

Dead to sin, Alive to Christ

I have really enjoyed walking through the book of Romans like we have been in this study. Because each section of scripture we have covered has told a story of the Christian life that is hopefully common amongst us. That although every story is different, and every person in this room is different, what bonds us together is that story of redemption that is centered around one man, Chris Jesus, who entered into our lives and has purchased us with a price and who has set us free from the bondage of sin.

That as we started in Romans 1, it told the story of the man without Christ. And we looked and saw that the man without Christ is naturally an enemy of God. That we are all together depraved, and that if we were left alone to stand before God on our own works, we would all together stand guilty before the Holy and Just God of the universe. And I can remember the days in my life spent without truly knowing Jesus. I know how hopeless they were, how evil they were, how given over to wickedness they were, and when I think back on those days, it paints a beautiful picture of God's patience towards me. It shows God's sovereign plan in my life and it makes Romans 3 and 4 shine like a bright star against a night sky.

Because it's there where we unpacked the doctrine of justification by grace through faith alone. That yes, if we were to stand upon our own works, we would be damned to hell for all eternity. Because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But there was One who did not sin. There was One who came to earth who lived a perfect, sinless, righteous life and who died a substitutionary death on the cross. Meaning on that cross, Christ suffered the penalty that I deserved, and in turn offered me a righteousness that was not my own! And this is the gospel of grace in Christ Jesus. That we are saved apart from our works, we are saved through faith in Christ Jesus, who died in our place, so that we may be declared right before God. And I can remember in my own life, first receiving this good news in a way that absolutely changed my whole life. I walked away from that conference in 2015 with absolute confidence that my debt had been paid, that Jesus was my savior, and now I would serve Him as my Lord and prize in this life and in the next!

And now we come to chapter 6 of the book of Romans. And Romans 6 answers a very important question that all we who have been purchased by Christ must answer. And that is, "What are we now? ". Because I know quite clearly what I once was. I once was a lost sinner, who practiced all sorts of wickedness, and who was dead to God. And I know, at least in part, of what I will one day be. I know that Christ has promised that I will be without sin. That my home is in heaven, where God is, where I will be delivered from the very presence of sin and walk completely clean and free from sin. But what am I now? Because when I look within me, I seemingly find two parts at war within me. In one part of me, I find someone who seeks to serve God, to know God, to love God, and to obey God. But in another part of me ,I find something warring against what I truly want to do. That there is something leftover in me that prevents me from loving the Lord how I would like to.

So let's dive into this passage and see what Paul has to say to us, who are stuck in this in between. He starts here in Romans 6:1 and says:

[Rom 6:1 NKJV] 1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

Notice with me that Paul begins here with a question, although one more rhetorical, but one that is related back to something he previously just said. And this is just a tip, as you are reading your Bibles, to really pay attention to every word. Ask questions on why it is there, follow the arguments being made and make good observations about the text. Remember, the Holy Spirit superintended the writing of scripture. And that in and of itself is reason to take careful consideration to how each word and phrase is constructed and put together in the scriptures. So when I see that "then" at the end of Paul's question, I immediately turn my bible back a page, and I see how this part of his argument relates to the previous part. So Look back a few verses with me:

[Rom 5:20-21 NKJV] 20 Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, 21 so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

That we see here, as Paul was comparing and contrasting the effects of the offense committed by Adam to the effects of the work accomplished by Christ, that where sin abounded, grace abounded much more! And there are many who ask the question, "why would God create a world where sin and evil were even possible?". And I think this gives us a look at a possible answer! Because where sin abounded, God's grace shined all the more! Without sin, we would not be able to comprehend the height, the depth, the width, and the length of the grace and the love of Christ! In fact, Paul seems to argue that this is the case in Ephesians 1, where he says:

[Eph 1:5-6 NKJV] 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

That we see it was according to the good pleasure of His will, to take sinful, wicked creatures like you and me, and to make us sons and daughters by Jesus Christ. Why? To the praise of the glory of His grace. So that we would look upon that sweet, amazing grace and we would praise God that He has done this work apart from any worth of our own! So yes, where sin abounded, grace abounded much more! For it was by grace that sin was conquered. Our banner and our testimony that will be stamped upon our foreheads forever will say "Saved by God's grace".

So it's against this background that Paul asks the question, "So what then? Should we continue in sin that grace may abound?" In other words, since God's grace was revealed because of our sin, should we continue in sin now so that God's grace may abound even more? Or even another way of saying it, why stop our sin if we are saved by grace alone?

