

# GOD'S GREAT EMBRACE

**Discovering Deeper  
Intimacy with *Jesus***

ADRIAN BEST



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May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be glorified in all our lives.

*Adrian Best*



## Introduction

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### Life Is All About Jesus

To get a glimpse of how different our lives could be if we grasped the truths explored in this book, imagine hearing a testimony like this nearly two thousand years ago:

*We've seen things.* Breathtaking, astonishing things. But our hearts have pierced the veil and seen what even our eyes cannot. Revelations from God, declaring that inexhaustibly awesome wonders have taken place in Jesus Christ.

“Moses, the prophets, truly the whole of Scripture points to me,” our Lord said to us. “I am the bread of life. Believe in me and you will never go hungry. I am the way. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

When Jesus walked with us, we saw a man. Now we see the eternal plan of God. In the person and work of Christ, all humanity and creation have been renewed. In him, through faith, we've been made new creations, lifted up by the Holy Spirit into the lavishly, loving embrace of God our Father.

We've been described as madmen and fanatics. We're not mad, but we are fanatical about Christ. We live and breathe our Lord Jesus. We're completely immersed in him. He is in us and we in him. He is our life, our work, our purpose, our bread and meat. He's our first thought in the morning, our last thought at night. We worship and adore him—the Prince of Glory, the Son of God.

We seek to know him more and more, and his hold on us grows with each passing day. Therefore, we cannot meet someone without sharing Jesus with that person. It is impossible for us to be silent and idle. Because of this, we have been mocked, despised, lashed, and chained—for him. And if it be the Father's will, we are ready to be crucified for his glory.

What we have, no amount of money can buy. We would rather be slandered and ridiculed, even imprisoned and killed, than deny what we've seen and now believe.

Such are the radical sentiments expressed by the New Testament authors. These individuals had seen something monumental in Jesus. They were bursting at the seams to tell the world about it to help everyone see what they'd seen and to believe what they believed.

To these trailblazers of Christianity, life was all about Jesus. Everything they wrote for us is soaked to the core with him. Beautifully and emphatically they articulated their Christ-centered faith, doing so with clarity and consistency.

They never grew tired of telling everyone that Jesus is our all in all. If we have him, we lack nothing.

These pioneers of the faith had eyes only for Jesus, though they saw through him to his Father. They understood that the whole reason Jesus lived, died and rose again was to take us to the Father. Of course we must center on Jesus, they exhorted, for it's only because of him that we can come to the Father at all. But our focus, they concluded, must be on both Father and Son. We're to know and love them, praise and trust them, obey and glorify them—with all our heart, mind and strength, as inspired in us by the Holy Spirit, whom we're to equally worship as God. Their prism was entirely Trinitarian, but everything they saw was through the lens of Jesus.

More specifically, they viewed themselves as one with Jesus, the Father's beloved Son, the crucified and risen Christ. "Jesus is in us and we're in him. We are united with Christ," they taught. To them, life is all about sharing in the life of Jesus. It's about entering ever more deeply into his intimate relationship with his Abba Father in the Spirit. Intensely meaningful, it is life *in Christ*.

## What to Expect from This Book

This book seeks to explore the wonder and mystery of the gospel, the key to all Christian life and practice: the believer's union with Christ.

What is this union? Why is it so important? There are few questions greater than these.

A dear friend and mentor once reminded me that we can't take others where we haven't been ourselves. I want to help you grasp something of your union with Christ by taking you on my own journey. Along the way, we'll encounter some of life's most burning questions. These deep mysteries of life and spirituality are not accessible by science, psychology, or philosophy, but are unveiled in the Trinitarian love and grace of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit poured out for us in Jesus Christ.

I offer my thoughts on union with Christ as a fellow pilgrim to whom God has spoken about this glorious biblical truth through the ups and downs of my life, a good dose of seminary education, and my years of church life, Christian experience and prayer. I've experienced firsthand the truths and the treasures, the pitfalls and the mistakes described in the pages ahead. But this book isn't about me. It's about all believers. It's about the Holy Spirit deepening our journey with Jesus into the Father's heart.

