** is also clearly a picture of God's forgiveness wherein He removes our sins off of us and onto the Savior, the Lamb of God, for "the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.(Isa 53:6) As David exclaimed "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered! 2 How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not **impute** (count, reckon) **iniquity**, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!" (Ps 32:1-2)

**Michael Andrus** - God performed an **accounting miracle** in regard to our sins. He says, "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, **not counting** men's sins against them." Isn't that amazing? God doesn't deny that we are sinners; He doesn't ignore our sins; He doesn't even minimize them. But He does choose not to count them against us. It's as though he looks at my ledger, with all my evil thoughts, deeds, and words, and He enters a **debit** there and credits all those sins to Jesus' account. Then He credits my account with the righteousness of Christ. It's an accounting miracle, friends, but not the kind that Enron executives tried to pull off. This one is legal because my sins have been fully paid for (Jn 19:30+) by the perfect Son of God.

**David Guzik** asks why has God not counted their trespasses against them...(Is it) because God has gone soft, and given mankind a "Get Out of Hell Free" card? Not at all. Instead, it is because our trespasses were imputed to Jesus. The justice our sin demanded is satisfied, not excused.([2 Corinthians 5](#))

**MacDonald** - God has provided a way by which men's **trespasses** might not be imputed to them, but while that way is available to all, it is effective only in those who are in Christ. The **trespasses** of unsaved men are definitely reckoned to them, but the moment these men trust the Lord Jesus as Savior, they are reckoned righteous in Him, and their sins are blotted out. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**And He has committed to us the word of reconciliation** (katallage) - **Murray Harris'** paraphrase = "And the obligation and privilege of declaring this message of reconciliation God has entrusted to our care." Note again God is the initiator and the giver and He Himself literally places this in us. What does he "place in us?" That is almost a rhetorical question. The truth that we are His royal representatives of His kingdom of light to proclaim the excellencies of Him Who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1Pe 2:9+) to souls who are in the midst of a perverse and crooked generation (Php 2:15-) is a truth that should overwhelm us with gratitude and a sense of urgency. That the Almighty, Holy One of Israel would use "jars of clay" (2Co 4:7ESV) to dispense His priceless, costly Gospel message to people dead in their trespasses and sins is beyond amazing grace. Ponder the irony - sinners reconciled by grace are now messengers of reconciliation!

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**ILLUSTRATION - Reconciled Through Death** - It is said that years ago in a western city a husband and wife became estranged and chose to separate. They moved away and lived in different parts of the country. The husband happened to return to the city on a matter of business and went out to the cemetery to the grave of their only son. He was standing by the grave in fond reminiscence when he heard a step behind him. Turning, he saw his estranged wife. The initial impulse of both was to turn away. But they had a common hearted interest in that grave, and instead of turning away they clasped hands over the grave of their son and were reconciled. They were reconciled by death! Our personal reconciliation took nothing less than the death of God's Son; but his death

and its effects went far beyond any human death. (Clarence E. Macartney, Macartney's Illustrations quoted by R K Hughes)

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### **[Ray Stedman Devotional](#) on 2 Corinthians 5:19**

This is the message above all else, that the world needs to know. The problem with people everywhere is they have no security, no sense of acceptance, and no sense of worth. Most people have a poor self-image--even the blustering people who try to portray that they are self-sufficient. Deep inside they know their actions are a cover-up; they know they do not really feel as confident as they would lead others to believe. They are often scared and frustrated. They have to pretend that they are able to handle everything, but at the end of the day they know they did not.

The reason people lack security is because they feel an alienation, an estrangement, from God. They live in a universe they obviously know does not belong to them. They did not make it; they do not run it. This whole world was functioning long before you and I showed up on it. People know that; therefore, they feel uneasy. Estrangement and alienation are the supreme problems of our day.

This message addresses the concern that we are lost, we are alienated, and we are cut off from the God who runs everything. This is a message, therefore, that strikes home to human hearts everywhere. It does not make any difference what color your skin is, what your background is, or how you grew up. You can say this to a businessperson on Wall Street; you can say it to a craftsman, a plumber, a doctor, a lawyer, or to a member of any occupation. They all need this universal word of reconciliation sent to the world.

A characteristic of this message is that it does not talk about the judgment of God over sin. When I graduated from seminary, I came to my occupation as a preacher with the idea that my job was to make people aware of their sin and to tell them of the judgment of God upon evil. I was brought up in a theological generation that was taught that you have to scare people before they will become Christians--to make them believe they are going to hell, so that when they see the flames burning beneath them, when they feel the singeing of their hair, then they will repent of their evil.

Then I began to learn from verses like this. I saw from the approaches of the apostles and the Lord Himself that that is not the message. (Ultimately you may have to warn people of coming judgment if they refuse this message of grace, but that is not where you start.) This is a message where God is saying, We do not need to talk about judgment. I've taken care of that.

I learned after a few years that all I need to do is go to people, taking for granted that they are hurting inside from their sins, just as I was hurting from my sins, and talk about a God who understands that, who wants to relieve them from that hurt and has done something about it. Therefore, He was not ready to throw me into hell; He was opening His arms and inviting me to come to a loving Father and be restored. That is the message.

*Lord, thank You that You have entrusted me with this message of reconciliation. Make me sensitive to Your Spirit that I might share it with those whom You have prepared.*

**Life Application** - What is God's message of reconciliation to our deep-seated sense of alienation and estrangement from Him? Are we carriers of that message?

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### **The Father's Love**

God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. —2 Corinthians 5:19

Today's Scripture: Genesis 22:1-14

In his autobiography, a well-known TV personality describes the time when he asked, "If God the Father is so all-loving, why didn't He come down and go to Calvary?" That comment reveals how little he understood the love of a good earthly father and the depth of love revealed in the Trinity.

Consider the love an earthly father has for his son. In Genesis 22, we read that God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. We can only imagine the agony in his heart as he and the boy climbed the mountain. Surely Abraham must have wished he could take Isaac's place.

As a father and grandfather myself, I would choose to die in place of my offspring, if given the choice.

Our love as earthly fathers is but a faint reflection of our heavenly Father's love for His Son and for us. Because of the close relationship between the Father and the Son, Jesus could say, "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30). And the Bible tells us that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19). Without a doubt, therefore, the Father did share His Son's pain at Calvary.

How wonderful to know that we have a loving Father in heaven! Because Jesus died for us, we can be forgiven and personally experience the Father's love. By: Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?  
—Wesley

The Father's love knows no limit.

**2 Corinthians 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, **be reconciled** to God.**

- **ambassadors:** 2Co 3:6 Job 33:23 Pr 13:17 Mal 2:7 Joh 20:21 Ac 26:17,18 Eph 6:20
- **as:** 2Co 5:11 2Co 6:1 2Ki 17:13 2Ch 36:15 Ne 9:29 Isa 55:6,7 Jer 44:4 Eze 18:31,32
- **in:** Job 33:6 Lu 10:16 1Co 4:4,5 1Th 4:8
- **be:** Job 22:21 Pr 1:22-33 Isa 27:5 Jer 13:16,17 Jer 38:20 Lu 14:23
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

2 Corinthians 5:11 (**AMBASSADORS PERSUADE MEN**) Therefore, (FIRST - MOTIVATION) **knowing the fear of the Lord**, (THEN - MESSAGE) **we persuade men**, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.

