

New Life in Christ

I Thess Intro #3

They love one another. They never fail to help widows; they save orphans from those who would hurt them. If they have something they give freely to the man who has nothing; if they see a stranger, they take him home, and are happy, as though he were a real brother. They don't consider themselves brothers in the usual sense, but brothers instead through the Spirit, in God. (Aristides describing Christians to the Emperor Hadrian 2 Century AD)

The Apostle Paul is celebrating the new life Christ brings to all who come to Him. No less than 10 times he points out freshness of this new life in Christ. Let me just trace them across the pages of this letter.

1. They had A NEW ORIENTATION or DIRECTION IN LIFE: Turned to God [1.9].
2. They had A NEW REASON TO LIVE: Wait for Son [1:10]
3. They had A NEW PLAN IN LIFE: Walk worthy of God [2.12]
4. They had A NEW AUTHORITY IN LIFE: Take God at His Word [2.13]
5. They had A NEW MEASURING STICK IN LIFE: Measure all by Christ's coming [2.19-20]
6. They had A NEW PERSPECTIVE IN LIFE: Accept suffering from God [3.3-4]
7. They had A NEW RESOURCE IN LIFE: Abound in love [3.12]
8. They had A NEW APPETITE IN LIFE: Stay pure [4.3]
9. They had A NEW LIFESTYLE: Be quiet, Mind own business, Work [4.11]
10. They had A NEW OCCUPATION IN LIFE - MINISTRY : Comfort one another [4.18]; Edify one another [5.11]
11. They had A NEW HABIT IN LIFE: Rejoice always [5.16]
12. They had A NEW AWARENESS IN LIFE - CONTACT WITH GOD: Pray always [5.17]; Be thankful [5.18]

I. A New Way of Life - CITIZEN OF HEAVEN OR EARTH DWELLERS?

- A. They had A NEW ORIENTATION or DIRECTION IN LIFE: Turned to God [1.9].
The lost person has an entirely different orientation than we do.
 1. They live for their APPETITES Philippians 3:19a Their destiny is destruction, **their god is their stomach**, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. (NIV).

2. They lived for their APPEARANCE Philippians 3:19a **and their glory is in their shame**. Their mind is on earthly things. (NIV). The world into which the gospel came was a rough and immoral
3. They live for their ADDRESS Philippians 3:19c **Their mind is on earthly things**. (NIV). Did you know that in the book Revelation the word the Holy Spirit uses to describe lost people most often is "earthdwellers", people who only live for the here and now. Note what John calls the lost in Revelation 3.10; 6.10; 8.13; 11.10; 12.12; 13.8, 12, 14; 14.6.
4. The uncertainty¹ and insecurity of material things makes materialism the mother of anxiety. This is why Christ's discourse on earthly and heavenly treasures is immediately followed by his admonitions not to worry about material things (Matt. 6:25-34). People lay up treasures on earth rather than in heaven not only because of greed and covetousness and selfishness, but because of fear, insecurity, and anxiety. Yet putting our hope in earthly treasures does nothing but multiply anxiety, precisely because they are so uncertain.
 - The man with his primary investments in the stock market will have his hopes rise and fall with the stock market.
 - The man whose greatest riches are in banks will be destroyed when the banks fail, as will the farmer whose greatest asset is his crops when his crops fail.
 - In contrast, the man whose hope is in God will be devastated only if God fails-which is an impossibility. Any man who has the rug pulled out from under him was standing on the wrong rug. To set our heart on earthly riches is not only to deprive God of glory, others of help, and ourselves of reward, but to destine ourselves to perpetual insecurity.

B. They had A NEW REASON TO LIVE: Wait for Son [1:10]

1. Waiting for the Son is a LIFE THAT EVERY- DAY is Denying ungodliness Titus 2:11-13 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; (KJV)
2. Waiting for the Son is a LIFE THAT EVERY- MOMENT is Watching Eagerly ! Philippians 3:20-21 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. (KJV)
3. Waiting for the Son is a LIFE THAT EVERY- ONE is Living and Dying in hope ! Genesis 48:15-16 And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, 16 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the

¹ Alcorn, p. 69.

name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. (KJV)

4. Waiting for the Son is a LIFE THAT EVERY- THING is revealing God's Hand ! Genesis 50:19 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? (KJV)
5. Waiting for the Son is a LIFE THAT EVERY- TIME is Looking for a city with foundations ! Hebrews 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. (KJV)

- C. They had A NEW PLAN: Walk worthy of God [2.12]
- D. They had A NEW AUTHORITY: Take God at His Word [2.13]
- E. They had A NEW MEASURING STICK: Measure all by Christ's coming [2.19-20] **check your bags before you fly.**
 - I have led tours with hundreds of participants over the years both domestic and international destinations. The shock and embarrassment of being stopped at the counter for oversize or weight baggage, or at the x-ray machine and made to open and explain items in your bag is unforgettable!
- F. They had A NEW PERSPECTIVE: Accept suffering from God [3.3-4]
- G. They had A NEW RESOURCE: Abound in love [3.12]
- H. They had A NEW APPETITE: Stay pure [4.3]
- I. They had A NEW LIFESTYLE: Be quiet, Mind own business, Work [4.11]
- J. They had A NEW MINISTRY: Comfort one another [4.18]; Edify one another [5.11]
- K. They had A NEW HABIT: Rejoice always [5.16]
- L. They had A NEW CONTACT: Pray always [5.17]
- M. They had A NEW AWARENESS: Be thankful [5.18]

II. A New View of God. They had experienced the DOCTRINE OF SALVATION² Some years ago a man in a penitentiary studied a Moody correspondence course. He found Christ. In answer to one of the questions which gave him an opportunity to express where he stood in relation to his newfound faith, he wrote down: "I am a new man in an old body." It was a most perceptive remark. For that is what salvation is. But it will go even further than that saved prisoner realized. One day he will be a new man in a new body.

- A. REPENTANCE: A CHANGE OF MIND Matthew 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: (KJV)
- B. REGENERATION: A CHANGE OF HEART John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (KJV)
- C. CONVERSION: A CHANGE OF LIFE Matthew 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. (KJV)
- D. ADOPTION: A CHANGE OF Family Romans 8:14-17 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness

² Phillips, 100 New Testament Outlines, #100.

with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (KJV)

- E. SANCTIFICATION: A CHANGE OF BEHAVIOR Hebrews 10:14-16 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; (KJV)
- F. JUSTIFICATION: A CHANGE OF STATE Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (KJV) ILLUSTRATION: "justified" In popular, everyday language the word can be paraphrased: "just as if I'd never sinned!" Some years ago a wealthy Englishman bought a Rolls Royce car and took it to France on his vacation. It broke down. At great expense the factory flew out a mechanic and not only repaired the car but entertained the customer in the best available hotel. When he arrived home he expected to receive a large bill but none came. Eventually he wrote, asking for his account to be rendered. He received this reply: "Dear Sir, We have no record of anything ever having gone wrong with your car." That is exactly what it means to be justified. It means that God has no record of anything ever having gone wrong in our lives.
- G. GLORIFICATION: A CHANGE OF PLACE John 17:24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. (KJV)

III. A New Freedom from Sin