

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

**IDENTIFICATION
WITH
CHRIST**

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Living Stream Ministry
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IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST

Romans 5:12 marks a major turn in Paul's writing in the book of Romans. This turn is from sins to sin, from position to disposition, and from justification to sanctification, or we may say from salvation to life. After making such a turn, Paul begins to deal with our person instead of our behavior. In the first four and one-half chapters of Romans Paul was concerned with man's deeds, not with man himself, and the sinful acts of fallen man were covered comprehensively. He showed that we have been brought out of that fallen state into the realm of grace, where we may enjoy God. However, this was merely a change of state, realm, and position. As yet, there has been no change in man himself, in his nature or disposition. Although man's deeds have been dealt with and his condition changed, man himself has not yet been touched.

Beginning with Romans 5:12, Paul deals with man himself. We must go beyond man's condition, situation, environment, and estate, for all these problems have been solved, and man has

been cleansed, forgiven, justified, and reconciled. The problem now in view is man himself. In no other portion of the divine Word is man exposed as thoroughly as in Romans 5 through 8.

What kind of man is exposed in this section of Romans? He is a man with sin in him, a man under the reign of death and, therefore, a man under God's righteous judgment and condemnation. Man has been poisoned with the evil nature of Satan, stung by the poison of sin. Man himself is absolutely sinful, not only in his dreadful deeds, but also in his disposition and nature. As far as man's being is concerned, he is thoroughly sinful. Sin is in man's fallen body, and man is under the reign of death, judged and condemned by God.

At this point we need to see a clear and definite contrast between all that belongs to Adam and all that belongs to Christ. In order to do this we may use the terminology of debit and credit found in accounting. In accounting we have a debit column and a credit column. Based upon these columns, we may reckon or make an account. I am not the first to use the word account in regard to spiritual things, for the Apostle Paul himself used this term. Several times in the book of Romans Paul employs the word "reckon" which

also means “put to account.” First, God reckoned Abraham’s faith as righteousness (4:3, 9, 22). When Abraham reacted to God by believing in Him, God, as the heavenly chief accountant, looked at the figures and seemed to say, “This faith of Abraham’s should be accounted as righteousness. I credit Abraham with righteousness.” Thus, God put righteousness in the credit column of Abraham’s account. Furthermore, Paul says that sin is not reckoned where there is no law (5:13). A better translation of this word is that sin is not put to account without law. Without law sin existed, but it was not entered into God’s accounting book. When we come to [Romans 6](#), we must use our spiritual mathematics to do some accounting work ([v. 11](#)). Since we have been crucified with Christ and resurrected with Him, we must make an entry of this fact into our accounting book, that is, we must reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God.

Let us proceed to draw two columns, a debit column and a credit column, for Adam and Christ. The first item on the debit side of the ledger is Adam himself. Adam constitutes a great debit for us all. Under Adam, the second item is transgression, or, to use synonymous terms, offense or disobedience. As used in [Romans 5](#),

the words transgression, offense, and disobedience all refer to the same thing. They are used interchangeably to designate the fall of Adam. This fall caused a tremendous debit. The third item in the debit column is sin, which came in through Adam's transgression. According to [Romans 5](#), judgment, the fourth debit item, follows the entrance of sin. God is a sober God. He is not only righteous, but also sober, always on the alert. God never sleeps. Immediately after Adam transgressed, God intervened and exercised judgment. Judgment always follows sin. Do not think that you must wait until your death to be judged, for we all were judged in Adam six thousand years ago. We were judged before we were born. The fifth item is condemnation. God's condemnation follows His judgment. Therefore, Adam, with everyone included in him, is under God's condemnation. Since we came out of Adam, we were there when Adam was condemned.

What is the total of the debit column? The total is death. We may list death as item number six, although actually it is the total of the first five items. The sum total of Adam, transgression, sin, judgment, and condemnation is death. This is the total of the universal debit column in the accounting record of the human race.

Hallelujah for the credit column! In the universal account we also have a credit column. The first item in this column is Christ who is versus Adam. Although Christ is versus Adam, there is no comparison between them. Paul says, “Not as the offense, so also is the free gift” (5:15). Adam is not as Christ, for Adam cannot compare with Christ. Christ far surpasses Adam. When Christ’s record is placed on the credit column, it is followed by billions of zeros. I am so glad that all of this is now our credit. I do not care about Adam’s debit. I have Christ.

Under Christ we have the second item in the credit column, obedience. Christ’s obedience unto the death of the cross is called His righteous act. The two terms obedience and righteous act are synonymous. The act of Adam is called transgression, offense, and disobedience; the act of Christ is called obedience or a righteous act. What is the worth of Christ’s obedience? It is beyond calculation.