Luke 10:16 (**FATE OF AMBASSADORS**) "The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me."

Isaiah 27:5 (**BE RECONCILED**) "Or let him rely on My protection, Let him make peace with Me, Let him make peace with Me."

Jeremiah 38:20 (**BE RECONCILED**) But Jeremiah said, "They will not give you over. Please obey the LORD in what I am saying to you, that it may go well with you and you may live.

Luke 14:23 (**BE RECONCILED**) "And the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled.

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENT ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:20](#)**

## "HEAVEN'S AMBASSADORS ON EARTH"

**Therefore** (term of conclusion) - This is one of the easiest terms of conclusion I've ever encountered. The conclusion of the fact that **He has committed to us the word of reconciliation** is that we need to spread the word of reconciliation as ambassadors for Christ.

[Matt Postiff](#) calls 2Co 5:20-21 "Diplomatic Christianity."

[Wikipedia - Ambassador](#) - An ambassador is an official envoy, especially a high-ranking diplomat who represents a state and is usually accredited to another sovereign state or to an international organization as the resident representative of their own government or sovereign or appointed for a special and often temporary diplomatic assignment. The word is also often used more liberally for persons who are known, without national appointment, to represent certain professions, activities and fields of endeavor such as sales. An ambassador is the ranking government representative stationed in a foreign capital or country.

[Ambassadors](#) - Paul uses the technical term for the political office of one who represents one kingdom to another. He and the other apostles were ambassadors in a special, authoritative sense, but all Christians, in imitation of Paul (1 Th 1:5-7; Heb. 6:10-12), bear the honor of representing Christ to the world.

**Wilson's Bible Types - Ambassador** - This title is given to those Christians who carry GOD's message to a lost and hostile world. It probably does not apply to all believers for many of GOD's children are afraid to become His messengers (ED: I STRONGLY DISAGREE - THIS IS THE PRIVILEGE OF EVERY BELIEVER!), and they keep the good news to themselves. The true ambassador comes out boldly for his king and for his country. (ED: THE ONLY WAY AN AMBASSADOR CAN BE "BOLD" IS TO SEEK INTERCESSORY PRAYER AND BE FILLED WITH AND EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT - SEE Acts 4:31+, Eph 6:19-20+) Ephesians 6:20 Paul used the title in this passage because he was representing Heaven on earth. He carried the King's message to the rebels who were bent on killing him. He was GOD's representative to bring to men the Word of his Lord (**WORD OF RECONCILIATION**) both for their salvation and their condemnation (IF THEY REJECTED IT).

- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Ambassador](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Ambassador](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Ambassador](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia [Ambassador](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Ambassador](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Ambassador](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Ambassador](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Ambassador](#), [Ambassage](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Ambassador](#)
- King James Dictionary [Ambassador](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Ambassador](#)
- Webster Dictionary [Ambassador](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Ambassador](#)

**We are ambassadors** (presbeuo) **for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us** - This hardly needs any exposition. It is so beautiful and clear as it stands. It is a description of that once in a lifetime opportunity to serve our Lord and Master as His ambassadors, His official heavenly representatives during our short stay on earth. Christ is now absent from the earth, and yet He speaks through His ambassadors. Every presidential election supporters of the new president are given the "cush" coveted jobs of ambassadors of the United States around the world. It is like a 4 year vacation (and even 8 if he is re-elected). As coveted as those U.S. ambassador posts are, they pale in comparison to the privilege EVERY believer in Christ has to represent our Lord with His message of reconciliation, which is the only way God calls men to the Gospel (see Ro 10:14-15+) And our "ambassadorship" does not end in 4 or 8 years, but only when our Father calls us home to heaven. In the meantime, our full-time job (privilege, honor and responsibility) is to speak the **word of reconciliation** to those who are hostile toward God (Col 1:21-22+) and are headed for eternal separation from Him! **Are ambassadors** is in present tense indicating that this privileged position of as Christ's ambassador is our ongoing duty as long as we are alive. In a sense we are never on "furlough!" Some have called themselves the "[vicar of Christ](#)" but every believer has the authority and privilege to be a "[vicar of Christ](#)!"

One is reminded of Paul's command in Colossians 4:5-6+ to "**Conduct** ([present imperative](#) see [need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of ([exagorazo](#) in present tense also calling for continual dependence [on the Holy Spirit](#)) the opportunity ([kairos](#) - see also Redeem the Time). Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."

In secular Greek **ambassadors** (presbeuo) was used of the emperor's [legates](#) and of [embassies](#) between towns. To be an ambassador in the ancient world involved a commissioning for a special assignment, a call to represent the sender and a delegation of the authority of the sender.

**Charles Swindoll - Ambassadors** represent their homeland and its messages, promoting its policies to the people among whom they live. Their country is often judged by their actions as their deeds are watched and their words scrutinized. The same is true for us. Our true home is in heaven; our true sovereign is the Lord Jesus Christ. As His ambassadors, we represent King Jesus to those around us, even though they do not acknowledge Him as their own sovereign Lord

**Tasker** says "Ambassadors engaged upon human affairs are chosen especially for their tact, their dignity and their courtesy, and because they are gifted with persuasive powers. The ambassadors for Christ should show the same characteristics. They must never try to bludgeon men and women into the kingdom of God, but must speak the truth in love ... by the gentleness and meekness of Christ." (The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians)

The only other use of **presbeuo** (it is not found in the Septuagint) is also by Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians where he asks the saints for prayer that he might with boldness make known the **mystery** (truth once not known but now divinely revealed) of the Gospel (Eph 6:19+) and then explains why...



for which I am an **ambassador** in chains (He is literally in chains in prison; cp Ep 3:1+, Eph 4:1+); that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought (= Paul pictures himself as continually under obligation to speak forth the Gospel boldly - not out of legalism but out of love for his Master - see 2Co 5:14+) to speak. (Ephesians 6:20+)

**Comment:** If one was looking for excuses for not sharing the Gospel as an ambassador for Christ, it would seem Paul had the "perfect excuse" -- "I confined to a jail cell. I'm in prison and in chains." Clearly Paul did not see this as an obstacle but as an opportunity, for as he wrote in Second Timothy "I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but **the Word of God** (the Gospel) is not imprisoned. For this reason (What reason?) I endure all things (What is he enduring?) for the sake of those who are **chosen** (elect - Paul did not know who they were, so he treated everyone as if they were elect! A good practice regarding a doctrine that tragically too often creates disunity, dissension and division!), that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory." (2Ti 2:9, 10-+)

**THOUGHT** - What's my excuse for not being an ambassador for my King, Christ Jesus?

### Guzik...

- There is so much in the idea of ambassadors!
- An ambassador does not speak to please his audience, but the King who sent him.
- An ambassador does not speak on his own authority; his own opinions or demands mean little.
- He simply says what he has been commissioned to say.
- But an ambassador is more than a messenger; he is also a representative, and the honor and reputation of his country are in his hands.

God's ambassadors have the **ministry** of reconciliation (2Co 5:18)

the **message** of reconciliation (2Co 5:19).

the **Model** of reconciliation (2Co 5:21).