And Paul answers his own question emphatically in verse 2:

[Rom 6:2 NKJV] 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

To the question of whether we should continue in sin, Paul says emphatically no! In the Greek, this would read something like “Let it not come to be, let it not come to pass, God Forbid!” That the answer is undeniably no! And yet it is sad that with even such a clear answer, that this is the theology of a lot of so-called Christians even today. I remember sitting down with a buddy of mine after I had come to believe in Christ, and this was a friend who I went to the same youth group as growing up but who I also went to the same parties with. But after I came to truly know Jesus, I realized that these two things were incompatible with a life and relationship with Jesus. So as I sat down with Him and started to explain to Him the gospel and what I thought God desired from our lives, I remember what he said to me was so heartbreaking. I remember him literally telling me to stop talking to him about this because he’s already got it. He explained to me that he’s already heard this all in church and that essentially, as long as he has prayed the prayer and trusted Jesus to save him from hell, he can pretty much live however he wants!

And I wish that I could reach back through time and grab him and say to him “ How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” But sadly, this is who Jesus is to a lot of people. He is simply a get out of jail free card. He is a hell fire insurance policy. They really do not desire to receive salvation from their sin, just from the penalty of it. They would be happy to continue in a life of darkness so long as they didn’t have to pay the ultimate price for it at the end. And truth be told, they would be miserable with a heaven that did not include their sin. And because of this, their destiny is in darkness. There is no salvation simply from the penalty of sin without also a salvation from the presence and power of it. God is the author of our salvation, and we must come on His terms, and not our own.

But for those who would come on Christ’s terms, this is a welcomed breath of fresh air from Paul. Because here Paul reveals the principle for which the believer may discontinue their life of sin. Because he says there in verse 2, that you have died to sin, and if you have died to sin, then how should you live any longer in it? But what exactly does Paul mean when he says we have “died to sin”. Well thankfully for us, he goes on to explain this principle over the next couple verses:

[Rom 6:3-4 NKJV] 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

We see that Paul explains here that when we were baptized into Christ, that the man we met back in Romans 1 died. The natural man who was by nature an enemy of God, a hater of God, who liked to be continually immersed in things of the world, that person died with Christ. And what was raised up out of that water was a new creation. And of course, we know baptism, what

we do with the water, is a symbol of what actually takes place on a spiritual level. Baptism is a symbol of the gospel work of Jesus Christ. To be baptized in Christ is literally to be immersed in the saving work of Jesus Christ. And this happens when we are united with Him by faith. And it's by faith and that old man dies with Christ, and then what comes out of the water is a new creation, born into righteousness by Christ. And this is what we recognize as the new birth. You hear that term "born again Christian" being thrown around a lot today. As if there were any other type of Christian than one who has been born again. But this has happened because there were so many people professing to be Christians who had never truly died to their sin! And this is what Jesus made so abundantly clear in John 3 in his conversation with Nicodemus where He says:

[Jhn 3:3-6 NKJV] 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

That notice, the second birth is not like the first! Because the first birth is what got us into this mess! It was the birth into this flesh, where sin and death reigned, that made us estranged to God and spiritually dead! It was this flesh that we inherited from Adam, where sin reigned through death, so that when we were born, we were alienated from God! But the second birth is one from the Spirit! It is God's Spirit which gives the new life in Christ Jesus. And this is what is created in our baptism into Jesus Christ. That the old dies. The old man is killed with Christ, and what becomes of us is a new spiritual life born by the Spirit of God. Titus 3 gives us some insight into how the Spirit causes this life to be created in us, where it says:

[Tit 3:3-6 NKJV] 3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

That we see we are both regenerated, signaling a new birth, and renewed, signaling a continual upholding of the new life created in Christ. And all of this is according to God's mercy. There is never a time we are not held and supported by grace.

And so we see, that to be baptized into Christ, is to take on the full weight of His saving work. There is no new life, there is no resurrection without crucifixion. There is no new life without first the old life passing away. And that is why, Paul goes on to explain, here in Romans 6:

[Rom 6:5-10 NKJV] 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be [in the likeness] of [His] resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our

old man was crucified with [Him], that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For [the death] that He died, He died to sin once for all; but [the life] that He lives, He lives to God.