As Christ’s obedience and righteousness are versus Adam’s disobedience and transgression, so also grace is versus sin. Grace is the third item on the credit column. Which is more prevailing, sin or grace? Paul tells us clearly that there is no comparison, for “where sin abounded grace has

more abounded” (5:20). To what degree does grace exceed sin? I do not know, and even Paul himself simply said that it was “much more.” Do not worry about the debit of sin, because the credit of grace is much more (5:17).

We have seen that judgment is the fourth item on the debit column. What item on the credit column corresponds to this? The item that is versus judgment is the gift of righteousness (5:17). What does the word gift mean in Romans 5? Some may say that it means speaking in tongues or other miraculous gifts. However, if you read Romans 5, you will see that the gift mentioned there is the righteousness of God. Romans 5:17 speaks of the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness. God’s grace has been unveiled, coming to us and giving us a free gift—the righteousness of God. The gift in Romans 5 is the very righteousness given to us by God’s grace. As we have seen, grace is God Himself as our enjoyment. Out of this enjoyment, this grace, the righteousness of God is given to us as our gift. Out of sin came judgment, and out of grace comes righteousness. Thus, righteousness is versus judgment. As long as you have the righteousness of God, you are not under judgment. Righteousness erases judgment. If I have the righteousness

of God, how can you judge me? I am as righteous as God is. As long as we have the gift of righteousness, judgment is impossible.

Following the gift of righteousness, we have justification, which is versus condemnation. Therefore, we have five items in the credit column. The total of these items is life, which can also be considered as the sixth item.

Let us balance our account. We have death as the total on the debit side and life as the total on the credit side. Which is greater? Certainly the answer is life. However, this life is not our physical life, *bios* ([Luke 8:14](#)), or our soulish life, *psuche* ([Matt. 16:25, 26](#); [John 12:25](#)); it refers to the divine, eternal, uncreated, and unlimited life of God that swallows up death, *zoe* ([John 11:25](#); [14:6](#); [Col. 3:4](#)). This life is Christ Himself as our resurrection life. Thus, the total on the credit side far outweighs the total on the debit side.

With all of this as a foundation, we may now proceed to [Romans 6](#). If we do not have [Romans 5](#) as a foundation, we can never be clear about [Romans 6](#). It is no longer a question of two situations or two states; it is a question of two persons, two men. The first man is Adam with all the debits, and the second man is Christ with all the credits. To which person do you belong?

IDENTIFIED WITH CHRIST IN HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Since we all were born in Adam, how can we say that we are now in Christ?

Baptized into Christ

In Romans 6:3 Paul says, “Are you ignorant that as many of us as have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?” Although we were born in the first person, Adam, we have been baptized into the second person, Christ. How pitiful it is for Christians to argue about the outward form of baptism! Some dispute about the kind of water used, and some argue about the method of baptism. Baptism means to be put into Christ and into His death. Whether we were good or bad, we were born in Adam. Now we see another man, Christ. How can we get into Him and be a part of Him? The way is to be baptized into Christ. The meaning of baptism is to put people into Christ. It is not a ritual or a form; it is an extremely significant experience. A spiritual transfer must happen in the act of baptism, and if we do not have a realization of this, we should not touch the matter of baptism. Never baptize people in a ritualistic

way. We must have the assurance and the realization that as we baptize people we are putting them into Christ. Once we realize the significance of baptism we will not allow it to degenerate into an outward form or ritual. Baptism is an act in which we put the members of Adam into death, thereby transferring them out of Adam and into Christ. People are baptized into Christ. Even the King James Version uses the word “into” in [Romans 6:3](#). How people have missed the mark regarding baptism in their divisive arguments about forms and methods! Whenever we baptize people, we only care that we put them into Christ. It is awful to perpetuate a ritual, but it is wonderful to baptize people into Christ.

Praise the Lord that we have been baptized into Christ! Although we were born in Adam, by baptism we have been identified with Christ in His death and resurrection. Through death and resurrection Christ was transfigured from the flesh into the Spirit ([1 Cor. 15:45](#)). Even Christ Himself needed death and resurrection to transform Him from the flesh to the Spirit. Likewise, through identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, we have been transferred out of Adam and into Christ. When we were

baptized into Christ, we were transferred from being a part of Adam into being a part of Christ. Now we are no longer in Adam. We are absolutely in Christ. This is the fact of identification. Now we must see and understand clearly two further points related to this.