**As though God were making an appeal** (parakaleo) **through us** - "God is sending you his invitation through us." (William Barclay) "God Himself Who issues his appeal through our words." (Murray Harris) God's **appeal through us** comes with God's authority (see Mt 28:19-20) We are as it were "God's mouthpiece" to speak forth His desire to reconcile sinners from their war with God, a war they cannot win in this life or the life to come! **Making an appeal** is in the present tense calling for a continuing appeal to those not reconciled and thus are still at war with Almighty God and in desperate need of a "permanent truce" or "peace treaty" lest they pass on to the next world as God's enemies who will suffer eternal separation from him and torturous imprisonment as "war criminals"! Note also that **making an appeal** (parakaleo) is the same verb Paul uses 2 verses later in 2Co 6:1+ "And working together with Him, we also **urge** (parakaleo) you not to receive the grace of God in vain." This verb (parakaleo) ties together the word of reconciliation (a word founded on the grace of God) in this chapter with the warning that the grace of God could be received in vain.

An **appeal through us** makes me think of our call in 2Ti 2:21+ to be "vessels of honor" ("jars of clay" - 2Co 4:7ESV+), sanctified (perfect tense), useful to the Master, prepared for every good work," that He may "pour" into us and through us into the souls around us desperately, deceitfully (Heb 3:13) trapped by Sin (Jn 8:34, Ro 6:17, 19, 20+)

**Paul Barnett** - The **ministry of reconciliation** cannot be exercised in a detached and cold manner. The language Paul uses is deeply emotional and passionate. '**Through us**', he declares, 'God appeals to men and women, Christ implores them.' This ministry can never be performed coldly or with a 'take it or leave it' attitude. Similarly, the hearers also need to be actively responsive to enter into a relationship of reconciliation with God. To be reconciled to God requires that a person ask God for the forgiveness he has provided in the death of his Son. This is clear in the teaching of Jesus where 'to be reconciled' means to seek for and receive forgiveness from the wronged party (Mt. 5:23-24). God will surely forgive; there is no doubt about it. But we must ask, and this means humbly acknowledging our need for forgiveness by God. ([The Message of 2 Corinthians - Bible Speaks Today](#))

**We beg** (deomai) **you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled** (katallasso) **to God - Making an appeal...we beg** - Although the two verbs (parakaleo and deomai) used in this entreaty are distinctive, their combined use (and both in present tense) undergirds the impassioned and urgent nature of Paul's entreaty. Don't put this off. Reconciliation is an offer to be presented and received today, as long as it is still called today! Don't procrastinate or hesitate or wait (e.g., until you've "got your act together" - see more on this in notes on 2Co 6:2)! The implication of this command **be reconciled** (in the [aorist imperative](#) which conveys a sense of urgency - "Do it now!" which requires one to yield to [the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) is that while God has provided the way for reconciliation and is thus the Reconciler, this reconciliation cannot take place apart from a sinner laying hold of God's great "life preserver" (message of reconciliation) by grace through faith. All of God's gifts must be received by faith! In other words reconciliation is available for all (some would argue this point) but is effectual only for those who receive it by faith (no one would argue this point).



**Guzik** - Paul sees that he serves in a foreign land as the representative of a King. The King has a message, and Paul is delivering that message as though God were pleading through us. ([2 Corinthians 5](#))

**Spurgeon** - The work of reconciliation he committed to his Son; the word of reconciliation he has committed to us. It is our high privilege to tell the tidings of the wondrous work by which God is reconciled, so that, without any violation of his justice, he can have mercy upon those who have offended against him. As if Christ himself stood here, and pleaded with you, he bids his ministers plead on his behalf. In the name of God, he bids us beseech you to be reconciled to God. Ambassadors do not generally beseech men; they stand on their dignity, they make demands for the honour of their sovereign; but Christ's ambassadors know of no dignity which should keep them from pleading with men.

**Michael Andrus** - "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." Once in a while our President goes to a foreign country and engages in personal diplomacy, but 99% of the time he works through ambassadors. There have also been times down through the centuries when God Himself spoke to individuals through dreams, visions, a burning bush, a talking donkey, or a still small voice. But the principal means He has used to take his message of reconciliation is also through ambassadors. Some were called "prophets", others "apostles", but the fact is God views each of His children as an ambassador, and each must represent his sovereign accurately, with faithfulness, and with cultural sensitivity. God makes His appeal to lost people through us! Those who have been reconciled with God are called to be agents of this same reconciliation to others. As His ambassadors, what should we be doing? We should implore people to be reconciled to God. That's what Paul himself does in verse 20: "We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." I go back to a question I raised earlier. Why ask people to be reconciled if God has already reconciled them? The answer should be clear: friendship has to be accepted. People don't initiate it, but they must respond to it. If they refuse to accept God's offer of friendship, He will not force it on them.

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**G Campbell Morgan** - What urgency breathes through these words! The subject is that of the reconciliation made possible between man and God, because "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." That word of reconciliation is committed to those called to serve Christ. They are ambassadors on behalf of Christ. Therefore the urgency. They must deliver their message in a way worthy of the One Who sends them: "As though God were entreating by us; we beseech."

That was Paul's concept of the way to preach Christ; and it is manifest in all the records we have of his journeys, his spoken messages, as well as in his letters.

**The marvel and the glory of the Divine provision, and the terror and peril of human need, were such as to make anything in the nature of indifference to results or coolness in presentation impossible.**

Every call was a beseeching. Moreover he dared to say that in this attitude he was representing God; and every soul who knows anything of the real meaning of the Cross, knows that this is a true word. God does not treat human salvation as a matter about which He can be indifferent or careless. The Cross is His passion, His earnestness; may we not dare to say, that by which He entreats men to be reconciled. In face of that, what can be worse than to declare His message as though it were not a message vital, tremendous, demanding all passion and power in its delivery? All this makes us think! And perhaps the thinking is better done alone! ([Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible](#))

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**Looking For Loopholes** - Comedian W. C. Fields (1880-1946) could make audiences roar with laughter, yet he himself was chronically unhappy. Religion apparently played no part in his life. But it's been said that as he faced the possibility of dying, he started to devote time to reading the Bible. When he was asked about his new interest in Scripture, Fields, always the comedian, replied, "I'm looking for loopholes, my friend. Looking for loopholes."

Fields may not have known Hebrews 9:27, "It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment," yet he realized that he might soon be standing before God. And he may have been wondering what he would say if asked by the Lord why he should not be judged for his sins.

We will all stand before God someday, so it's imperative that we prepare to meet Him. But how? The only preparation we need to make is to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior from sin. He died to take the punishment we deserve (2Corinthians 5:21; 1Peter 3:18). When we admit that we are sinners (Romans 3:23) and ask Him to forgive and save us (Acts 16:31; Romans 10:13), we are brought into a right relationship with God (2Corinthians 5:18, 19).

Are you prepared? There are no loopholes. —Vernon Grounds

How can you go another day?  
Respond to Christ, do not delay;  
Just trust in Him, His Word believe—

Eternal life you will receive.