What you'll find here is down-to-earth and pastoral, while also rooted in biblical theology. Starting with foundational truths about this union in the first four chapters, the rest of the book gives rise to an abundance of practical applications, with the potential to transform your life.

## Key Terms

Before launching into this book, it's helpful to have a basic working definition of three important concepts

associated with union with Christ: sonship, justification and sanctification.

In regard to Jesus, sonship points to his unique relationship with the Father. The sonship of believers refers to our sharing in the Son's relationship with the Father. As God's sons and daughters, we can come before him, just as Jesus does and always has.

In this book, I use the word *sonship* as a theological term. It has nothing to do with gender. Females are brought to sonship in Christ just as males are included in the bride of Christ, the church.

*Justification* refers to our position before God. We're perfectly righteous in God's sight, totally accepted by him on the basis of Christ's life and cross. Justification takes place the instant we come to faith in Jesus and it remains our status throughout life, despite our sin.

*Sanctification* describes a life set apart from sin and to God. It refers to the continuing process of being transformed into the likeness of Jesus. We're becoming within ourselves what we already are in Christ. Sanctification progresses gradually throughout life, from conversion until death, with plenty of backward steps and slow advances along the way.

We can rest peacefully in our sonship and justification in Christ, but we must keep a holy dissatisfaction about our current state of sanctification—until that blessed day when we stand before God in heavenly glory, completely and perfectly sanctified in Christ.



# 1

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## A Grace Awakening

**H**ave you ever had a light-bulb moment that completely changed the course of your life? An event, big or small, that set you on a radically new path? A moment of realization and inspiration, when lights of insight were switched on for the first time and you saw so clearly things previously hidden in the dark?

For the biggest such moment in my life, I have Martin Luther to thank.

I was in my mid-twenties—my bachelor years—and living with a couple of friends from church. Having had my fill of sitcom TV for the evening, I retired to the modest comforts of my bedroom about nine o'clock. Despite feeling tired and ready for some shut-eye, I felt drawn to an article on Martin Luther that had caught my eye earlier that day at seminary. Lying down, I began to read. I had no idea this article would impact me forever.

Of course, the day I gave my life to Christ at age thirteen was utterly life-changing. That was a spiritual awakening. This was a grace awakening.

## The Great Exchange

The article was specifically about Luther's teaching on what he called the "wonderful" or "joyous exchange."<sup>1</sup> I'd never heard of this before, nor of the truth that underpins it—something the article dubbed "union with Christ."

As I pored over the words, God's truth leaped off the pages. My jaw dropped with astonishment and elation. For the first time, the eyes of my understanding saw with clarity, at the heart level, the wonder of God's grace in Christ. In the twinkling of an eye, God deepened my grasp of his gospel. *Salvation is an exchange, through union with Christ.*

This beautiful exchange is summed up by Paul in 2 Corinthians 8:9: "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich."

And again, in 2 Corinthians 5:21: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

The climax of this exchange is found in Ephesians 1:3: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."

Here's Paul's point: What is ours is given to Jesus, and what is his is given to us.

Christ became one of us, fulfilled the law and all righteousness, and on the cross took upon himself and dealt with every fallen aspect of our lives—all our sin and



guilt, brokenness and shame, judgment and eternal death—in order that we, united with him, may have bestowed on us every good thing of Christ’s—his sonship and glory, righteousness and holiness, joy and eternal life, and more.

Luther used the picture of marriage to illustrate this truth.<sup>2</sup> All that the bride is and has, she shares with her groom; all that the groom is and has, he shares with his bride (Song of Songs 2:16). So it is with us and our Bridegroom, to whom we’re joined in the most perfect of all marriages.

Now, imagine that the bride is a prostitute and the groom is a king. Full of grace and love, the king says to her, “All that you are and have, I take to myself, and all I am and have, I give to you, my queen.”

That is what it means to be in Christ.