Baptized into His Death— Grown Together with Him in the Likeness of His Death

[Romans 6:5](#) says that “we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death.” What does this mean? The phrase “likeness of His death” in [Romans 6:5](#) refers to baptism. Baptism is the likeness of the death of Christ. In baptism, we have grown up together with Christ. This phrase “grown together” affords the translators a difficult problem. However, if we stay very close to the meaning of the Greek word, there will be no difficulty. The same Greek word is used in [Luke 8:7](#) to speak of the thorns which grew up together with the wheat. Likewise, we have grown together with Christ. When we were baptized into Christ, in one sense we were put to death; in another sense we began to grow. This very much resembles the sowing of seed into the earth. Apparently the seed is sown; actually it

begins to grow. By being baptized into Christ we have all grown together with Christ in the likeness of His death. Since we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, we are now growing together with Him. We have died, yet we are growing.

Walking in Newness of Life

We also are growing together with Christ in the likeness of His resurrection (6:4-5). What is the likeness of His resurrection? It is the newness of life. We all should walk in this newness of life. We must see these two points: that we have grown together with Christ in baptism and that we grow together with Him in the likeness of His resurrection, that is, in the newness of His resurrected life. If we see this, it means we see we have died with Him and now we are growing with Him. We were buried with Him in baptism, and now we are growing with Him in His resurrection, in His divine life. We must walk according to the newness of life.

KNOWING AND RECKONING

Knowing by Seeing

In Romans 5 we were born in Adam and

were constituted sinners. In [Romans 6](#) we have been baptized into Christ and identified with His death and resurrection. Now we are in Christ. Since we are in Him, whatever He has passed through is our history. He has been crucified and resurrected. Thus, His crucifixion and resurrection are ours. This is a glorious fact. We need to see this, not just to understand it. We need to pray that the Lord will give us a clear vision of the glorious fact that we are in Him, and that we have been crucified and resurrected with Him. To know this we need to see such a vision. After we see a certain thing, we can never say that we do not know it. God has accomplished the glorious fact of putting us into Christ; we have been crucified and resurrected with Him.

Our knowing is based upon our seeing, and our seeing comes from the vision. We need a vision to see our co-crucifixion with Christ in [Romans 6:6-7](#) and our co-resurrection with Christ in [Romans 6:8-10](#). If we have seen these two aspects of the fact of our identification with Christ, we know that we are dead to sin and alive to God.

Here it is not a matter based upon our believing, but a matter absolutely based upon our seeing. When, by a vision, we see this glorious

fact we cannot help but believe it and realize that we have died with Christ and also have been raised with Him. By this kind of seeing we know with full assurance that we are dead to sin and alive to God.

I must emphasize once again that we need a vision to see the glorious fact revealed in [Romans 6](#). Many Christians have the doctrinal knowledge of [Romans 6](#) but have never seen a vision of the fact unveiled in this chapter. To understand a thing doctrinally is altogether different from seeing that very thing in a vision. This problem regarding [Romans 6](#) is prevalent among Christians. Many think that they understand the doctrine of [Romans 6](#), but have not seen the fact by way of a vision. Many stress the matter of believing. But if you do not see the fact, it will be difficult for you to believe by your doctrinal understanding. Once you see it in a vision, you will have faith in it spontaneously. What Paul means by “Knowing this” is actually the seeing of a fact in a spiritual vision. We all must pray that the Lord will deliver us from contentment with a mere doctrinal understanding of [Romans 6](#) and grant us a clear vision in our spirit that we may see the glorious fact revealed in this chapter. Then we will know it in its reality.

Reckoning by Believing

Based upon our seeing of the fact revealed in Romans 6, we must do our accounting work. We must reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God (6:11). On the one hand, we must reckon ourselves dead to sin; on the other hand, we must reckon ourselves alive to God. This reckoning is based upon our seeing. I have seen that I have died with Christ and that I am growing with Christ in His resurrection. Therefore, automatically and continually, I reckon myself dead to sin and alive to God. This is a matter of accounting. Under our account we have a great credit item—dead to sin and alive to God.

Reckoning is a matter of believing produced by seeing. Having seen the facts, we reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God by believing that we have been crucified and resurrected with Christ. Once we have seen the fact, we believe that we are such. Then we reckon by believing what we have seen.

Many Christians have practiced the technique of reckoning themselves dead. Eventually, as all can prove, this technique does not work. It is not a matter of technique; it is a matter of seeing the fact that results in reckoning with a spontaneous

faith. Simply using the technique of reckoning according to the doctrinal understanding without seeing the fact will always end in failure. Only after the Apostle Paul mentions the matter of knowing by seeing the fact ([vv. 6-10](#)) does he direct us to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God ([v. 11](#)). Reckoning needs the seeing which results in believing. If we have seen the fact, we will believe it and reckon on it accordingly.