—Branon

**Don't plan to repent at the 11th hour**

**—you may die at 10:30.**

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**AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST** - Late one night a salesman drove into a strange city and tried to get a room in a hotel. The clerk informed him that there was no vacancy. Disappointed, he started to leave the lobby when a dignified gentleman offered to share his room with him. Gratefully the traveler accepted his kindness.

Just before retiring, the man who had shown such hospitality, knelt and prayed aloud. In his petition he referred to the stranger by name and asked the Lord to bless him. Upon awakening the next morning, he told his guest it was his habit to read the Bible and commune with God at the beginning of each day, and he asked if he would like to join him. The Holy Spirit had been speaking to the heart of this salesman, and when his host tactfully confronted him with the claims of Christ, he gladly received the Savior.

As the two were ready to part, they exchanged business cards. The new believer was amazed to read, "William Jennings Bryan, Secretary of State."

You see William Jennings Bryan was not only the Secretary of State under Woodrow Wilson, but more importantly he was an **ambassador for Christ**.

**Once you are saved you are transformed into a "new creature" and are given a new mission. You become Christ's "ambassador."** - from P. R. Van Gorder:

J. Dwight Pentecost states in his book, *Designed to Be Like Him*,

"There can be no higher goal. There can be no higher ambition. There can be no higher purpose than that which the Word of God puts before us as the chief end of the child of God, to glorify God. The greatest goal in the believer's life is not his own enjoyment of his salvation. His highest goal is not learning the truths of Scripture, nor even teaching and preaching the Word. His greatest goal is to live Jesus Christ so that men may know the Father."

Just like the prince or son of a King would act like royalty and so must the children of God act. We are ambassadors for God here on earth and we should act like children of God. As believers, being an ambassador for Christ is our true vocation. Page Patterson said in TTU chapel that we are not students, teachers, lawyers, nor doctors in "vocation," instead, we are **ambassadors for Christ!** ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**Representing God** - When I stepped up to the checkpoint so I could enter the prison, I was told that my identification card had been misplaced. The guard had to fill out a temporary permission slip so I could get in and teach Bible classes to some of the inmates. After I showed her my driver's license, she filled out the slip and I was allowed in. When I glanced at the piece of paper, I laughed.

**In the space provided to indicate who I was representing, the guard had written "God."**

Later, as I drove home, I thought about that permission slip more seriously. The guard may have had a sense of humor, but she was right! Even though I was representing a prison ministry, I was really representing God. I am glad the guard made that connection.

Paul said to the Corinthians, "We are ambassadors for Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:20). As such, we have a responsibility to "walk properly toward those who are outside" the faith (1 Thessalonians 4:12). As followers of Jesus Christ, we represent God wherever we are, and in whatever we do. On the job, in the neighborhood, on the softball team, or on the highway, we are His representatives.

Lord, help us to represent You faithfully in every area of our lives. Amen. — by David C. Egener [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Wherever I am, whatever I do,  
O God, please help me to live  
In a way that makes me credible  
As Your representative.

—Egener

**Christ sends us out to bring others in.**

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**Dare to Be Different** - Since my dad was a pastor, I got stuck with the label known to every pastor's kid: PK. But, much to the congregation's disappointment, the title didn't stop me from being my mischievous little self. I can't count the times I heard, "Little Joe, you're the pastor's son. You should be an example." But I didn't want to be an example! I was only 5 and wanted to have fun with my friends!

Let's face it, being an example is often about being different. But most of us don't want to be different. We want people to like us, and the safest way to do that is to blend in. But following Christ has never been about blending in. Following Him means to be like Him, to respond to life and relate to people as He did. It's a little risky and uncomfortable to be different. But that's what being an "ambassador for Christ" (2 Cor. 5:20) is all about—bringing the wonderful difference of your King to bear on the territory you've been assigned: your home, your office, your friendships. Representing the King is not just our calling; it's a great honor.

In retrospect, I can see how my antics as a PK reflected poorly on my dad. It's motivating to remember that our non-Jesus attitudes and actions also reflect poorly on our King.

Make a difference by daring to be different!— by Joe Stowell ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Show me the way, Lord, let my light shine  
As an example of good to mankind;  
Help them to see the patterns of Thee,  
Shining in beauty, lived out in me.  
—Neuer

**Dare to be different—  
for the Father's sake.**

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## Heaven's Ambassadors

We are ambassadors for Christ. — 2 Corinthians 5:20

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

A fourth-grade classmate of mine made a lasting impression on me. His goal was to be a national ambassador when he grew up. He never achieved this lofty childhood dream, but as a believer in Christ he is an ambassador in a land that is not his real home. So am I. So is every Christian.

According to Paul, our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). Through Christ, God has made each of us into a new creation and reconciled us to Himself (2 Cor. 5:17-18). Meanwhile, we serve as Christ's ambassadors (2Co 5:20) to a world that is perishing under a hostile ruler.

But what does it mean to be Christ's ambassador? It means we are to urge others to be reconciled to God (vv.18-20). Our task is to lead people to the Savior so that they become citizens of the eternal kingdom we represent. Together with them we anticipate His return for us and the time when the kingdoms of this world will become the "kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ" (Rev. 11:15).

Until then, we must take our assignment seriously. It's a great privilege to have our citizenship in heaven. It's an equally great obligation to be an ambassador of that heavenly kingdom. By: Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Let us go forth, as called of God,  
Redeemed by Jesus' precious blood;  
His love to show, His life to live,  
His message speak, His mercy give.  
—Whittle

Our citizenship in heaven defines our duties here on earth.

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**Truth and Reconciliation** - To help heal the wounds left by racial injustices in South Africa, the government extended amnesty to any citizens who would come forward with the truth about crimes they had committed.

Many atrocities were detailed and confessed. Some families learned for the first time the "who, what, when, where, and how" of their loved one's "extermination." Many cloaked their confession in "I was just following orders." For some victim's families, the truth

brought a degree of closure.

As I watched segments of the proceedings on TV, I longed to see expressions of heartfelt repentance and forgiveness. No doubt some genuine healing took place, but it wasn't obvious from what I saw. Then it occurred to me that truth alone doesn't bring about reconciliation. That comes only when truth is accompanied by grace. But what is the source of such grace? John said that Jesus was "full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14). And Paul said that when Jesus died on the cross, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19).

As Christians, we experience God's grace and forgiveness in a deeply personal way. Because we are reconciled to Him, we are enabled to extend grace to others.— by Dennis J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

His grace is sufficient, no one can exhaust it;  
Be strong in God's grace—each day it is new.  
Draw largely, continually, out of His fullness;  
You'll find that His grace is sufficient for you.  
—Anon.