Whatever Christ shares with us is truly and uniquely his own. Jesus gives us his sonship, his righteousness, his sanctification. It would be wrong to think of Christ’s sonship *and* our sonship, or Christ’s righteousness *and* ours, or Christ’s holiness of life *and* ours. There aren’t two sonships, two justifications, two sanctifications. Christ’s sonship is our adoption, his righteousness is our righteousness, his sanctification is our sanctification. His becomes ours.

Likewise, it’s wrong to think God treats us “as if” we’re his children or “as if” we’re righteous. If you’re united with Christ, you *are* a child of God and you *are* righteous.

Whatever has happened to Jesus has also, in him, happened to us. His history is our history. It’s the exchange of our fallen humanity for his risen and glorified humanity. It’s the exchange of our dead existence in sin for his

fellowship with the Father in the Spirit. To be a Christian is to share in the life of Jesus.

## The Time Between Times

That article enabled me to see the beauty and joy of Christianity in ways I never had before.

As I set it on my bedside table, something further dawned on me. If the great exchange is true, our salvation in Christ is already complete.

When viewed from the perspective of God, who is outside time, Christians are even now united with Christ in all his fullness. God gave us all of Christ's benefits at once, in the moment we first had faith and were made one with his Son (Romans 8:30; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 1:3–14; Hebrews 10:14). As Paul says, "In Christ you have been brought to fullness" (Colossians 2:10). In love, the Father has given all things to Jesus (John 3:35), and all things of Jesus are given to those who believe (Ephesians 1:3).

From God's vantage point, all the various aspects of salvation—our adoption, justification, sanctification and glorification—continue simultaneously in our lives from conversion onward. Each is like the facet of a diamond, and the diamond is Christ, whom we received at first faith.

But from our perspective, governed as we are by time, salvation is perceived and experienced in stages as a linear progression or in chronological order: faith followed by adoption and justification, followed by sanctification, then

glorification. We're acutely aware of the distinction between what we are already in Christ (adopted, righteous, sanctified and glorified) and what we are in ourselves (sorely in need of sanctification and glorification).

To our time-locked thinking:

- we have been saved (from the punishment and reign of sin and to God's embrace)
- we are being saved (from the power and influence of sin at work within us and to God's likeness)
- we ultimately will be saved (from the lingering presence of sin in us and to God's glory)

We presently experience Christ's resurrection life and power in part, not in full. We're in the time between times—between Christ's first and second comings. But at Christ's glorious return, we will experience his fullness in us. When we see him, we'll be like him (1 John 3:2).

God sees the end from the beginning. He knows the overall plan, the whole canvas, with all its intricacies. He's a weaver of tapestries who creates the tiniest detail and designs the big picture. We, on the other hand, cannot see the end from the beginning. That is why we worry about our salvation and need our Father's constant reassurance to strengthen our faith and hope.

We ask God, "Father, do you love me?"

"Yes," he replies. "More than you can imagine. I chose you before the creation of the world to be my child."

"Do you love me even when I sin?"

“Yes, even then.”

“So, I’m forgiven?”

“Yes, of every single sin.”

“So then... I’m right in your sight?”

“Yes. Perfectly righteous.”

“Will you make me more like Jesus?”

“Yes. I will sanctify you.”

“And will you keep me, protect me, and lead me home to heavenly glory?”

“Yes, yes and yes. Those whom I have chosen, I also called; those I called, I also justified; those I justified, I also glorified. All my promises are Yes in Christ, and all are yours in Christ.” (Romans 8:30; 2 Corinthians 1:20).

## Paradigm Shift

From that evening onward, my Christian walk took a new direction. I was determined to understand more deeply the believer’s union with Christ and the great exchange it brings about. I saw this doctrine as crucial gospel truth in which to grow.

# 2

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## The Gospel in Two Words

I love to go hiking, away from the hustle and bustle of civilization. I've found no better place to relax, unwind, ponder and pray than out on a nature trail where my five senses can enjoy the freedom of the great outdoors.

