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Fluff can sometimes be nice.

It's more comfortable to sit on a padded pew than a hard metal chair. Sleeping on a bed with a bit of fluff is more comfortable than sleeping on a hard concrete floor.

Fluff can soften hard edges and increase comfort.

And while there is nothing inherently wrong with a bit of comfort, it isn't always what's best. It can make you soft and complacent. It can easily become your overriding goal limiting your growth and usefulness.

And, it's interesting; Jesus never promised to make you comfortable.

- He promised to share your burdens if you come to Him and stay with Him ([Matthew 11:28-30](#)).
- He promised to provide for your needs if you will choose to put Him first in your life ([Matthew 6:33](#)).
- He promised to answer your prayers when you're seeking His glory and not your own ([John 14:12-14](#) & [15:7-8, 16](#)).
- He promised you trouble in this world, but that He has ultimately overcome the world ([John 16:33](#)).

But, He never promised comfortable here in this world.

Complete Commitment

I'm reading through the Gospels right now in my personal devotions. A couple weeks ago, I came across this passage that reached up and smacked me right between the eyes. It's found in [Luke 14](#).

Jesus said:

"If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else – your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters – yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple." ([Luke 14:25-27](#), NLT)

Of course we know that Jesus isn't saying we must hate people. He is saying He is the One we must be taking our cues and directions from. And while the image of carrying my cross is not especially pleasant, I understand it to mean I must die to myself and live for Jesus.

But, I must admit, this does sound a bit severe. Jesus goes on:

"But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!'" ([Luke 14:28-30](#), NLT)

What's He talking about here? How many of us have actually stopped to consider the cost of following Jesus? Then, after giving another example of the importance of counting the cost, Jesus said this:

"So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own." ([Luke 14:33](#), NLT)

Does He really mean this or is He just trying to get our attention? What if He's serious? What if this is really true?

Maybe it's just a translation fluke – let's check a couple others – how about the New King James:

"So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple." ([Luke 14:33](#), NKJV)

That was no help – outdated language, same message. How about this one:

"In the same way, therefore, every one of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple." ([Luke 14:33](#), CSB)

That one was just as strong. Maybe the Voice will soften it up a bit:

"In the same way, if you want to be My disciple, it will cost you everything. Don't underestimate that cost!" ([Luke 14:33](#), the Voice)

There is no way to misunderstand what Jesus is saying. He wants control of you and everything you have. When you give yourself to Him, He claims it all!

We need to wrestle with this a bit.

This is the hard question Jesus asks you and me:

“Are you willing to be completely Mine – down to the last penny?”

Compassionate, Unselfish Love

But, it’s not just our money and our stuff. The last night Jesus was with His disciples before His arrest and death He said:

“... Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” (John 13:34-35, NLT)

He didn’t offer this as a suggestion, a good idea, or as something He would like us to try. He stated it as a “New Commandment” wanting to be sure we understood *this is not optional*.

A little later that evening, He said:

“You didn’t choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. This is my command: Love each other.” (John 15:16-17, NLT)

Jesus went so far as to say this kind of compassionate, unselfish love is the identifying characteristic of His true followers!

This is a message Jesus reinforced several times during His ministry.

In the story of the *Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)*, we saw an example of *compassionate, unselfish love* in action. An illustration of what it means to *love your neighbor as you love yourself*.

In the story of the *Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31-46)*, we see the same thing.

Those who are lost were not evil. They simply failed to look beyond their own needs and interests to the needs of people around them. They were just too absorbed in themselves to get involved with others. *They simply failed to exhibit compassionate, unselfish love for others.*

Those who were saved were focused outward and saw the needs of others. They got involved in helping meet their needs. *Their lives expressed compassionate, unselfish love for others.*

And then in [Matthew 19](#) we find this sad story.

A young man watched Jesus bless the children and his heart was stirred. He came to Jesus wanting to be blessed by Him too. He asked what he needed to do to be saved.