**Those who know God's grace  
will show God's grace.**

**2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him**

- **he:** Isa 53:4-6,9-12 Da 9:26 Zec 13:7 Ro 8:3 Ga 3:13 Eph 5:2 1Pe 3:18 1Jn 2:1,2)(who: Isa 53:9 Lk 1:35 Heb 7:26 1Pe 2:22-24 1Jn 3:5
- **we:** 2Co 5:17 Isa 45:24,25 53:11 Jer 23:26 33:16 Da 9:24 Ro 1:17 3:21-26 Ro 5:19 8:1-4 10:3,4 1Co 1:30 Php 3:9
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passages:**

Isaiah 53:4-6+ Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

Hebrews 4:15 (**THE SINLESS SAVIOR**) For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, **yet without sin.**

Hebrews 7:26, 27 (**THE SINLESS SAVIOR**) For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, **innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners** and exalted above the heavens; Who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

1 Peter 1:19 (**SINLESS SAVIOR**) but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

1 Peter 2:22 (**THE SINLESS SAVIOR**) **WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH;**

1 John 3:5 (**THE SINLESS SAVIOR**) You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and **in Him there is no sin.**

**FOR IN DEPTH COMMENT ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 5:21](#)**

**THE LAMB OF GOD  
MADE THE SCAPEGOAT FOR US**

**C H Spurgeon** - See ye here the foundation-truth of Christianity, the rock on which our hopes are built. It is the only hope of a

sinner, and the only true joy of the Christian, — the great transaction, the great substitution, the great lifting of sin from the sinner to the sinner's Surety; the punishment of the Surety instead of the sinner, the pouring out of the vials of wrath, which were due to the transgressor, upon the head of his Substitute; the grandest transaction which ever took place on earth; the most wonderful sight that even hell ever beheld, and the most stupendous marvel that heaven itself ever executed, — Jesus Christ, made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him! You scarcely need that I should explain the words when the sense is so plain. A spotless Savior stands in the room of guilty sinners. God lays upon the spotless Savior the sin of the guilty, so that he becomes, in the expressive language of the text, sin. Then he takes off from the innocent Savior his righteousness, and puts that to the account of the once-guilty sinners, so that the sinners become righteousness, — righteousness of the highest and divinest source — the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. (2Cor 5:21 Christ Made Sin)

**John MacArthur** - With a conciseness and brevity reflective of the Holy Spirit, this one brief sentence, only fifteen words in the Greek text, resolves the dilemma of reconciliation. This sentence reveals the essence of the atonement, expresses the heart of the gospel message, and articulates the most glorious truth in Scripture—how fallen man's sin-sundered relationship to God can be restored. 2Cor 5:21 is like a cache of rare jewels, each deserving of a careful, reverential examination under the magnifying glass of Scripture. It yields truths about the benefactor, the substitute, the beneficiaries, and the benefit. ([2 Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**William MacDonald** - This verse gives us the doctrinal foundation for our reconciliation. How has God made reconciliation possible? How can He receive guilty sinners who come to Him in repentance and faith? The answer is that the Lord Jesus has effectively dealt with the whole problem of our sins, so now we can be reconciled to God. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**He made (poieo) Him Who knew (ginosko) no sin** (hamartia) *to be sin on our behalf* - He is the Father and Him is the Beloved Son and **made Him** is God's great act of amazing grace. **Who knew no sin** of course is the sinless Lamb of God Christ Jesus. Of course Jesus knew that sin existed but He did not know it experientially by being personally involved with it. This was an absolute requirement for Jesus to qualify to bear the full wrath of God against the sins for others. Paul is referring specifically to the time of Jesus' incarnation, not to His pre-existent state. **On our behalf** (huper hemon) means in our place (speaks of substitution). If you work backwards in the text, you will notice that the nearest antecedent for "our" is the phrase "**ambassadors for Christ**" in 2Co 5:20. Some interpret this as Christ was our substitute while others see it as indicating Christ as our representative.

If our Lord's bearing our sin for us is not the gospel, I have no gospel to preach.

-- C. H. Spurgeon

**Spurgeon** writes that in regard to Jesus being made **to be sin on our behalf**..Christ was not guilty, and could not be made guilty; but He was treated as if he were guilty, because He willed to stand in the place of the guilty. Yea, He was not only treated as a sinner, but he was treated as if He had been sin itself in the abstract. This is an amazing utterance. The sinless One was made to be sin. Sin pressed our great Substitute very sorely. He felt the weight of it in the Garden of Gethsemane, where he "sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground." The full pressure of it came upon him when he was nailed to the accursed tree. There in the hours of darkness he bore infinitely more than we can tell. ([The Heart of the Gospel](#))

**Murray Harris** writes that when we try to expound on God making Christ sin "Although **poieo** (made) can mean "make something into something (else)," the meaning in 2Co 5:21 is not "God made the sinless one into sin" (as in the Jerusalem Bible), but "God caused the sinless one to be sin," where **poieo** denotes causation or appointment and points to the divine initiative. But we should not forget that matching the Father's set purpose to deliver Christ up to deal with sin (Acts 2:23; Ro 8:32) was Christ's own firm resolution to go to Jerusalem to suffer (Mk 8:31; Lk 9:51). Jesus was not an unwilling or surprised participant in God's action. ([New International Greek Testament Commentary - 2 Corinthians](#))

In another commentary **Murray Harris** explains Christ's being made sin this way - It seems Paul's intent to say more than that Christ was made a sin offering and yet less than he became a sinner. So complete was the identification of the sinless Christ with the sin of the sinner, including its dire guilt and its dread consequences of separation from God, that Paul could say profoundly, "God made him...to be sin for us." ([Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Wickham** - The Greek runs like this: The One who did not know sin for us sin was made, that we might become God's righteousness in Him. The Sinless One became (by imputation) sin for the sinner, that the sinner might become (by imputation) sinless in the Sinless One. Here is the very heart of the Gospel, a verse that stands with Jn 3:16 in importance. In the OT, the imputation of God's righteousness to the believer is taught didactically (Gen 15:6; cf. Rom 4:3, 9), prophetically (Isa 53:11; 61:10; Jer 23:6), and typically (Zech 3:1-5). ([2 Corinthians 5](#))

**So that** ([hina](#) - purpose) is a conjunction that is used to introduce a purpose clause, here explaining the purpose of God making His only begotten Son to be sin for us. And what an incredible purpose it is!

**We might become the righteousness** (dikaioisune) **of God in Him** - The **Amplified** expands it this way - "the righteousness of

God (what we ought to be, approved and acceptable and in right relationship with Him, by His goodness). "**Might become** ([ginomai](#)) is aorist tense (at a moment in time; i.e, when we believe), subjunctive mood, which is the mood of possibility. It is possible for every sinner separated from God to become a saint, reconciled to God and positionally, eternally righteous in Christ. Sadly, the great "potential" made available at Christ's crucifixion and resurrection will be rejected by most of mankind (cf Mt 7:13-14+). **Righteousness** is rightness of character before God and rightness of actions before men. Righteousness of God could be succinctly stated as all that God is, all that He commands, all that He demands, all that He approves, all that He provides through Christ. **In Him** means In Christ (cf 2Co 5:17+). In union with Christ. In (the new) covenant with Christ. In oneness with Christ. "As a result of being united with Christ" (Harris). "In union with Him, and by virtue of our standing in Him" (Henry Alford).

Paul explains to those who had believed the message of reconciliation and were **'In Christ'** that it was

by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and **righteousness** and sanctification, and redemption, (1 Co 1:30+).

Someone else has well said that **righteousness** is that which the Father required, the Son became, the Holy Spirit convines of, and faith secures.

