



Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

DECEMBER 2018

Restoring my Soul

A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

DECEMBER 2018

RESTORING MY SOUL

A Five Day Devotional Guide

December 2018

Contributing Authors

Victor Hall

Peter Hay

David Baker

Compiled by

David Baker

Contents

Monday	3 December	Examples of faith.....	2
Tuesday	4 December	The rest of faith.....	3
Wednesday	5 December	Paul’s testimony.....	4
Thursday	6 December	A righteousness from the Law.....	5
Friday	7 December	Paul’s repentance.....	6
Monday	10 December	A revelation of the mystery.....	7
Tuesday	11 December	A joyful realisation.....	8
Wednesday	12 December	Counting all things as loss.....	9
Thursday	13 December	The warning of Malachi.....	10
Friday	14 December	The goal of the Christian life.....	11
Monday	17 December	The deeds of darkness.....	12
Tuesday	18 December	No condemnation in Christ Jesus.....	13
Wednesday	19 December	Only one judgement.....	14
Thursday	20 December	Self-righteous love.....	15
Friday	21 December	Self-worth.....	16
Monday	24 December	The capacity to love ourselves.....	17
Tuesday	25 December	The conviction of the Holy Spirit.....	18
Wednesday	26 December	Chastened for our peace.....	19
Thursday	27 December	By His stripes we are healed.....	20
Friday	28 December	The renewing of our mind.....	21

Examples of faith

In the book of Romans, we are encouraged by the apostle Paul to give attention to the lessons learned by Abraham and King David. **Rom 4**. Their lives, and the faith that they found as God made Himself known to them, were recorded as examples of how God, in love, deals with mankind. Abraham and David were part of a whole 'cloud of witnesses' who all lived by faith, and from whom we can receive instruction regarding the way of righteousness. **Heb 12:1**.

In this regard, we observe that Abel, the son of Adam, found faith-righteousness by being joined in one Spirit with God through the fellowship of offering. **Heb 11:4**. In contrast, we learn, through the example of Cain, that any religious exercise that does not spring from a faith that we receive when God's word is spoken to us, results in enmity and hatred. **1Jn 3:12**. This fruit brings us under the judgement of God. **Gen 4:6 12**.

We recall that mother Eve 'drew a line' on Cain and his culture in the seventh generation from Adam. From her, we learn the lesson of sanctification, which is necessary for the establishment of godly homes. In the days of Lamech, Eve said that God had appointed her another offspring, or seed, to replace Abel in the genealogy of the sons of God. **Gen 4:25**. Her faith was righteousness, because it was birthed from the word of God that had been proclaimed to the serpent, Satan. God had said that her seed would crush Satan's head, and all that he stood for. **Gen 3:15**.

Adam lived for 930 years after he fell into sin. **Gen 5:5**. He received and obeyed the word that the Lord spoke to him, which was that the ground would be cursed for his sake. **Gen 3:17**. Frustration and futility became his lot, as a chastening that would bring him to faith-righteousness. He learned that man cannot, through his own efforts, live to fulfil the mandate that has been given to him for his life.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: ROMANS 4

The rest of faith

During his lifetime of toil, Adam was humbled, and came to accept that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. **Deu 8:3. Mat 4:4.** In the days after the death of Adam, Lamech, the ninth son from Adam in the genealogy of the sons of God, prophesied that his son, Noah, would give the sons of God rest from the 'work and the toil of their hands', which was a consequence of the Lord's cursing of the ground. **Gen 5:29.** Noah walked with God and was blameless. He feared God and found favour in the eyes of the Lord. **Gen 6:8 9.** In obedience to God's word, Noah built an ark, and became an heir of the righteousness that is according to faith. **Heb 11:7.**

The ark, which typified the body of Christ, became a place of refuge for Noah and his family when God, in judgement, 'baptised' the world with a flood. For us, baptism is an antitype of the flood. **1Pe 3:21.** The death of Christ was a baptism of judgement that fell upon Him because of our sins, and also for our sake. By joining Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, the body of Christ becomes a refuge for us in the same way that the ark, for Noah, was a refuge and a way of escape from the waters of judgement.