So for Paul, to be united together with Christ is the same as being baptized into Christ. And if we were baptized into Christ, then we have been united with Him both in death and in life. He says the reason that we are no longer in bondage to sin is because the old man was crucified with Christ! The old man had to die because if the old man really did die then we are no longer slaves to sin. Death is freedom in this case! And now the new man has not been born again into slavery to sin, but rather life to God. In fact, this is Paul's whole point here. That the new man that was created in Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit should not be given over to sin in the same way your old man was! But your new man has been created for good works in Christ Jesus! This is what Ephesians 2 tells us

[Eph 2:8-10 NKJV] 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

That the reason we were created anew in Christ Jesus is so that we would be capable for the very first time of performing works that are actually good! God did not create in you a new person to be sold under the same slavery to sin once again, that would be absurd! But rather, He has created the new person through the power of His resurrection that you might become capable of truly loving, serving, and obeying God. And this is truly the evidence that this new man has really been created in us, that there should be inside of us a new creation who loves God and who hates sin. For your old man was exactly the opposite, your old man loved sin and hated God, but the new man created in Jesus desires to be free from sin and to cry out to God as our father.

And we need to be careful not to minimize these words to simply be symbolic or poetic in some way. I wanna make this clear, that what these words are not saying is that if you trust in Jesus that you will be *like* a new person. What Paul is teaching here is not reformation in the sense that Jesus really just wants to pull you up by your bootstraps and get you going in the right direction. This isn't behavioral conditioning or moralism. Jesus doesn't just want you to act better and by acting better you become this "new creation". That is not what this is saying! So many Christians today misunderstand what God really did at their conversion! They've minimized the miraculous work of God in salvation and boiled it down to simply a decision they made to follow Jesus. Your salvation was not simply you just saying, "Today, I suppose I will be a Christian and begin to follow all the teachings and ways of Jesus". No! You couldn't have even made that decision had God not made you alive to Christ! Think about the absurdity of that

thought! The bible says you were **dead** in your sins! And so what really happens at our conversion is what God described in Ezekiel 36, where he says:

[Eze 36:25-27 NKJV] 25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do [them].

What was spoken prophetically to Israel here was a foreshadowing of the salvation that comes through Jesus Christ. That God would take that unresponsive heart of stone out of you, and place in you a new heart, a heart of flesh. And this heart is one who would be sensitive to the Spirit of God so that we may love God and keep His commandments.

And this should cause us to walk in this newness of life that Paul refers to in verse 4. Because something real has happened to us that has changed our inner attitudes towards God and towards sin.

But now the question still remains: If I have been created new in Christ, and my old self has been crucified with Christ, then why do I still sin? Why do I find it so hard sometimes to do what I truly desire to do, which is to follow Christ and serve Him?

Paul is going to spend much time answering this question in the next chapter, but I think the short answer I can give you tonight is what Paul expresses in 2 Corinthians 4 where he says :

[2Co 4:6-7 NASB20] 6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen containers, so that the extraordinary [greatness] of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;

That we hold the new creation, the one who is able to comprehend the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ, we hold this treasure in an earthen container. And this vessel, this body, is really unfit to hold this sort of glory! And one day this flesh will be done away with, and God will give us new bodies that will be able to handle all of the weight of the new creation in Christ Jesus. But right now, as we walk on this earth, we walk in these bodies. And within the members of our flesh remains a law of sin that wars against our new inward man.

You have been training your body in unrighteousness all of your life until you trusted in Christ Jesus. And when you trusted Jesus, suddenly there was a new attitude, a new man created within you that desired to love Jesus and who hated sin. But walking that out involves untraining your body and your mind towards unrighteousness and training it towards righteousness.

I remember when I was a new believer one of the things that changed pretty dramatically in me was the way I spoke. I'm sure Brandon could attest to this, but when I did not know Christ, the

words out of my mouth were far from edifying. I couldn't string together two sentences without an F word. And this came out the worst when I was with my friends from High School. But when God saved me, my desires changed. That new man in me wanted to stop speaking like those worldly people and I wanted my mouth to be used as a vessel for good and not for evil. There was an attitude change there that was undeniable. But I remember one day, I was hanging out at the football field with a few friends from High School, and we were casually talking, cracking jokes, and I remember, as I was talking with one of my friends, that I had said a cuss word in the midst of the conversation. And when I did not know Jesus, this wouldn't have had any impact on me whatsoever. But I remember when that word came out of my mouth, I suddenly felt sick to my stomach. I remember getting in my car as I was about to leave and just crying out to God, almost in tears, in confession and asking for His forgiveness.