[Charles Swindoll](#) - The simple content of this message of reconciliation is succinctly stated: "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (5:21). This verse is the heart and soul of the saving power of the gospel. Jesus, the perfect God-man, the spotless Lamb of God, was made a sin offering in our place, just as Isaiah had prophesied centuries earlier, "But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief, if he would render Himself as a guilt offering" (Isa. 53:10). Through faith alone in the person and work of Jesus Christ, we become the righteousness of God. A real transfer occurs at the Cross: We trade our guilt for His innocence. Having been declared righteous (justified), we are completely free of guilt and shame and have become full heirs of a glorious promise.

**Murray Harris** - The glorious purpose of the Father's act in making Christ "to be sin" was that believers should "become the righteousness of God" in Christ. This is a bold restatement of the nature of justification. Not only does the believer receive from God a right standing before him on the basis of faith in Jesus (Philippians 3:9), but here Paul says that "in Christ" the believer in some sense actually shares the righteousness that characterizes God himself (cf. 1 Cor 1:30). ([Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Murray Harris** in another commentary writes "We conclude that in v. 21a Paul is not saying that at the crucifixion the sinless Christ became in some sense a sinner, yet he is affirming more than that Christ became a sin offering or even a sin bearer. In a sense **beyond human comprehension**, God treated Christ as "sin," aligning him so totally with sin and its dire consequences that from God's viewpoint he became indistinguishable from sin itself. ([New International Greek Testament Commentary - 2 Corinthians](#)) (ED: I like Harris' statement "beyond human comprehension," for this truth is so deep and mysterious that it defies an easy understanding and explanation.)

**R Kent Hughes** adds "Thus Christ became sin while remaining inwardly and outwardly impeccable. He became sin as our substitute and sacrifice." ([2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness. Preaching the Word](#))

[Michael Andrus](#) - Consider a scene on death row. The warden comes to a cell and announces to a certain inmate, "It's time; come with me." But suppose the man in the next cell were to say to the warden, "Warden, that man has become my friend here on death row. I'll tell you what! Let me take his place." The warden would laugh at the convict and say, "You can't take his place, I'm going to come for you next week!" But what if someone from outside the prison with no crimes on his record were to step forward and say, "I'll take his place," that would be another story. Probably it would be illegal in our system, but it would not be immoral. If he freely offered to be a substitute, we would marvel at the love being expressed. Well, Jesus, the only human being without a record, did just that.

**Righteousness** ([1343](#)) [dikaioisune](#) from [dikaios](#) = being proper or right in the sense of being fully justified being or in accordance with what God requires) is the quality of being upright. In its simplest sense [dikaioisune](#) conveys the idea of conformity to a standard or norm and in Biblical terms the "standard" is God and His perfect, holy character. In this sense **righteousness** is the opposite of hamartia (sin), which is defined as missing of the mark set by God. Paul's uses in the Corinthian letters - 1 Co. 1:30; 2 Co. 3:9; 2 Co. 5:21; 2 Co. 6:7; 2 Co. 6:14; 2 Co. 9:9; 2 Co. 9:10; 2 Co. 11:15

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**Abernathy** summarizes numerous commentaries (abbreviated in brackets) -

**QUESTION—What does it mean that Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin?**

This statement is expressed as a paradox [Danker, He, Mead, SP]. Paul is using the abstract to refer to the concrete [My, NIC2, SP].



**1. It conveys the idea of substitution.** God made the one who was innocent to be the guilty one [Danker]. It means that God laid all sin on Christ [AB, Lns, NIC1, TG]. It means that God treated Christ as though he were a sinner [NAC, TG; CEV], placing on him the burden of human sin [TG]. It means that he was made to bear human sin [NTC], and the consequence of sin [TNTC]. He was made a victim for sin [NJB]. All sin was placed upon him as upon the scapegoat on the day of atonement [EGT]. God made him the object of his judgment and wrath against sin [HNTC, ICC2, My, NIC1]. It means that God treated him as he would treat sin [Mead]. Jesus stood in for sinful humanity and God dealt with him as he would have dealt with sinners [NAC].

**2. It conveys the idea of identification.** Christ was identified with sin [He, ICC1], and shared human sin [TEV], so that man could share God's own righteousness through union with Christ [ICC1; TEV]. Christ identified with human sinfulness [REB] and with sinful humanity [AB, TH], taking the place of sinners and representing them [SP]. Christ identified with the sin, guilt, and consequences of human separation from God [EBC]. It is metaphorical, and means that Christ's love for sinners is so great that, though he is not responsible for sin, he identifies with mankind and takes responsibility for sinners such that human sin becomes his own [Stagg]. It is a metonymy in which the abstraction 'to be made sin' is given for the concrete, which is the crucifixion, in which Christ's death was sin-laden [NIC2].

**3. It conveys the idea of sacrifice in that God made Christ a sin-offering**[Lewis, NCBC, WBC; NLT]. This follows the wording of Leviticus 5:12 and 6:5 [Lewis] or Is 53:10 [NCBC, WBC] where the sin offering is simply called 'sin'. Christ became a sin-offering, taking their sin and its judgment to himself [NCBC]. ([An Exegetical Summary of 2 Corinthians](#))

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**James Smith** sums up this great exchange...

Christ takes our sins—that we might take his righteousness!

He suffers—that we might go free.

He is stripped—that we may be clothed.

He is put to death—that we might live.

He is made sin—that we might be made righteous.

O what mercy! "What a mystery of mercy is this! We have no righteousness of our own—our best is but as filthy rags. God requires a righteousness, and one that will meet all the demands of his law, and satisfy his impartial justice, in order to our justification. Jesus, therefore, came to do, and to suffer, all that was necessary to make us righteous, divinely righteous. The righteousness of God, or as righteous as he is righteous. The righteous of God in him. We now, therefore become righteous, perfectly righteous, not by obeying the law—but by faith in Christ—union to Christ—and participation with Christ. Faith brings us to Christ, the Holy Spirit unites us to Christ, and then we participate in all Christ has. His life is our righteousness, his death is our atonement, his intercession is our salvation. He took our place—that we might take his. He came to toil for us—that we may rest with him. He sorrowed for us—that we may rejoice with him. He died for us—that we may live with him. Blessed Redeemer, how wondrous your love! How perfect your work! [The Marvelous Exchange - James Smith](#)

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#### Related Resources:

- [What is righteousness? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [Why does Christ's righteousness need to be imputed to us? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [What is the substitutionary atonement? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [Righteousness - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
  - [Righteousness - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
  - Torrey Topical Textbook [Righteousness](#)
  - Easton's Bible Dictionary [Righteousness](#)
  - Holman Bible Dictionary [Righteousness](#)
  - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Righteousness](#)
  - Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Righteousness Righteous. Righteousness](#)
- 

**Made Sin for Us** - Words cannot fully express the worth of Christ's work for us on the cross. To think that He endured separation from the Father because of our sins staggers our finite minds. Elizabeth Barrett Browning tried to capture the deep theological significance of this in these poetic words:

"Deserted! God could separate from His own essence rather; And Adam's sins have swept between the righteous Son and Father Yes, once Immanuel's orphaned cry His universe hath shaken It went up single, echoless, 'My God, I am forsaken!'"