Through the ark, Noah received, in type, resurrection life. The ark brought him above the flood. After the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat, Noah was then able to establish a new order for the sons of God. This order was given to Abraham so that sons of God would be all those who received, and lived by, Abraham's faith. **Gal 3:7.** This is why we are told in Scripture to consider what Abraham found, and what we are finding as his sons.

Paul's testimony

Throughout his letters, Paul reflected on what he had found on his journey in Christ, and with Christ, as a son of Abraham. First, he found that God the Father had called him, and separated him from his mother's womb, to be a messenger. **Gal 1:15**. The Father made it known to Paul that He was going to reveal His Son in him. **Gal 1:16**. Paul then received the mystery of the gospel, which he was to proclaim to the Gentiles. Once Paul began his ministry, he found that his hearers glorified God in him as they received his message. **Gal 1:24**.

Even though he had found all these things, Paul testified that he had not yet been made perfect in relation to the righteousness of faith. He wrote, 'Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.' **Php 3:12**. This is an extraordinary statement. It serves as an exhortation to every believer to continue walking on the pathway upon which we are delivered from self-righteousness and are made perfect in relation to the righteousness of faith which comes from God, in Christ.

Indeed, Paul encouraged us in this way, writing, 'Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.' **Php 3:13 14**. We are urged by Paul to join the fellowship of this journey. As we follow the example of Paul, we will mature in the faith-righteousness that comes from God. This journey is on the pathway of offering that Christ pioneered for us.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: GALATIANS 1

A righteousness from the Law

Prior to his conversion, Paul pursued a righteousness that was based on the Law. He even testified that, in relation to the Law, he was blameless! **Php 3:6**. No doubt, in his zeal for God, and for the covenant that God had made with the children of Israel, Paul asked God to help him to be righteous according to the Law. However, later, as he reflected back on his life, Paul described this pursuit as 'having a righteousness of my own *derived* from the Law'. **Php 3:9**. This is a notable statement. Paul came to realise that he had used God's Law to define his own standard of 'good'. For this reason, his works were not revealing God's righteousness; they were revealing his own righteousness. **Mat 23:27-28**.

Paul read the Scriptures from this self-righteous position. This meant that he interpreted the Scriptures according to his personal view of righteousness. He believed that his view was right, because it accorded with the understanding that the Jews were God's chosen people. **Deu 14:2**. Their corporate view of law-keeping, in the context of the temple, its priesthood, and its ordinances, was considered to be God's will for them, and this was 'right and good'. Everything that came against this position, then, was 'wrong and evil'.

For this reason, Paul considered Christianity to be an evil that challenged what he viewed to be true and righteous. In his mind, Christianity undermined the Jewish nation and its religious culture. Paul regarded the Christian gospel to be contrary to God's will and, therefore, evil. He understood that for good to be good, it must stamp out this evil. To this end, he considered his persecution of the church to be a demonstration of his zeal for God and for God's covenant people. **Php 3:6**.

Paul's repentance

In his self-righteous zeal, motivated by the other law within him, Paul ravaged the church, entering house after house, dragging Christian men and women from their homes and putting them into prison. **Act 8:3**. However, the unwillingness of these people to conform to Paul's religious expectations, and the peace of God that they demonstrated in the midst of their suffering, seemed only to provoke Paul. He became increasingly agitated and unstable, breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord. **Act 9:1 2**.

As Paul experienced the effects of the other law within him, which brought him under the power of sin, with all of its murderous desires, he would not have considered himself to be in a wretched state. Rather, he would have justified his attitudes and actions as being the fruit of righteous anger.

On the road to Damascus, the Lord revealed Himself to Paul. He said that through Paul's zealous and self-righteous persecution of the members of the body of Christ, the Lord Himself was being persecuted. **Act 9:3-5**. Amazingly, this is how the word of the cross of Christ was being ministered to Paul for the purpose of his salvation. The cross of Christ, manifest by those who were suffering as members of His body, was the 'goad' against which Paul was kicking. **Act 9:5**. Kicking against this goad was causing his emotional and psychological distress.