Because I did not want to sin any longer. I did not love my sin. I was not proud of the way that I had spoken any longer. And yet within me, there still remained that capability. Almost like a reflex. It just came out. But for the believer, that sin should not be met with indifference, but rather with Godly sorrow. Not a type of sorrow that leads us away from the Lord, because we talked last week that our righteousness is not dependent upon our performance. But a type of Godly sorrow that pushes us closer to God, knowing that He says:

[Mat 5:4 NASB20] 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

So how should we go on living then? Because in us is this new creation that loves God and yet in this body remains sin that is contrary to the new man. Paul gives these words through the Holy Spirit here in verses 11-14

[Rom 6:11-14 NKJV] 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members [as] instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members [as] instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

We are to reckon ourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus! Reckon here means to treat it as if it were a reality! If I reckoned this building to be on fire, I would not stand here and burn up with it, I would exit the building. And why would Paul tell us to reckon ourselves dead to sin but alive to Christ? Because we ARE dead to sin and alive to Christ. That is our reality! Although we cannot see the new man in any physical way, it is not any less of a reality then this building, or these chairs, or the physical bodies that you and I can see and interact with. This is your reality as a Christian, if you have indeed been born again by the Spirit of God

Therefore, Paul says, because you are alive, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey its lust!

Remember sin reigned in death. But you are no longer dead to God. You are alive to Christ. Therefore sin should not reign, but rather grace through righteousness to eternal life. Which means then, when temptation comes knocking, you should not answer the door. Before, when you were dead, you really had no choice. You were a slave to sin. But now that you have died, temptation can still come, but you do not have to answer to it any longer. You can, by the spirit of God, resist sin and temptation, finding help from God in your time of need.

And finally Paul here tells us that we should not present our members as instruments of unrighteousness, but rather present our whole selves to God as being alive from the dead. In our book this week, one of the questions asked about the three steps of sanctification. And we see here in the text the same progression that Paul makes. First we are to know what really happened at our conversion that is symbolized by the baptism. That we really did die with Christ. That person who hated God, who possessed a heart of stone, who was dead in their trespasses and sins, that person was crucified with Christ. And now, by the power of God, a new creation has been born. That suddenly we become alive to God and this new creation is created in true righteousness and holiness. This creation is able to have fellowship with God and able to truly be obedient according to grace.

And once we know these things, we need to put them into practice. That the knowledge is only as good as we live according to it. And this is what it means to reckon that these things are true. We live as if this is our reality because it really is our reality. Imagine a prisoner who has been set free from prison after a lengthy sentence. And he goes home, a free man, yet he continues to live his life as a prisoner! He gets up every morning at the same time, eats the same 3 square meals a day, puts on his orange jump suit and continues to live life as one in prison would! We would hopefully grab that man and try to reason with him and tell him that he really is free! You no longer have to live in the way that you used to! Things have changed!

And finally, we are to present ourselves to God as slaves of righteousness instead of unrighteousness. And this is something that happens according to the will of the new man, not against it! There's a certain peace that comes through being obedient to Christ once He has saved you. It's what our heart truly desires once we've been converted. To live in disobedience should not be comfortable to the Christian. We should not be comfortable rolling around in the same mud we lived in as an unbeliever. But instead, we should work hard to present our members to God for His holy service.

With the lips we once cursed Him with, we should now all the more open to bless His name. We should sing aloud great hymns and worship songs that bring honor to Him. We should share the good news of Jesus with any soul who would listen to us.

With the mind which once was given over to sin, we should all the more present it to God to be transformed. We should devote ourselves to the study of the scriptures, we should read and reason until our brains are ready to melt. We should zealously engage with the Word of God, so that our minds may be trained up to be God honoring.

With the heart which once devised only wicked plans and sought after its own selfish lusts, we should now all the more seek to love those who are of the faith. We should give ourselves in full devotion to God, no longer allowing our affections to be given over to the things of the world, but bringing ourselves in full worship to Jesus Christ.

This work, this learning to become who we really are in Jesus Christ, is what we call sanctification. It's the means by which God has chosen to slowly conform us into the image of His son Jesus Christ. It happens as we put to death the things of the flesh, and put into practice the things of the Holy Spirit that are now impressed upon our hearts as the new creation in Christ. As zealously as you gave yourselves over to the lusts of the flesh, you now must in equal zeal give yourselves over to the pursuit of Holiness. You must labor more passionately, more seriously, and more abundantly than you ever have before.

But do not be confused, the work that was started in you by grace will also continue and be fueled by grace. This isn't now saved by faith but maintained by works. Although this grace should cause us to work diligently towards our sanctification, notice what Paul says about this work in his own life here in 1 Corinthians 15:

[1Co 15:10 NKJV] 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God [which was] with me.

