

Grace Bible Church
Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
The Tree of Life from the week ending 10/25/09
The will of God that most believers resist.
Knowing no man after the flesh. Part 2.

We have been noting our third vital subject concerning the will of God which most believers choose to resist and that is refusal to respond to the principle of: Knowing no man after the flesh.

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 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. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
(2Co 5:14-21)

Here is the principle of ambassadorship, and no one can truly be an ambassador for Christ unless they are confident of who and what they are as royal ambassadors. In 2Co 5:16 we read, **therefore from now on**, notice the word “therefore” because it is a reference to verses 14-15. Because the love of Christ controls us (verse 14), because we have come to a conclusion, having concluded this, 2Co 5:14....**that one died for all**, and because all members of the human race are considered to be born in spiritual death, **therefore all died**; Next, because 2Co 5:15 says **He died for all** (the doctrine of the unlimited atonement); therefore, **they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf**. So, in 2Co 5:16, **from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh** or according to human viewpoint of our own soul, or the thought pattern of our old sin nature.

Recognizing or knowing no man after the flesh means on the basis of the former standards of our fleshly human viewpoint. This is when we were proud, arrogant, insecure, feeling threatened, secretly jealous of others because of our own insecurity. Paul says, **from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh**; or according to our flesh. As verse 17 says, **therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.**

In 2Co 5:17 the apostle Paul tells us that the moment we personally believed in the Lord Jesus Christ there was a tremendous amount of work accomplished by God the Holy Spirit thorough the grace of God. This ministry is called the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. This is the beginning of having the opportunity to do what the AMP translation of Eph 4:22 says:

Strip yourselves of your former nature [put off and discard your old unrenewed self] **which characterized your previous manner of life and becomes corrupt through lusts and desires that spring from delusion; (Eph 4:22).**

This is what it means to be regenerated in Eph 4:23, **And be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind** [having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude], Notice it is having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude, because that is exactly what happens when you recognize or know no one after the flesh, including yourself. **And put on the new nature (the regenerate self) created in God's image, [God-like] in true righteousness and holiness** (Eph 4:24).

Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. (2Co 5:17)

This means that when you don't recognize or know yourself after your own flesh you believe that you are a member of the Royal Family of God. One of the most important, unique and freeing principles we learned under the principle of recognizing or knowing no one after the flesh.

If you are going to think with divine viewpoint rather than human viewpoint and recognize or know no one after the flesh you will have the attitude of the mind of Christ toward God, toward yourself and toward others. This type of thinking will constantly be a challenge to you.

The first question you need to answer is **“What is your attitude toward yourself?”**

Is it 1Co 15:10, **By the grace of God I am what I am.** Or is it self-condemnation as we are warned against in Rom 8:1; 1Jo 3:20. We are warned against this principle of self-condemnation in 1Jo 3:19, **We shall know by this that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before Him,** This is the only way we'll know we're living in God's reality. God is greater than our arrogant and guilty hearts and knows more about us than we do ourselves. 1Jo 3:21, **Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;** Once self-condemnation is dealt with and taken care of and we're no longer accusing or condemning ourselves, we are bold and free before God! 1Jo 3:22, **and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.**

We are able to pray and receive what we asked for because we're doing what He said, doing what pleases Him. 1Jo 3:23-24, **And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.**

A person plagued with guilt ends up experiencing such feelings and thoughts as:

1. Nervousness.
2. Depression.
3. Defensiveness.
4. Suspicion of others.
5. Sleeplessness, insomnia.
6. Fear, panic attacks.
7. Escapism, flight.
8. Insecurity.
9. Judgmentalism.
10. Lack of concentration.
11. Shallow friendships.
12. Blame others.
13. Self-condemnation.
14. Addictions, self-destructive behavior.
15. Works and performance.

Many of God's people never receive deliverance from guilt. A lot of times we bring certain matters we feel responsible for before the Lord. However, if we live and believe the word of God, it will constantly reveal that we are not responsible for the actions of another individual. There are two types of guilt: genuine guilt and false or imaginary guilt. Genuine guilt arises after a real violation of one's moral beliefs. As Christians it arises after a real violation of God's biblical tenets and principles. Imaginary guilt on the other hand, arises from imaginary or unreal violations of one's moral beliefs. The individual actually feels guilty without committing any violation. This type of

guilt is considered among categories of mental illness and is also classified as an anxiety disorder. From our Christian perspective they are aspects of a wounded spirit. Many people like to blame others for their wounds and there's a tendency for God's people to feel a sense of responsibility, a responsibility that has no foundation. It is rare to come across mature believers who suffer from imaginary guilt. The next time someone tries to blame you for the fact that they are losers and it's your fault for wounding them or mistreating them, remember the words of the prophet Jeremiah:

“For I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy,” (Jer 30:14)

The results of not recognizing or knowing yourself according to the flesh is manifested by an entirely new and different attitude toward yourself. This will produce an entirely new and different attitude toward God, the plan, purpose and policy of God as well as an entirely new and different attitude toward others. Understanding this principle in detail will give you the power to completely change your capacity for love toward yourself, toward God and toward others. As this understanding and perception develops, you will learn to live in your brand new nature, no longer looking at the members of the human race, including yourself, the way you use to.

One of the divine viewpoint principles that we noted from the original language which is life changing is found in 2Co 5:14, **for the love of Christ controls us**, the key is the Greek phrase, hee (the) agapee (love) tou (of) Christou (Christ) translated **the love of Christ**. However, **“of Christ”** is the genitive case of Christos, and means the **love that belongs to Christ**. Jesus Christ went to the Cross to demonstrate His love. The love belonging to Christ was the manifestation of grace in His soul based upon Bible doctrine. This type of love is something that can be duplicated in us even though we possess an old sin nature.

Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. (Rom 8:34).

If you are going to be properly motivated you must be properly motivated from doctrine in the mentality of the soul. There must be the same grace that you have toward yourself, toward others. No grace toward yourself means no grace toward others. No love toward yourself means no love toward others. No forgiveness toward yourself means no forgiveness toward others.

The trouble with most believers is that what they are and how we live are contradictory. In Rom 6:4, we are told to walk in the newness of life: **therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life**. We are to realize what we are. We are new creatures and are therefore to live accordingly. Remind yourself of who you are: a new creature in Christ; a child of a King; a member of the RF of God; an heir to the throne; an ambassador for Christ; a believer-priest; a lord and king. Be who you are! Be what you are! However, make sure you understand and realize that there must be no contradiction between who you are and what you are doing. Be who and what you are.

So we have seen:

Love of Christ = motivation

Divine viewpoint = conclusion

One died for all = substitutionary spiritual death

All died = born in spiritual death

He died for all - unlimited atonement

Result - execution of the spiritual life.

If you are ever going to think with divine viewpoint rather than human viewpoint and recognize or know no one after your own flesh or their flesh, then: You will have the attitude or the mind of Christ toward God, toward yourself and toward others. As Phi 2:5 says, **Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus**.

So, what is your attitude toward yourself? Is it 1Co 15:10, **By the grace of God I am what I am**. Or is it self-

condemnation as we are warned against in Rom 8:1; 1Jo 3:20. If it is 1Co 15:10 then 2Co 5:17 will be an accepted fact, you will believe that **you are a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.** If not, then self-condemnation and guilt will result.

One of the most important principles of fulfilling 2Co 5:16-17, is the principle of overcoming a guilty conscience and self-condemnation. As new creatures in Christ we are to think with the divine viewpoint of; Eph 4:32, **And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.** As new creatures in Christ we are to think with the divine viewpoint of Col 3:13, **bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.**

The Bible doesn't have much to say about forgiving yourself but it does imply that we all need to believe that we have been forgiven by God. However, with this principle of the grace and mercy of God toward ourselves, it requires forgiveness and the responsibility we have toward others.

“Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.” (Mat 6:11-15)

Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times? " Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. And when he had begun to settle {them,} there was brought to him one who owed him ten thousand talents. or \$100,000. But since he did not have {the means} to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. (Really, He couldn't pay up, so the king ordered the man, along with his wife, children, and goods, to be auctioned off at the slave market.) The slave therefore falling down, prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will repay you everything.' And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii and he seized him and {began} to choke {him,} saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' So his fellow slave fell down and {began} to entreat him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' "He was unwilling however, but went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you?' "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart." (Mat 18:21-35)

So, the principle of forgiveness is very vital in understanding the personal application of recognizing or knowing no one after the flesh, and the fact that: If any one is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. One of the best examples of the need to forgive yourself is recorded in the Book of Hosea. God told the prophet Hosea to marry a woman named Gomer, who God knew would be unfaithful to Hosea. Even though Hosea loved Gomer, she continued to be unfaithful and hurt him deeply. The Book of Hosea focuses on God's and Hosea's frustration in having an unfaithful wife when neither did anything to deserve the unfaithfulness. God's wife was the nation of Israel. Hosea's wife was Gomer. And neither one of them did anything to deserve the unfaithfulness.

The Bible implies, but does not explicitly state, that the issue is not God's inability to forgive but His people's inability to forgive themselves for their own unfaithfulness that is the problem. You cannot receive love until you first learn to love and forgive yourself. For example, once Gomer succeeds in forgiving herself, she frees herself to experience Hosea's love and to be faithful to him. The Bible indicates that experiencing forgiveness is transforming and causes us to love more deeply.

“For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.” (Luk 7:47)

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Forgiving yourself can be a deep form of spiritual healing. The apostle Paul said to the Corinthians in 2Co 2:7, concerning the man who was sleeping with his stepmother: 2Co 2:6 says, **Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority.** This means they had excommunicated him from the local assembly. The apostle Paul goes on to say, 2Co 2:7, **so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, lest somehow such a one be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.** We can apply this to how we feel about ourselves. Until we forgive ourselves, we will focus upon our sorrow, regret and shame. By forgiving ourselves, we free ourselves to love and receive God's love. We also free ourselves to receive the love of others.

So again, because the love of Christ controls or motivates us, and because we have come to a divine viewpoint conclusion, having concluded this, that one died for all, the substitutionary spiritual death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because all members of the human race are considered to be born in spiritual death (2Co 5:14), therefore all died; the result is that in 2Co 5:15, and He died for all, the doctrine of the unlimited atonement; therefore, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Because that is why the Lord Jesus Christ came. As new creatures in Christ we think with the divine viewpoint of Heb 4:16 **Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.** As new creatures in Christ we think with the divine viewpoint of Phi 1:6 **For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.**

So notice again the principle, it all begins by your answer to the question: What is your attitude toward yourself? If it is 1Co 15:10, **By the grace of God I am what I am,** then 2Co 5:17 will be an accepted fact, you will believe that you **are a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.** If not then self-condemnation and guilt will result. One of the most important principles of fulfilling 2Co 5:16 is the principle of overcoming guilt, a guilty conscience and self-condemnation.