We know that Paul found repentance following his encounter with Jesus Christ. As a result, he was born from above of the life of God, baptised into Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit. **Act 9:17 18**. He also received a word from Ananias, who was a messenger of Christ. Ananias declared that God had appointed Paul to know His will, and to see the Righteous One. By this, he meant that Paul would meet and know Christ, personally, and would speak His word as a witness to all men. **Act 22:14 15**. As Christ's witness in the world, Paul would suffer many things. **Act 9:15 16**.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: ACTS 9

A revelation of the mystery

In the early stages of his Christian walk, as one who was young in the Lord, Paul would have felt wretched as he struggled with the issues provoked by his own righteousness, which he defined as another law that was part of his identity. **Rom 7:23**. He found that he had no ability, through the exercise of self-righteousness, to overcome the power of sin within himself. We note this in Paul's testimony: 'For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practising what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.' **Rom 7:15**.

However, it would appear that, during this time, Paul received a revelation of the mystery of Christ. **Eph 3:2-4**. With this illumination, Paul realised that he did not have to attain to the righteousness of God through his own efforts to obey God's word. God's righteousness would be given to him as a gift, when he believed and, by faith, participated in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. **Rom 5:17. 2Co 4:13-14. Php 3:10-11**. By this means, Christ's life would become his life, and he would become the righteousness of God in Christ. **Gal 2:20. 2Co 5:21**.

Having been illuminated regarding the righteousness of God that comes by faith, Paul rejected the self-righteous mode of his former life, with its violent ministry, and counted it all as 'vile refuse'. **Php 3:8**. He viewed it as being unacceptable, and that it was not to be part of his offering. It needed to be burned, as it were, outside the camp, in the manner of the unacceptable parts of Israel's offerings. **Lev 4:11-12**. The 'refuse' of our self-righteousness is dealt with in the fellowship of Christ's offering, as we receive our sufferings as a participation in the reproaches that fell on Christ. **Heb 13:13**.

A joyful realisation

Although Paul had already been converted, baptised, and filled with the Holy Spirit, he began to understand what it means to walk after the Spirit. He said that those who do not walk after the Spirit, in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, will revert to walking after the flesh. They will follow the dictates of God's Law, through self-righteous initiative. **Gal 3:2 5**. Those who endeavour to keep the Law through the efforts of the flesh have not yet understood that self-righteous activity, as a mode for achieving God's righteousness, does not work. In fact, if they continue in this way of religious living, they make themselves enemies of God. **Rom 8:7 8**.

The statement of Paul – 'Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?' – communicates his *joyful* realisation that self-righteousness does not work. **Rom 7:24**. This was a point of relief and thanksgiving for Paul, because it was accompanied by the understanding that, in the fellowship of Christ's offering and suffering, the body of death could be removed from him. No longer would Paul be motivated by good ideas, or by the anxious pursuit of his own righteousness. He was now committed to continuing in the fellowship of Christ's offering, and to following the leading of the Holy Spirit, who was the expression of his name and identity.

Paul understood that, in this fellowship, God was pleased to reveal His Son in him so that he might preach Christ to the Gentiles. **Gal 1:15 16**. The wonder and implications of this revelation staggered Paul. Before discussing this revelation with anyone else, he went to Arabia and Damascus. We can picture Paul during this time, praying, searching the Scriptures, and counting the cost of God's call upon his life. Three years later, Paul went to Jerusalem, and shared his revelation with the apostle Peter, and with James, the Lord's brother. **Gal 1:18**.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: ROMANS 7

Counting all things as loss

During the early phase of Paul's ministry, the churches in Judea had not seen his face. However, they kept hearing the report that Paul, who had previously persecuted them, was now preaching the faith that he had once sought to destroy. For this reason, they glorified God in him. **Gal 1:18 24.**

The apostle Paul desired to be found in Christ, not having a righteousness of his own that was derived from the Law. In other words, Paul did not want to be righteous because he was fulfilling the Law, or because he was using the Law properly. Neither did he want the Lord to help him to fulfil the Law. Instead, Paul wanted to be *in Christ*, and to have the righteousness that comes from God through faith. **Php 3:8 9.**

The righteousness that comes from God through faith is the whole package of life that the Father has predestined for us. The Father wants our cooperation so that we reveal the name that He has for us. Our familiar and fallen propensity, however, is to make a name for ourselves. Paul called this 'a righteousness of our own'. **Php 3:9.** In the pursuit of our own righteousness, we can even draw from the standard of God's Law to define an image and a name for ourselves. We believe that what we are presenting is true. Paul called this 'a strong delusion'. **2Th 2:11 12.**