COOPERATION BY REJECTING AND PRESENTING

As we reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God, we need to present our members as “weapons of righteousness to God” ([6:13](#)). Most versions do not translate this part of the Word this way. Instead of “weapons,” the King James Version uses the word “instruments.” However, the same Greek word is used in [2 Corinthians 6:7](#) in the phrase that is translated “the armor of righteousness.” It is better to render the word “armor” as “weapons.” Paul says that he has the weapons of righteousness. Thus, Paul’s concept in [Romans 6](#) of weapons of righteousness is due to the war between righteousness and unrighteousness. [Romans 7:23](#) proves that a battle is raging within man. [Romans 13:12](#) says, “let us put

on the weapons of light.” This also proves that a war is raging. In such a fight we do not need instruments; we need weapons. Every member of our body is a weapon. We should be on the alert for the next battle, for we are warring constantly. Once we realize that we are dead to sin and alive to God, and reckon ourselves to be such, we must present our members as weapons of righteousness to fight the battle.

Furthermore, we need to present ourselves and our members as slaves to God ([6:16](#), [19](#), [22](#)). If we present ourselves to God as slaves and our members as weapons of righteousness, we will be sanctified spontaneously. This means that we take sides with the resurrected Christ who dwells within us as life. We stand with this eternal life. In this way we give the eternal life an opportunity to work within us, to separate us from everything common, and to sanctify us. The result of this presentation is sanctification. This is the order of our experience: we see, we reckon, we present ourselves to God, we reject sin, and we cooperate with God.

We must reject sin, for it still dwells in our fallen body ([6:12](#)). Do not cooperate with sin any longer. Reject sin and cooperate with God. Do not be so spiritual that you become passive and

cease to do anything at all. Passivity is dreadful. If you are passive, you will be cheated and deceived. We should be neither passive nor too active, since neither our passivity nor our activity is of any value. What then should we do? We must see the facts, reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God, present our members and ourselves to God, reject sin, and cooperate with our God. We should not do anything on our own. Do not try to love your wife or submit to your husband. Do not try to be humble or kind. However, you need to reject sin. When sin comes to you with a proposal, you must say, “Sin, depart from me. I have nothing to do with you.” Do not let sin continue to lord it over you (6:14). This means that you reject sin and turn to God and say, “Lord, I am Your slave. I want to cooperate with You. In the matter of loving I want to cooperate with You. I want to be Your slave. Whatever You do, I will follow You and cooperate with You.” Do not be passive or active. Simply reject sin and cooperate with God. If you do this, you will not only be righteous, but also sanctified. You will undergo an inward, dispositional change.

The issue of sanctification is life eternal (6:22). Romans 6 concludes with sanctification unto eternal life; Romans 8 begins with the Spirit of

life. Do not ask me where to put Romans 7. Although this chapter is in the Bible and cannot be deleted, it can be eradicated from our experience. We may leap from the end of Romans 6 to the beginning of Romans 8.

What the Apostle Paul means in Romans 6 is that, on the one hand, we are in the fact of having been crucified and resurrected with Christ and that, on the other hand, we have the divine life. The fact that we have been crucified and resurrected with Christ has transferred us out of Adam into Christ. The divine life enables us to live a sanctified life. We need to see that we have been transferred. Based upon our seeing, we reckon ourselves as such by believing. Then we need to cooperate with the divine life by rejecting sin and by presenting ourselves and our members to God. We do have a position to reject sin, for now we are “not under law but under grace” (6:14). Sin has no ground, no right, to make any claims upon us. Instead we, standing under grace, have the full right to reject sin and its power. At the same time, by taking sides with Christ, we present ourselves and our members as slaves to God that the divine life may work within us to sanctify us, not only positionally, but also dispositionally, with the holy nature of God.

As a summary, we may say that we have all been baptized into Christ. By being baptized into Him we have been identified with Him in His death and resurrection. We have grown together with Him in His death and are now growing together with Him in His resurrection life. We see that we are dead to sin and alive to God and reckon it so in our heavenly accounting book. Based upon this reckoning, we present ourselves as slaves to God and our members as weapons of righteousness. This affords the opportunity for the divine life within us to do its sanctifying work. Then we learn to reject sin and to cooperate with God. The result of it all is sanctification, which ends with life eternal. Praise the Lord!

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