Jesus told him to keep the commandments.

He asked which ones.

Jesus answered:

“You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. Honor your father and mother. Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Notice where Jesus landed – *Love your neighbor as yourself.*

“I’ve obeyed all these commandments,” the young man replied. “What else must I do?”

Jesus told him, “If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

Jesus asked this young man to provide an extreme action of compassionate, unselfish love that would free him from his selfish addiction to himself and his stuff.

But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.
([Matthew 19:18-22](#), NLT)

The young man discovered he loved himself and his stuff more than God and others.

Jesus asks for total control. It’s ultimately all or nothing. This takes us back to [Luke 14:33](#):

“So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own.” ([Luke 14:33](#), NLT)

After the man left, Jesus turned to His disciples and said:

“I tell you the truth, it is very hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. I’ll say it again – it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!” ([Matthew 19:23-24](#), NLT)

And most of us would agree with Him. Rich people tend to be self sufficient, they don’t feel like they need all that much. For the most part, they’re pretty tight with their money and their stuff.

Do you know that if you live in a home with heat and running water and have a car to drive, you’re in the top 20% of the richest people on earth.

You and I are the rich folk of this earth. We’re the ones who would rather not be looking at these passages today because we have a lot of stuff we don’t want to give up.

For the most part, we’re pretty comfortable and would prefer to stay that way.

But, we're not real useful to God when we're this comfortable. The truth is we need to take this message seriously. Reading on:

The disciples were astounded. "Then who in the world can be saved?" they asked.

Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible." (Matthew 19:25-26, NLT)

Jesus' question remains:

"Are you willing to be completely Mine?"

Here's what I see when I look into my life.

My first, honest answer is no. There's stuff I don't want to give up. There's things I don't want to do.

But when I look deeper, I know I want to be willing. In my head, I know it is the right thing. I know when it's done I won't regret it.

I even sense I'm moving that direction. I'm grateful God is still at work in my life.

So, here's what I'm praying.

"Lord, please make me willing to be willing to be completely Yours."

I'm claiming the promise found in [Ezekiel 36](#):

"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations." (Ezekiel 36:25-27, NLT)

I invite you to join me in this.

God's intervention is your only hope.

- It's the only way you can be saved.
- It's the only way you can share compassionate, unselfish love with others.
- It's the only way you will ever be able to release complete control of your life to Him.

Jesus is still asking:

"Are you willing to be completely Mine?"

Notes

Text you find in **this color** is a link to more information. It may take you to the Bible verse in context and/or in several different translations utilizing [BibleGateway.com](https://www.biblegateway.com). In some cases, it may take you to a website where there is additional information. And, it may take you to a PDF copy of previous sermons in this series.

Previous Messages in this Series (click on the title to download it)

- May 9, 2020 – *Dead or Alive?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- May 16, 2020 – *Symptom or Disease?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- May 30, 2020 – *Out or In?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- June 6, 2020 – *Starve or Eat?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- June 13, 2020 – *Atrophy or Exercise?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- June 20, 2020 – *Just Love?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- July 4, 2020 – *Am I a Hypocrite?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- July 11, 2020 – *Burn Out or Rest? – Part 1* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- July 18, 2020 – *Burn Out or Rest? – Part 2* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- Aug. 1, 2020 – *A Look Back* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- Aug. 15, 2020 – *Love Like Jesus!* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- Aug. 22, 2020 – *Distracted or Focused?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- Aug. 29, 2020 – *Mortal or Immortal?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- Sept. 5, 2020 – *Tortured or Destroyed?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- Sept. 12, 2020 – *Now or Later?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- Sept. 19, 2020 – *No or Yes? Part 1* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- Oct. 3, 2020 – *No or Yes? Part 2* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- Oct. 10, 2020 – *No or Yes? Part 3* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- Oct. 17, 2020 – *Judge or Judged?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- Oct. 24, 2020 – *Hated or Loved?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- Oct. 31, 2020 – *Lost or Saved?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)