Even after he had been converted, Paul considered any sense of validity, or self-verification, that he derived from his ministry, to be of no value. This is because he understood that ministering in this way was based on a righteousness of his own. It was the same self-righteousness that he had pursued prior to his conversion. In this regard, he wrote, 'I count *all things* but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, *and do count them but dung.*' **Php 3:8.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 2 CORINTHIANS 11

The warning of Malachi

In referring to his own righteousness as 'dung', Paul was drawing on the words of the Lord by the prophet Malachi. Through Malachi, the Lord said, 'And now, O priests, this commandment is for you. *"If you will not hear, and if you will not take it to heart, to give glory to My name,"* says the Lord of hosts, "I will send a curse upon you, and *I will curse your blessings*. Yes, I have cursed them already, because you do not take it to heart. Behold, I will rebuke your descendants and *spread refuse [lit: dung] on your faces*, the refuse of *your* solemn feasts; and one will take you away with it. Then you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you, that My covenant with Levi may continue, says the Lord of hosts". **Mal 2:1 4.**

Paul recognised and treated every effort to find righteousness and identity expression through keeping the Law as being the excrement of an offering that God threatened to spread upon the face of a priest as his reward for his service, because he had insulted the covenant that God had given to Levi. **Mal 2:3.** We, too, insult the New Covenant when we live according to our own righteousness, rather than by faith in the fellowship of Christ's offering. **Luk 14:34-35.**

We cannot simply decide to cease from living according to our own righteousness. In fact, we cannot even diagnose our own righteousness. Such an endeavour is a self-righteous judgement that we make of ourselves. Paul outlined the only way in which we can be delivered from self-righteousness and can have the righteousness of God. He said, 'That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.' **Php 3:10 11.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY: MALACHI 2

The goal of the Christian life

The primary goal of every Christian believer should be to live in Christ, not having a righteousness of our own that has been derived from the Law. To confess this means, firstly, that we do not want to attempt to live righteously by trying to use the Law properly. It also means that we do not even want the Lord to help or strengthen us in any way, so that we can live by the Law.

The apostle Paul expressed the goal of his Christian life by saying, 'That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.' **Php 3:10 11**. Attaining to 'the resurrection from the dead' means living by resurrection life while still in a mortal body.

Paul's reference to attaining resurrection life 'by any means' indicates that he was receiving resurrection life in the fellowship of Christ's offering, by walking in whichever way the Holy Spirit was leading him. In this fellowship, everything that he experienced throughout the course of each day was being priested to him by the Son, according to the will of the Father, and was working together for his good. **Rom 8:26 28**. Through these experiences, he was being progressively delivered from his own way; and Christ's life was progressively becoming his life.

As Christ's blood was poured out in love as an offering, His life brought Him back from the death that He was dying because of our sin. As we are joined to the fellowship of His offering, the life of God that is in His blood is given to us as resurrection life. His life delivers us from the death of sin while we are living in our mortal body. We are able to carry about in our mortal body the *dying* of the Lord Jesus, so that the *life* of Jesus, also, may be manifest in our mortal body. **2Co 4:10 11**.

The deeds of darkness

Condemnation is an implication of self-righteousness. A common misconception among Christians is that condemnation refers to the shame and regret that a person feels when they sin. However, Jesus Himself said, '*This is the condemnation*, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' **Joh 3:19**. We see that condemnation is not simply a feeling; it is, in fact, a whole way of living.

When Jesus said that men love the darkness because their deeds are evil, He was not particularly referring to people who endeavour to conceal their corrupt activities. Rather, Jesus meant that mankind is in darkness because *all* of their deeds are motivated by the evil that is within them. This evil is the *other law* which is present in the heart of every person. Paul recognised this evil within himself, writing, 'I find then a law, that evil is present [in] me, the one who wills to do good'. **Rom 7:21**.

Even more than being the basis of our evil deeds, the other law makes our spirit, itself, evil and sick. According to Solomon, the spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord. **Pro 20:27**. Jesus described this lamp as being the eye of a person's body. **Mat 6:22**. He then explained that if a person's eye, or spirit, is evil, their whole body will be 'full of darkness'. **Mat 6:23**. Evidently, to live by the other law is to be full of darkness.