Notice that Paul says he labored more abundantly than they all! That he outworked everybody because of the grace which saved him! And yet even his labor he recognizes as more grace! And this is the great paradox of sanctification. That yes, it is your full effort. You are called to do it! You need to get your feet moving because it will not happen aside from your effort. Yet, even in the effort you exert, the undergirding of all the work that is done, is the grace of God. That these two things work hand in hand so that it is your full effort and God's continuing grace which leads to your sanctification.

Another example from scripture, look at Philipians 2:

[Phi 2:12-13 NKJV] 12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for [His] good pleasure.

A lot of people take verse 12 and rip it out of context and it freaks them out. They think this is saying that we need to maintain good works in order to "work out our salvation". But when you couple this verse with verse 13, what we see is that beautiful process of sanctification in the life of a believer. You should work out your salvation. You should put into practice the life of the new man with fear and trembling. But realize in all your working, in all your efforts, that it is really God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. That the firm foundation of all of our efforts in sanctification is the working and effective grace of God.

One more passage from scripture, this time from Titus 2:

[Tit 2:11-14 NKJV] 11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself [His] own special people, zealous for good works.

That we see once more that your sanctification, and ultimately your glorification in Christ, was God's purpose in saving you. That we would no longer live according to the ungodly ways in which we once walked or be given over to the worldly lusts which we were once given over to, but rather be zealous for good works. Because this is who we really are in Christ. It is our reality if we have been born again.

A couple exhortations before we leave this passage for today and begin to discuss:

- 1. [2Co 13:5 NKJV] 5 Examine yourselves [as to] whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you are disqualified.**

We talked a lot about baptism tonight and the new creation. And I wanna make this abundantly clear, a thousand water baptism will profit you nothing if the real thing hasn't happened for you. If you haven't been made a new creation by Christ, then we can hold you under the water til you're blue in the face, but when you come back up you will still be the same dead sinner you were when you went under. And so we need to examine ourselves. We need to ask whether there really is something different about us. Have you ever experienced an attitude change towards your sin? Do you experience the stabbing of the Holy Spirit when you are in sin?

Or is sin still just as comfortable as ever to you? Is it a burden to try to keep God's commandments? These are all questions that need to be examined to see whether you are truly in the faith. If you think there is any chance that you are not, then take heart, because this realization is the grace of God! I can personally attest to this, because when I was about 9 years old, I was baptized in a swimming pool for the first time by Dad, although back then he was Pastor John or Mr. Barber. And I went through most of the rest of my life thinking that from that moment on, I was good! But there was never really any heart change, there was never really a forsaking of the old and an embracing of the new. I wasn't really born again. That didn't happen until much later, when I was in college, and I heard the preaching of the good news and God did that miraculous work of regeneration in my life. That I was baptized for real that night. And then about a year after that conversion, I got to be baptized again by Dad, this time as an outward expression of the inward reality that had really taken place.

So examine yourself, and if you've found that you have not been saved, then cry out to the Lord. Ask Him to do that work of making you a new creation. Read, hear, go over the promises of God time and time again until your eyes are opened and you can say with confidence that you are a new being created in Jesus.

Second exhortation from this passage:

2. We must continue to fuel and feed the inward man day by day

Notice the implications of this verse in 2 cor 4:

[2Co 4:16 NKJV] 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward [man] is being renewed day by day.

Notice the implications, the inward man is being renewed day by day. Renewing implies that there is a way in which the new man becomes weak as we walk through this life. Especially if we do nothing to cultivate this new creation. This is the danger of presenting ourselves to sin once we've become a truly converted Christian. That there is a way in which we can so damage our minds and conscience, and that we can fail to nourish the new creation in us, that we become almost numb to the things of God. And that is a scary and miserable place to be as a Christian.

Therefore, cultivate habits in your life that help nourish your new creation in Christ. I have learned in my own life that I need to go to a mid-week service. It is one of those things that I just get restless if I do not meet with other saints. One of my least favorite things is getting sick and missing a Sunday morning. I just get to feeling depressed so quickly. So for me, one thing I try to do is be with the saints as much as I can. It feeds the inner man in me and stirs me up towards love and good works.

Reading my bible in the morning time makes a huge difference in the way my day goes. When I set the alarm early, and I dig into a verse or a chapter or a few chapters, I find that my focus is so much stronger for that day to walk in the newness of life.

There are habits of grace that I think are very wise for Christians to cultivate. I would start with a daily dose of the word of God, coupled with scripture wrought prayer. I think that has been the most important thing for me to put into practice as a believer.