On nearly every trail I hike, seeds are scattered all around me. I glimpse them, yet I don't pay attention to them. My brain focuses on the bigger picture and omits these lesser things.

But when I think about them, these little bundles of nature amaze me. In humble seeds lie the power to grow an entire forest.

### A Duet of Words

Key details can be right in front of our eyes, yet we fail to see them. That's especially true if the details are small. Little things often go unnoticed. Obscured by bigger things more easily perceived, they seem insignificant. But great truths can be hidden in small details.

Like a humble seed, there's a little phrase in the Bible that often goes unnoticed. We hear it in church and we

read it on nearly every page of the New Testament epistles, yet we often view it as unimportant, uninteresting, or as time-worn Christian jargon.

But there's far more to this little phrase than we could ever imagine. In it, infinitely great things are found. It contains a mountain of meaning and tons of power. It's the Bible's abbreviation for the profound truth and reality of the believer's union with Christ.

That phrase is *in Christ*.

God's wisdom is packaged in those two words (1 Corinthians 1:30). God designed salvation in such a way that in order for us to share in Christ's wondrous blessings, Jesus himself must dwell in us and we in him (Romans 8:10; 1 Corinthians 1:30). We must be one with him—united with Christ (Romans 6:5). In this duet of words, Scripture finds its shorthand for all the marvel and mystery of the Christian life.

The phrase *in Christ* (and its variations, *into Christ*, *with Christ*, *through Christ*) can be seen a staggering number of times in the New Testament. It undoubtedly held great meaning for the Bible's authors.

The apostle Paul used this expression a whopping 216 times in his writings.<sup>3</sup> In the opening of Ephesians (1:1–14), he uses *in Christ* (or its sister phrases) over ten times in just thirteen verses. That's intense—especially when we consider he uses the common word *and* fewer times in the same passage.

Peppering his letters to the early church with these phrases, Paul tells us that we:

- have grace in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:4; Ephesians 1:6; 2 Timothy 1:9)
- have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ (Ephesians 1:3)
- have been chosen in Christ (Ephesians 1:4, 11)
- have been created in Christ (Ephesians 2:10)
- are new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- have died with Christ (Romans 6:3–11; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:12, 20; 3:3; 2 Timothy 2:11)
- have risen with Christ (Romans 6:4–11; Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 2:12; 3:1)
- have been made alive in Christ (Romans 6:8, 11; Colossians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:11)
- have been seated in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 2:6)
- are reigning with Christ (2 Timothy 2:12)
- have redemption in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 1:7)
- have adoption (sonship) in Christ (Ephesians 1:5; Galatians 3:26)
- have justification (righteousness) in Christ (Galatians 2:17; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21)
- have sanctification (holiness) in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; Ephesians 2:10)
- have glorification in Christ (Romans 8:17)
- have wisdom in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30)
- have eternal life in Christ (Romans 6:23)

- have an inheritance in Christ (Ephesians 1:13–14; Romans 8:17)
- have been marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit in Christ (Ephesians 1:13)

Paul is so prolific in his use of the phrase *in Christ* that theologian Albert Schweitzer says, “This ‘being-in-Christ’ is the prime enigma of the Pauline teaching: once grasped it gives the clue to the whole.”<sup>4</sup> From beginning to end, union with Christ is the heart of Paul’s Christian life, theology and experience.

Writing of Paul, the esteemed Scottish minister James S. Stewart described union with Christ as “the key which unlocks the secrets of his soul,” even more than justification, sanctification, or reconciliation. Stewart continues:

If one seeks for the most characteristic sentences the apostle ever wrote, they will be found not where he is refuting the legalists, or vindicating his apostleship, or meditating on eschatological hopes, or giving practical ethical guidance to the church, but where his intense intimacy with Christ comes to expression.<sup>5</sup>

And Paul isn’t the only one. According to priest and author Brennan Manning, “Union with Jesus emerges as John’s dominant theme” in his Gospel account,<sup>6</sup> a point with which eminent theologian Martyn Lloyd-Jones agrees.<sup>7</sup>

The doctrine of union with Christ pervades the whole New Testament. As theologian Sinclair Ferguson says, the



believer's union with Christ is "a doctrine which lies at the heart of the Christian life" and "the truth to which the New Testament constantly returns."<sup>8</sup>

Many founding fathers of Protestantism and other historic figures in the church over the last five hundred years have taught union with Christ in their sermons and writings. Pastors, theologians and missionaries—including giants of the faith like Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Owen, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, Hudson Taylor, Karl Barth and John Stott—have taught about our union with Christ.