Separated from Yahweh, a person pursues an image of themselves which is based upon their judgement of what is good or evil. The self-defined works associated with this image are sin, even if the person desires to fulfil God's Law. This is because their works are for the purpose of revealing an image of themselves. This way of living is, fundamentally, contrary to God's law of love.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: ROMANS 13

No condemnation in Christ Jesus

The apostle Paul declared that there 'is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus' **Rom 8:1**. Why is this so? First, in obedience to the Father, Jesus took our condemnation upon Himself as a sin offering. **2Co 5:21**. **Luk 22:42**. Through His death, He bore the full judgement and penalty of the Law that is associated with our sin. Once He died, the Law no longer had dominion over Him. In other words, having died, He was no longer being judged by the Law. **Rom 7:1**.

Second, Christ took the Law out of the way. He did this so that we would no longer relate to the Law in the same way that the Old Covenant demanded. The Law is a hindrance to us because of the self-centredness of our heart. It brings us under judgement because we are unable to obey its commands. Christ removed the Law, and nailed it to the cross. **Col 2:13-14**. Now, in Christ, the Law is no longer our reference point for life.

When we are baptised into Christ's death, we are delivered from the condemnation associated with our sin. This is because, in Him, we cease from trying to keep God's Law from the basis of our own self-righteousness. Instead, we live by the law of the Spirit of life. **Rom 8:2**. The Holy Spirit joins us, in one Spirit, to the Lord. **1Co 6:17**.

In the fellowship of Christ's offering and circumcision, the other law is progressively removed from us, and we are ceasing from sin. As the apostle Peter wrote, 'Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men [i.e. according to the other law], but for the will of God.' **1Pe 4:1 2**.

Only one judgement

Why do many Christians still come under condemnation when they sin? It is because they either do not know, or do not accept, the necessity to *join* the offering of Christ. They certainly confess that Christ died on their behalf, but they do not believe that the new and living way, in which they are to walk, involves their participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. People who live in this way judge themselves as being either righteous or unrighteous, from the basis of their own law. **Rom 7:23**. Paul said that people who judge themselves in this way become weak in faith and depressed, and can even become spiritually dead. **1Co 11:30. Pro 13:12**.

We are not to judge ourselves in this way. There is only one judgement that the apostle Paul said we are to make, and this judgement is compelled by the love of God that the Holy Spirit pours into our heart. He said that if Christ died for us, then we are to die with Him in the fellowship of His offering. We are being relieved of all other judgements, in Him, and are being enabled to live for others. **2Co 5:14**.

The capacity to obey the Lord is poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit. **Rom 5:5**. Because of this, we are able to love the Lord and to love others. By this means, God's Law is being fulfilled in us. **Rom 8:3-4**. This is a most important understanding. We are not able to fulfil the will of God simply because the other law is removed from us, or even because our spirit is being healed. If this were so, we would still be fulfilling God's will through our own efforts. In the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit Himself is the expression of the righteousness of God in us. This should be a great relief to every Christian, and cause for joyful thanksgiving!

FOR FURTHER STUDY: ROMANS 5

Self-righteous love

We are unable to fulfil the commandment of the Lord to 'love one another' through our own efforts. Attempting to do so is self-righteous. A common indication that a person is endeavouring to fulfil the command to love from the basis of self-righteousness is their enthusiasm to embrace, in the name of God's love, every person and every mode of conduct in the church. This self-sourced love can become a destructive leaven within a congregation. The promotion of this all-encompassing love, which is lawlessness, is one of the reasons why, in this present time, the love of many Christians is growing cold.

Mat 24:12.