Scripture References

Psalm 32 (NLT): *Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight!*

² *Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty!* ³ *When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long.* ⁴ *Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Interlude*

⁵ *Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the LORD." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.*

⁶ *Therefore, let all the godly pray to you while there is still time, that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment.* ⁷ *For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory.*

⁸ *The LORD says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you."* ⁹ *Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control."*

¹⁰ *Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the LORD.* ¹¹ *So rejoice in the LORD and be glad, all you who obey him! Shout for joy, all you whose hearts are pure!* (**Psalm 32**, NLT)

Proverbs 3:5-12 (NIV): *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;*

⁶ *in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

⁷ *Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.* ⁸ *This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.*

⁹ *Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops;* ¹⁰ *then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.*

¹¹ *My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline, and do not resent his rebuke,* ¹² *because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.* (**Proverbs 3:5-12**, NIV)

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NLT): *"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.* ³² *It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.*

³³ *"This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.* ³⁴ *No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."* (**Jeremiah 31:31-34**, NIV)

Ezekiel 36:25-27 (NLT): *“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.” (Ezekiel 36:25-27, NLT)*

Matthew 5:19-34 (NLT): *“Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.*

²² “Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. ²³ But when your eye is unhealthy, your whole body is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.

²⁵ “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life – whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? ²⁷ Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?

²⁸ “And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, ²⁹ yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. ³⁰ And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

³¹ “So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ ³² These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. ³³ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

³⁴ “So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today. (Matthew 6:19-34, NLT)

Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT): *Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30, NLT)*

Matthew 19:16-30 (NLT): *Someone came to Jesus with this question: “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?”*

¹⁷ “Why ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. But to answer your question – If you want to receive eternal life, keep the commandments.”

¹⁸ “Which ones?” the man asked.

And Jesus replied: “You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. ¹⁹ Honor your father and mother. Love your neighbor as yourself.”

²⁰ “I’ve obeyed all these commandments,” the young man replied. “What else must I do?”

²¹ Jesus told him, “If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

²² But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

²³ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “I tell you the truth, it is very hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. ²⁴ I’ll say it again – it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!”

²⁵ The disciples were astounded. “Then who in the world can be saved?” they asked.

²⁶ Jesus looked at them intently and said, “Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible.”

²⁷ Then Peter said to him, “We’ve given up everything to follow you. What will we get?”

²⁸ Jesus replied, “I assure you that when the world is made new and the Son of Man sits upon his glorious throne, you who have been my followers will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or property, for my sake, will receive a hundred times as much in return and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰ But many who are the greatest now will be least important then, and those who seem least important now will be the greatest then. ([Matthew 19:16-30](#), NLT – see also [Mark 10:17-31](#) & [Luke 18:18-30](#))

Matthew 25:31-46 (NLT): “But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left.

³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. ³⁶ I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’

³⁷ “Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? ³⁹ When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

⁴⁰ “And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’

⁴¹ “Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons. ⁴² For I was hungry, and you didn’t feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn’t give me a drink. ⁴³ I was a stranger, and you didn’t invite me into your home. I was naked, and you didn’t give me clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn’t visit me.’

⁴⁴ “Then they will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?’

⁴⁵ “And he will answer, ‘I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.’

⁴⁶ “And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.”
([Matthew 25:31-46](#), NLT)

Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT): Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” ([Matthew 28:18-20](#), NLT)

Mark 12:28-34 (NLT): One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

²⁹ Jesus replied, “The most important commandment is this: ‘Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. ³⁰ And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ ([Deut. 6:5](#)) ³¹ The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ([Lev. 19:18](#)) No other commandment is greater than these.”

³² The teacher of religious law replied, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth by saying that there is only one God and no other. ³³ And I know it is important to love him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law.”