A girl in Gary, Indiana, terribly burned in a flash fire, lingered between life and death. A delicate and extensive skin graft offered the only hope for her restoration. When the hospital issued a call for volunteer skin donors, a young boy responded. During the surgery, complications set in and the boy died. But through his sacrifice he made it possible for that young girl to be completely restored.

Nothing in our Lord's life called for His death. He was free from sin's fatal infection. Yet He willingly offered Himself to die in our place. A poet wrote:

"He suffered in our stead,  
He saved His people thus;  
The curse that fell upon His head  
Was due by right to us."

Having been restored to God's favor by the sacrifice of His Son, we should lift our hearts to our sinless Substitute. —P R Van Gorder. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Christ was delivered for sins  
that we might be delivered from sin.**

-- cp Ro 4:25

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**C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening** - Mourning Christian! why weepest thou? Art thou mourning over thine own corruptions? Look to thy perfect Lord, and remember, thou art complete in him; thou art in God's sight as perfect as if thou hadst never sinned; nay, more than that, the Lord our Righteousness hath put a divine garment upon thee, so that thou hast more than the righteousness of man-thou hast the righteousness of God. O thou who art mourning by reason of inbred sin and depravity, remember, none of thy sins can condemn thee. Thou hast learned to hate sin; but thou hast learned also to know that sin is not thine-it was laid upon Christ's head. Thy standing is not in thyself-it is in Christ; thine acceptance is not in thyself, but in thy Lord; thou art as much accepted of God to-day, with all thy sinfulness, as thou wilt be when thou standest before his throne, free from all corruption. O, I beseech thee, lay hold on this precious thought, perfection in Christ! For thou art "complete in him." With thy Saviour's garment on, thou art holy as the Holy one. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Christian, let thy heart rejoice, for thou art "accepted in the beloved"-what hast thou to fear? Let thy face ever wear a smile; live near thy Master; live in the suburbs of the Celestial City; for soon, when thy time has come, thou shalt rise up where thy Jesus sits, and reign at his right hand; and all this because the divine Lord "was made to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

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**Reconciliation** - Sin is a fundamental relationship; it is not wrong doing, it is wrong being, deliberate and emphatic independence of God. The Christian religion bases everything on the positive, radical nature of sin. Other religions deal with sins; the Bible alone deals with sin. The first thing Jesus Christ faced in men was the heredity of sin, and it is because we have ignored this in our presentation of the Gospel that the message of the Gospel has lost its sting and its blasting power.

The revelation of the Bible is not that Jesus Christ took upon Himself our fleshly sins, but that He took upon Himself the heredity of sin which no man can touch. God made His own Son to be sin that He might make the sinner a saint. All through the Bible it is revealed that Our Lord bore the sin of the world by identification, not by sympathy. He deliberately took upon His own shoulders, and bore in His own Person, the whole massed sin of the human race— "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin," and by so doing He put the whole human race on the basis of Redemption. Jesus Christ rehabilitated the human race; He put it back to where God designed it to be, and anyone can enter into union with God on the ground of what Our Lord has done on the Cross.

A man cannot redeem himself; Redemption is God's 'bit,' it is absolutely finished and complete; its reference to individual men is a question of their individual action. A distinction must always be made between the revelation of Redemption and the conscious experience of salvation in a man's life. (Oswald Chambers [2 Corinthians 5:21 Reconciliation](#))

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**Substitution** -The modern view of the death of Jesus is that He died for our sins out of sympathy. The New Testament view is that He bore our sin not by sympathy, but by identification. He was made to be sin. Our sins are removed because of the death of Jesus, and the explanation of His death is His obedience to His Father, not His sympathy with us. We are acceptable with God not because we have obeyed, or because we have promised to give up things, but because of the death of Christ, and in no other way. We say that Jesus Christ came to reveal the Fatherhood of God, the lovingkindness of God; the New Testament says He came to bear away

the sin of the world. The revelation of His Father is to those to whom He has been introduced as Saviour. Jesus Christ never spoke of Himself to the world as one Who revealed the Father, but as a stumbling block (see John 15:22, 23, 24). John 14:9 was spoken to His disciples.

That Christ died for me, therefore I go scot free, is never taught in the New Testament. What is taught in the New Testament is that "He died for all" (not - He died my death), and that by identification with His death I can be freed from sin, and have imparted to me His very righteousness. The **substitution** taught in the New Testament is twofold: "He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." It is not Christ for me unless I am determined to have Christ formed in me (by grace through faith). (Oswald Chambers [2 Corinthians 5:21 Substitution](#))

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**A Land of Beginning Again** - More than four hundred years before Jesus' birth, the Greek poet Agathon said, "Even God cannot change the past." Historically speaking, he was right. What happens cannot be undone. Yet when God sent His Son to die on the cross, He provided a way to erase our sinful past.

Here is how Donald Grey Barnhouse described what Jesus did for us: "Just as a hole in the ocean floor would let sea water into the volcanic fires, creating force that could blow the world apart, so the Lord Jesus Christ by dying and rising again broke through the past and allowed eternity to pour in, shattering, turning and overturning, changing, and altering all things. He took the past of all believers and cleansed it by His blood and transformed the life in such a way that the time-rooted life gave way to life eternal."

The poet said, "I wish there were a land of beginning again." There is. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1John 1:7). And the hymn writer said, "Calvary covers it all, my past with its sin and stain; my guilt and despair Jesus took on Him there, and Calvary covers it all."

This is the wonder of the gospel. For those who have accepted Christ's offer of forgiveness, He "wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, . . . having nailed it to the cross" (Col 2:14). God has completely cleansed our sin-stained past. — P R Van Gorder. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Salvation can change the worst sinners  
into the most honored saints.**

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**THE SIX-LEGGED LAMB** - For he hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 2 Corinthians 5:21

When God saves a man, He does more than pardon that sinner of his guilt; He also completely erases the old offenses from the "books," clears the penitent's name, and bestows upon him the perfect righteousness of the Savior. For that reason believers may justly be called "saints," for they stand perfect in Christ!

Dr. Harry A. Ironside used to tell of an experience he had while he was the guest of a western sheep herder. One morning he saw an old ewe lope across the field followed by the strangest looking lamb he had ever seen. It apparently had six legs! The last two seemed to be torn from the body and were just dangling there. The shepherd caught the odd lambkin and brought it to Dr. Ironside for examination. Closer inspection showed that the skin from another lamb had been stretched over its body. The shepherd explained that this little one had been orphaned, and none of the ewes would adopt it. However, a day or two later a rattlesnake killed another young lamb. Its bereaved mother could not be consoled. She also stoutly rejected this orphaned animal when it was offered to her as a substitute. However, when they skinned her own dead lambkin and draped its wooly coat over the orphaned one, she immediately accepted it, because it smelled right to her. Dr. Ironside was much impressed, and said: "What a beautiful picture of substitutionary atonement. We too were once orphans — spiritual outcasts — without hope of Heaven. We were not acceptable to God because of our sin. However, the lovely Lamb of God took the sting of the 'old serpent' and died upon the cross for a lost world. Now by receiving Him through faith we are redeemed and made ready for Heaven because His righteousness has been applied to our account."

Sinner, have you been made acceptable to God "in the Beloved"?