We should not be motivated by the demand of others to prove that we are Christians through self-justifying, self-righteous actions. A person who is being delivered from self-righteousness does not rely on their own understanding of love. For this reason, their testimony is the same as that of the apostle John. He wrote, 'We have come to *know* and *have believed* the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.' **1Jn 4:16.**

In order to know and believe the love of God, we must first accept that God's love is not native to us. We must *receive* His love. God is love, and He abides within us when we are born from above by the incorruptible seed of the word of God. **1Pe 1:23.** To abide in God is to be joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering. His offering reveals the love that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have for each Other, and for us. The fellowship of this offering, therefore, is the only context in which we can love God, and love others as ourselves. In this fellowship, we are being delivered from the basic desire to live for ourselves, and are receiving the capacity for love as it is poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit. **Rom 5:5.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 1 JOHN 4

Self-worth

It is significant that God said we are to love our neighbour *as ourselves*. **Mat 22:39**. How do we do this? Clearly, the Lord is not commanding us to be conceited or self-admiring. To love ourselves in this self-centred manner is to be satisfied with an image that we have created for ourselves, based on our view of what is good or evil. Significantly, from this same basis, people can loathe themselves. **Jdg 6:14-15. 1Sa 9:21**.

Self-worth is tenuous when a person endeavours to know themselves from the basis of the knowledge of good and evil. This is because their worth depends upon the extent to which they are content with the image they have of themselves. **Pro 25:6-7**. The value of their self-image will be particularly affected by the affirmation that they receive from others. This way of viewing themselves and others is, in fact, the basis of fallen romance.

The affirmation of who we are should not be a romantic affirmation. A romantic affirmation is fundamentally selfish. When a person lives and relates with others from the basis of fallen romance, they have expectations of how they should be received by others, and who others should be to them. **2Co 10:12**. They serve what they perceive to be the agendas of another. However, they do this in an attempt to become who they believe the other person loves. This inevitability results in reaction and conflict, because it is based in unreality and self-centredness.

A person who lives in this way will be continually assessing themselves, and comparing themselves with others, in order to create a better image of themselves. However, they can never be truly satisfied. The more they pursue a 'perfect' image, the less they are able to really know and worth themselves. An effect of this sinful way of living is the progressive frailty, or degeneration, of their identity. This frailty needs to be healed if a person is to receive and live by the love of God.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: LUKE 14

The capacity to love ourselves

The capacity to love ourselves comes from God. This is why we need to know and believe the love that He has for us. **1Jn 4:16**. To love ourselves is to accept and honour who God has named us to be as His son. **1Jn 3:1**. We first come to know the love of God when we receive our name as a son of God through new birth. Our name and sanctification is further made known to us as we present ourselves for participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering. By offering, we are able to prove the will of God, which is our sanctification. **Rom 12:2. 1Th 4:3**. Finally, we are commended to our name and works as a son of God, when we look into the corporate face of Christ, through fellowship with our brethren.

If loving ourselves refers to accepting and delighting in who God made us to be, then loving others is the capacity to appreciate whom the Lord has made them to be. More than this, it involves laying our life down according to our name, to reveal the name of another. **2Co 4:12**. This is the love of God, because this is how God Himself lives.

New birth, and our fellowship in the offering and circumcision of Christ, is the only way by which we can be delivered from the desire to create and project an image of ourselves. Deliverance from this propensity is necessary if we want to love the Lord, love ourselves, and love our neighbour as ourselves. In this fellowship, the other law, by which we either promote ourselves or depreciate ourselves, is being progressively removed from us. **Rom 6:5 10. Col 2:11**. Furthermore, our identity is being regenerated, and the life of God is increasingly becoming our life. This happens because the love of God is being poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit. **Rom 5:5**.

The conviction of the Holy Spirit

We know that the love of God has been poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit when we are full of conviction! Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit comes, 'He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement.' **Joh 16:8.**

Through *the conviction of sin*, we are made aware of our fleshly endeavours to create and project an image of ourselves. Without the conviction of the Holy Spirit, which comes as the word is preached to us, we will continue to live in the delusion that our projections are the expression of our sonship. **Rom 7:23 24. Mat 6:23.** A person who has received the conviction of sin will present themselves to the Lord, and in fellowship with their brethren, to obey the word that they have heard. **1Jn 1:7.** This is the evidence of repentance and faith towards God. **Heb 6:1.** As we continue to walk in the fellowship of Christ's offering, the propensity to pursue an image for ourselves is being removed from us.

Jesus described the Holy Spirit as 'the Spirit of truth' who would lead us into the truth of our name and sanctification as a son of God. **Joh 16:13.** When the Spirit of truth *convicts us of righteousness*, He is confirming to us the righteous works of God that belong to our name. These are the works that we are to do as son-priests who are part of the body of Christ. We fulfil these works by offering and, in so doing, demonstrate the love of God.