³⁴ Realizing how much the man understood, Jesus said to him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.” And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions. ([Mark 12:28-34](#), NLT)

Luke 10:25-37 (NLT): One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: “Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?”

²⁶ Jesus replied, “What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?”

²⁷ The man answered, “You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.” (Deut. 6:5) And, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Lev. 19:18)

²⁸ “Right!” Jesus told him. “Do this and you will live!”

²⁹ The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

³⁰ Jesus replied with a story: “A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.

³¹ “By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. ³² A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

³³ “Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. ³⁴ Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, ‘Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I’ll pay you the next time I’m here.’

³⁶ “Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked.

³⁷ The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy.”

Then Jesus said, “Yes, now go and do the same.” (Luke 10:25-37, NLT)

Luke 13:6-9 (NLT): Then Jesus told this story: “A man planted a fig tree in his garden and came again and again to see if there was any fruit on it, but he was always disappointed. ⁷ Finally, he said to his gardener, ‘I’ve waited three years, and there hasn’t been a single fig! Cut it down. It’s just taking up space in the garden.’

⁸ “The gardener answered, ‘Sir, give it one more chance. Leave it another year, and I’ll give it special attention and plenty of fertilizer. ⁹ If we get figs next year, fine. If not, then you can cut it down.’” (Luke 13:6-9, NLT)

Luke 14:25-33 (NLT): A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, ²⁶ “If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else – your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters – yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.

²⁸ “But don’t begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? ²⁹ Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. ³⁰ They would say, ‘There’s the person who started that building and couldn’t afford to finish it!’

³¹ “Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000 could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him? ³² And if he can’t, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away. ³³ So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own.” (Luke 14:25-33, NLT)

Luke 14:33 (NKJV): “So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.” (Luke 14:33, NKJV)

Luke 14:33 (the Message): “Simply put, if you’re not willing to take what is dearest to you, whether plans or people, and kiss it good-bye, you can’t be my disciple.” (Luke 14:33, the Message)

Luke 14:33 (the Voice): “In the same way, if you want to be My disciple, it will cost you everything. Don’t underestimate that cost!” (Luke 14:33, the Voice)

John 1:1-14 (NLT): In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He existed in the beginning with God. ³ God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. ⁴ The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

⁶ God sent a man, John the Baptist, ⁷ to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. ⁸ John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. ⁹ The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He came into the very world he created, but the world didn’t recognize him. ¹¹ He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. ¹² But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³ They are reborn – not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

¹⁴ So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.

(John 1:1-14, NLT)

John 13:33-35 (NLT): Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can’t come where I am going. ³⁴ So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. ³⁵ Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

(John 13:33-35, NLT)

John 14:1-20 “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. ² There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³ When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going.”

⁵ “No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. ⁸ From now on, you do know him and have seen him!”

⁸ Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”

⁹ Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? ¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. ¹¹ Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

¹² “I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. ¹³ You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴ Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!

¹⁵ “If you love me, obey my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷ He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. ¹⁸ No, I will not abandon you as orphans – I will come to you. ¹⁹ Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. ²⁰ When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.” (John 14:1-20, NLT)

John 15:1-17 (NLT): “I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn’t produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. ³ You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

⁵ “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. ⁷ But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! ⁸ When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

⁹ “I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. ¹⁰ When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will

overflow!¹² This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you.¹³ There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command.¹⁵ I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.¹⁶ You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name.¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other."
(John 15:1-17, NLT)

John 16:19-33 (NLT): Jesus realized they wanted to ask him about it, so he said, "Are you asking yourselves what I meant? I said in a little while you won't see me, but a little while after that you will see me again.²⁰ I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy.²¹ It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world.²² So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy.²³ At that time you won't need to ask me for anything. I tell you the truth, you will ask the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use my name.²⁴ You haven't done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy.