\*God sees my Savior, and then He sees me  
"In the Beloved," accepted and free!  
— C. D. Martin

**God formed us, sin deformed us,  
but Christ alone can transform us!**

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**The Burned-Over Place** - Some early settlers were traveling together across the western prairies of the United States. One day

they were horrified to see a fire fanned by strong wind coming their way.

As the flames raced closer and closer, one man, to the amazement of the others, set fire to a large patch of grass downwind. The tinder-dry grass burned quickly and left behind a charred and barren area. Then he told them to move onto the burned-over place. They watched as the fire swept toward them until it reached the burned area—and then stopped! They were safe as the fire passed by them on both sides.

The fires of God's judgment will descend on a wicked world, but God has provided a burned-over place. At Calvary, the fire of God's justice was met by Jesus. He bore our sin there and fully paid for our transgressions. He made full satisfaction for our sins, and we who have taken our stand by faith in the finished work of Christ are safe in the burned-over place. There is nothing left to burn.

Jesus "bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed" (1Pe 2:24). Are you in the burned-over place?— by M. R. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The flames of God's judgment can never touch me,  
For Jesus has borne all God's wrath on the tree;  
I now stand secure in the burned-over place,  
A sinner, unworthy, yet saved by His grace!  
—Bosch

### **Jesus died in our place to provide a place of safety.**

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**The Adam Legacy** - Our new grandson Jackson had fine features, soft blemish-free skin, and ten tiny fingers and toes on two little hands and feet. How could any proud Grampa not see him as a "perfect" baby? He certainly was a miracle of divine formation (Psalm 139:13, 14).

The apostle Paul gave us a broader view of such "perfect" little infants when he wrote, "Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin...Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam" (Ro 5:12, 13, 14). In other words, every child is born with a tendency to sin. But that's not Paul's final word. He also wrote about Jesus, the "last Adam," who became a "life-giving spirit"(1Cor 15:45).

Long after man's first sin, a baby was born who was God incarnate (Jn 1:14). God made Christ, " who knew no sin to be sin for us" (2Corinthians 5:21). When we trust Jesus as our Savior, the Holy Spirit creates within us a new desire to do what is pleasing to God. The flesh still has its pull, but the pull of the Spirit is stronger.

In the "first Adam" we're all sinners. But let's concentrate on who we are in the "last Adam."

One with Adam are we all,  
One with Adam in his fall;  
But another Adam came—  
Fallen sinners to reclaim.  
—D. De Haan

### **If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away. —2 Corinthians 5:17**

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**Calvary's Deepest Pain** - After washing His disciples' feet and celebrating the Passover with them, Jesus led them into a familiar garden and "began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed" (Matthew 26:37). Going a bit farther with Peter, James, and John, He said, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me" (Mt 26:38).

Then, walking a short distance away, Jesus "fell on His face" before God, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Mt 26:39). He did this three times (Mt 26:44).

How do we account for such a surge of emotional turmoil? Only by understanding the "cup" that Jesus asked His Father to take from Him. He was about to bear "the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). That "cup" was filled with the sins of the whole world.

The agony of Gethsemane would culminate on the cross in His heart-wrenching cry: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46). Jesus' physical pain was nothing compared with Calvary's deepest pain—the awful reality of being abandoned by

His Father. God made Jesus “to be sin for us” (2Corinthians 5:21), so the Father had to turn away from Him.

Praise God for His great love for us! — by Herbert Vander Lugt [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

"Man of Sorrows," what a name  
For the Son of God who came  
Ruined sinners to reclaim!  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!  
—Bliss

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**Christ braved the shadow of eternal death  
to bring us the sunshine of eternal life.**

**Whipping Boy** - Throughout history, royal families have received special treatment. Often they were exempt from keeping the law or receiving punishment or even discipline. But the royal children still needed to know that when they misbehaved they deserved to be punished. When a prince or princess disobeyed or did poorly in schoolwork, the punishment was given to a “whipping boy” instead. There was no doubt who was really at fault, but it was simply unthinkable for a servant to spank a person of royalty.

The cross of Calvary gives a completely different view of dealing with wrongdoing. Although the servant is at fault, royalty receives the punishment. Jesus Christ, the Prince of Glory, took our place when He died on the cross. He voluntarily became our “whipping boy” and paid the penalty for our sins.

How much we owe to Jesus Christ! How could we ever forget that we have been bought with a price! That’s what kept Paul going when lesser men might have quit. He was confident that because we have a substitute, God is not angry with us. His Majesty’s justice has been satisfied. We are free to live and love as we never have before.

May that motivate us to tell others the good news! —H W Robinson [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When Jesus took our punishment,  
God’s wrath was satisfied;  
Now we can live at peace with Him  
Because for us Christ died.  
—Sper

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**Christ became a curse for us  
to remove the curse from us.**

**His Pain for Our Gain** - Every year I hear about people who have their hands and feet nailed to a cross for a brief time to imitate the crucifixion of Christ. These misguided souls may mean well, but their futile self-torture is only a tiny fraction of the Lord’s physical pain—and nothing of His deep spiritual agony.

After a night of humiliating abuse and vicious scourging, which was enough to kill some people, Jesus was wracked with horrendous pain during His 6 hours on the cross. But far worse was the agony in His soul. During the 3 hours of darkness, He endured the God-forsakenness of hell.

The prophet Isaiah declared the suffering Servant to be absolutely without fault, but said, “It pleased the Lord to bruise Him” and to “make His soul an offering for sin” (Isa. 53:10). The apostle Paul said that God made the sinless One “to be sin for us” (2 Cor. 5:21). Not until Jesus knew He had endured the full measure of God’s judgment against our sins did He say, “It is finished!” (Mt. 27:50; Jn. 19:30).

We can only faintly comprehend the mystery of what our Savior endured. But we trust Him and rejoice in the assurance that He paid the full penalty for all our sins. Christ’s deepest pain opened the door to our greatest joy.— by Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Lord was crucified for us;  
He gave His life so we would gain  
Eternal life and endless joy  
In heaven where there is no pain.

—Sper

**Christ endured the agony of the cross  
so we could enjoy the glory of heaven.**

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**True Faith** - Some things in life call for us to be absolutely accurate—to do exactly as the directions say. For instance, I can't fill out my tax returns any old way I want. I have to do exactly as the tax code requires, or I'll spend a lot of time explaining myself. Even in a land of liberty, we are bound to follow certain rules.

Adhering to the Bible as the guidebook in our spiritual life is even more vital. Some people may consider these matters to be peripheral and easily ignored, but we must get them right.

That's why it is distressing to learn that according to the Barna Research Group, 42 percent of Americans think Jesus committed sins. And even 25 percent of professing Christians say He was not sinless. Beyond that, 61 percent of Americans think there are other ways to salvation besides faith in Christ.

These are dangerous deviations from the truth. Our Guidebook, the Bible, is clear—Jesus Christ lived a perfect life, and His sacrificial death is the only way to establish a relationship with God.

We can't afford to make up our own rules. Only those who call "on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Ro 10:13). That's true faith. Any other way leads to eternal death.— by Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I dare not try some other way  
And do the best I can;  
There is no other way to God  
Than His eternal plan.  
—Hess

**To get into heaven,  
it's who you know that counts.**