The *conviction of judgement* refers to our participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering. Paul was referring to the conviction of judgement when he wrote, '*For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.*' **2Co 5:14 15.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY: JOHN 16

Chastened for our peace

While all six wounds of Christ's offering are effective in delivering us from sin and the other law, and to give us His life, Paul specifically nominated our fellowship in Christ's chastening and scourging as contexts in which we can come to know and believe God's love for us. **Heb 12:5 6**. Jesus was chastised, or disciplined, by the Father, for our peace, when He was beaten with rods in the court of Caiaphas, the high priest. **Isa 53:5. 2Sa 7:12 15**. This was the third wounding event that Christ endured on His offering journey from Gethsemane to Calvary.

When we receive our daily sufferings as a share in this element of Christ's offering, we are able to come to peace. Through our fellowship in the chastening that Christ received, the desire to go our own way is being removed from us, and we are learning how to live and walk according to the word of God that defines our sonship. We know peace because we cease from pursuing an image for ourselves that is in conflict with the sonship that the Father has prepared for us.

Through this process, we also come to peace with others. This is because we stop striving with, and competing against, our brothers and sisters in Christ. As we accept and value our sonship, we are able to appreciate who God has named others to be. In this way, we are being freed to love our brethren in the same way that we love ourselves.

In addition to peace, the effect of chastening is that we are able to give thanks to God in every circumstance of life. Thanksgiving becomes the fruit of our lips, because His life is flourishing within us, and is being expressed by us. The Scriptures call this a 'sacrifice of thanksgiving'. **Lev 7:11 14. Heb 13:15**.

By His stripes we are healed

The scourging that Christ received under the direction of Pilate was His fourth wound. The purpose of this wound was *our healing*. **Isa 53:5**. In particular, scourging is the means by which our identity, or spirit, is healed through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. **Tit 3:5**.

The whip that was used to scourge Christ had nine leather strands. Each strand had four or five pieces of sharp bone or metal attached to it. A full beating of thirty-nine stripes would have caused approximately 1600 wounds on Christ's back! All of these wounds were for the purpose of bringing healing to the many and varied aberrant behaviours that are associated with the degeneration of our human condition.

The lust of the eyes has a particular influence on the health of our spirit. 'The lust of the eyes' refers to the fantasies, projections and dreams that people pursue for themselves as an alternative to their sonship. These pursuits only lead us away from the truth of who we are, and into deviant ways of living. These ways of living lead to the fragility, or degeneration, of our identity.

The healing that Christ brought through His scourging is available to us as we eat and drink the elements of the communion. His body and blood have become the fruit of the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. **Rev 22:1-2**. By eating and drinking the communion, we remain joined to the offering of Christ, through which we are delivered from the lust of the eyes. Importantly, in the fellowship of His sufferings, we are receiving the healing that Christ achieved through His scourging. It is here that He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds. **Psa 147:3**.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: 1 PETER 2

The renewing of our mind

The apostle James explained that it is through the various trials that we experience as part of the chastening hand of the Father in our life, that we are made perfect and complete. He wrote, 'My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.' **Jas 1:2 4.**

James then highlighted the reality that the antidote to instability is to receive wisdom from God, and to live by faith in fellowship with Christ. Specifically, he said, 'If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God ... but let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.' **Jas 1:5 8.** Offering transfer is being frustrated for the person who doubts. This is because they are not living by faith and, therefore, are not walking in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

The renewing of our mind is important to the recovery of our identity, and to living as a son of God. We must cease from the recriminating mind-chatter that is endemic to living according to the flesh. **Rom 8:5 6.** In order for our mind to cease from being motivated by the flesh, it needs to be set on the things of the Spirit. Here is a key: 'the things of the Spirit' refers to the word being proclaimed at this present time. It is the word of present truth. The effect of receiving and believing the word is that we continue in the fellowship of the Father, and of His Son, as a living sacrifice. **Rom 12:1.** In this fellowship, we cease from pursuing our own righteousness, and are being transformed by the renewing of our mind. **Rom 12:2.**

FOR FURTHER STUDY: JAMES 1