²⁵ "I have spoken of these matters in figures of speech, but soon I will stop speaking figuratively and will tell you plainly all about the Father.²⁶ Then you will ask in my name. I'm not saying I will ask the Father on your behalf,²⁷ for the Father himself loves you dearly because you love me and believe that I came from God.²⁸ Yes, I came from the Father into the world, and now I will leave the world and return to the Father."

²⁹ Then his disciples said, "At last you are speaking plainly and not figuratively.³⁰ Now we understand that you know everything, and there's no need to question you. From this we believe that you came from God."

³¹ Jesus asked, "Do you finally believe?³² But the time is coming – indeed it's here now – when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me.³³ I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."
(John 16:19-33, NLT)

John 20:11-18 (NLT): Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in.¹² She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying.¹³ "Dear woman, why are you crying?" the angels asked her.

"Because they have taken away my Lord," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him."

¹⁴ She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. ¹⁵ "Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?"

She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."

¹⁶ "Mary!" Jesus said.

She turned to him and cried out, "Rabboni!" (which is Hebrew for "Teacher").

¹⁷ "Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message. ([John 20:11-18](#), NLT)

Romans 7:21-25 (NLT): *I have discovered this principle of life – that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. ²² I love God's law with all my heart. ²³ But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. ²⁴ Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? ²⁵ Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.*
([Romans 7:21-25](#), NLT)

Romans 8:1-17 (NLT): *So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. ² And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. ³ The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. ⁴ He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.*
⁵ Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. ⁶ So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. ⁷ For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. ⁸ That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.
⁹ But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) ¹⁰ And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. ¹¹ The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

¹² Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. ¹³ For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

¹⁵ So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. ¹⁷ And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering. ([Romans 8:1-17](#), NLT)

Galatians 5:16-26 (NLT): So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. ¹⁷ The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. ¹⁸ But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

¹⁹ When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. ²⁵ Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another. ([Galatians 5:16-26](#), NLT)

Ephesians 2:1-10 (NLT): Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. ² You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil – the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ³ All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.

⁴ But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ⁵ that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) ⁶ For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. ⁷ So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (**Ephesians 2:1-10**, NLT)

Philippians 2:1-18 (NLT): *Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate?* ² Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.

³ Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

⁵ You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

⁶ Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to.

⁷ Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹² Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. ¹³ For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

¹⁴ Do everything without complaining and arguing, ¹⁵ so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. ¹⁶ Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ's return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless. ¹⁷ But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy. ¹⁸ Yes, you should rejoice, and I will share your joy.

(**Philippians 2:1-18**, NLT)

1 Timothy 1:12-17 (NLT): *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength to do his work. He considered me trustworthy and appointed me to serve him, ¹³ even though I used to blaspheme the name of Christ. In my insolence, I persecuted his people. But God had mercy on me because I did it in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴ Oh, how generous and gracious our Lord was! He filled me with the faith and love that come from Christ Jesus.*

¹⁵ This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” – and I am the worst of them all. ¹⁶ But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life. ¹⁷ All honor and glory to God forever and ever! He is the eternal King, the unseen one who never dies; he alone is God.

(1 Timothy 1:12-17, NLT)

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NLT): Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. ² We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God’s throne. (Hebrews 12:1-2, NLT)

Hebrews 13:5-6 (NLT): Don’t love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, “I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.” (Gen. 28:15, Deut. 31:26, Josh. 1:5)

⁶ So we can say with confidence, “The LORD is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?” (Ps. 27:1, Ps. 118:6) (Hebrews 13:5-6, NLT)

2 Peter 1:3-7 (NLT): By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. ⁴ And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world’s corruption caused by human desires.

⁵ In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God’s promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. (2 Peter 1:3-7, NLT)

1 John 3 (NIV): See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

⁴ Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. ⁵ But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. ⁶ No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

⁷ Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. ⁸ The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. ⁹ No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. ¹⁰ This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

¹¹ For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. ¹² Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. ¹³ Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?

¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

¹⁹ This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: ²⁰ If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴ *The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.*

(1 John 3, NIV)

1 John 4:7-21 (NIV): Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

¹³ This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. ¹⁷ This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. ²¹ And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. (1 John 4:7-21, NIV)

1 John 5:11-13 (NLT): *And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.

¹³ I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life. (1 John 5:11-13, NLT)

Revelation 3:14-22 (NLT): *“Write this letter to the angel of the church in Laodicea. This is the message from the one who is the Amen – the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s new creation:*

¹⁵ “I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! ¹⁶ But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth! ¹⁷ You say, ‘I am rich. I have everything I want. I don’t need a thing!’ And you don’t realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. ¹⁸ So I advise you to buy gold from me – gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. Also buy white garments from me so you will not be shamed by your nakedness, and ointment for your eyes so you will be able to see. ¹⁹ I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference.

²⁰ “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends. ²¹ Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne.

²² “Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches.” (Revelation 3:14-22, NLT)

Revelation 21:1-4 (NLT): *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.*

³ I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.” (Revelation 21:1-4, NLT)

E.G. White References

Desire of Ages, pages 416-417: *Jesus now explained to His disciples that His own life of self-abnegation was an example of what theirs should be. Calling about Him, with the disciples, the people who had been lingering near, He said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." The cross was associated with the power of Rome. It was the instrument of the most cruel and humiliating form of death. The lowest criminals were required to bear the cross to the place of execution; and often as it was about to be laid upon their shoulders, they resisted with desperate violence, until they were overpowered, and the instrument of torture was bound upon them. But Jesus bade His followers take up the cross and bear it after Him. To the disciples His words, though dimly comprehended, pointed to their submission to the most bitter humiliation – submission even unto death for the sake of Christ. No more complete self-surrender could the Saviour's words have pictured. But all this He had accepted for them. Jesus did not count heaven a place to be desired while we were lost. He left the heavenly courts for a life of reproach and insult, and a death of shame. He who was rich in heaven's priceless treasure, became poor, that through His poverty we might be rich. We are to follow in the path He trod.*

Love for souls for whom Christ died means crucifixion of self. He who is a child of God should henceforth look upon himself as a link in the chain let down to save the world, one with Christ in His plan of mercy, going forth with Him to seek and save the lost. The Christian is ever to realize that he has consecrated himself to God, and that in character he is to reveal Christ to the world. The self-sacrifice, the sympathy, the love, manifested in the life of Christ are to reappear in the life of the worker for God.

"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." Selfishness is death. No organ of the body could live should it confine its service to itself. The heart, failing to send its lifeblood to the hand and the head, would quickly lose its power. As our lifeblood, so is the love of Christ diffused through every part of His mystical body. We are members one of another, and the soul that refuses to impart will perish. And "what is a man profited," said Jesus, "if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Desire of Ages, pages 416-417)

Steps to Christ, pages 62-63: *The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been – just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents – perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized.*

It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have

no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.

More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20. So Jesus said to His disciples, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Matthew 10:20. Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works – works of righteousness, obedience.

So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us. (Steps to Christ, pages 62-63)

Other Resources

The Case for Christ – Daily Moment of Truth, page 118: *British church leader Galvin Reid tells about meeting a young man who is a great example of this. The young man had fallen down a flight of stairs as a baby and shattered his back. He had been in and out of hospitals his whole life – and yet he made the astounding comment that he thinks God is fair. Reid asked him, "How old are you?" The boy said, "Seventeen." Reid asked, "How many years have you spent in hospitals?" The boy said, "Thirteen years." The pastor said with astonishment, "And you think that is fair?" The boy replied with buoyant enthusiasm: "Well, God has all eternity to make it up to me."*

The Case for Christ – Daily Moment of Truth by Lee Strobel & Mark Mittelberg, Zondervan, page 118. To purchase as a paper copy, [click here](#); for Apple products, [click here](#); for a Kindle Reader, [click here](#); or for a Nook Book, [click here](#).