## Christianity 101

Having studied this doctrine at PhD level, I'm convinced that union with Christ is Christianity 101. Along with the cross, it's the central truth of the entire doctrine of salvation.<sup>9</sup>

To be saved is to be in Christ; to be born again is to be in union with Jesus. The phrase *in Christ* is virtually a synonym for "Christian" in 2 Corinthians 12:2 ("I know a man in Christ") and Romans 16:7 ("Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who... were in Christ before I was").<sup>10</sup>

If you believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you are in union with him. You're united with Christ irrespective of how close you feel to him on any given day. The depth of your experience of intimacy with Jesus may fluctuate and your devotion to fellowship with him may vary, but your union with him remains constant and complete.

Nothing can make you any more or any less united with Christ. It's like marriage. You're either married or you're not. No one can become more married or less married. You may sometimes feel closer to your spouse than you do at other times, but the marriage covenant doesn't fluctuate based on emotions.

Union with Christ is the way God works in us and through us. It's not a single blessing among many other parts of our salvation. We receive adoption, justification, sanctification and glorification when we become one with Jesus through faith.

As Paul says in Ephesians 1:3, in Christ we receive "every spiritual blessing." All the benefits of salvation radiate from this union. Like wheel spokes extending from the hub, union with Christ is at the center of it all.

## The Great Irony

Although every believer is in union with Christ, some don't know it, or know it only vaguely. They miss out on the incredible added dimension of daily Christian experience that comes from living consciously in union with Christ. They're not dwelling in the security, peace and power of the revelation of what it means to be united with Jesus.

Imagine peering through the lens of a high-power camera. You zoom in on a fairyfly, the world's tiniest insect—some are only 0.005 inches long (0.13 mm). It sits delicately on a shiny golden surface. You see the long bristles on the fairyfly's wings, giving it a kind of feathery appearance.

Now visualize yourself slowly zooming out. The golden surface curves in a circular fashion and you see a person's face imprinted in the gold. You decipher that it's a coin. Widening the scope further, you realize this coin is nestled among countless other gold coins, plus gems and precious jewels. The fairyfly has no idea that a priceless treasure lies beneath its feet.

Christians who are unaware of their union with Christ are sitting on a great treasure without realizing it.

If you're a Christian, you've been in union with Jesus from the moment you first committed your life to him. All the wonder and mystery of this truth has been yours since your conversion.

## Fixing the Lens

Until we realize the central place of union with Christ in Christian theology, life and practice, many of the gospel's richest treasures will remain hidden from our sight and experience. "Union with Christ may be the most important doctrine you never knew you needed to know."<sup>11</sup>



# 3

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## The Dynamic of God

**B**efore we explore the tremendous wonders of life in Christ, let's first consider its mystery. We'll begin with a glimpse through the eyes of a fisherman named John.

Our boat cut smoothly through tranquil shallows, waves gently lapping the wooden bow. The whisper of wind in the sails and the songs of seabirds in flight were like music to my ears. I took in a long, deep breath, refreshed by the crisp air and the familiar scent of open water. Flanked by my friend Peter and my brother James, I looked fondly at my Lord and my fellow disciples. Then I followed Jesus's gaze and peered into the distance to the lake's far side.

When we pushed off from shore, the sun was slowly retiring. But as we sailed, the sky quickly darkened as billowing black clouds rolled in. A strong wind rose. This had the makings of a raging tempest.

My Lord was resting in the stern, asleep. And rightly so. His ministry was taxing, though he went about it with tremendous grace, peace and strength.



## Notes and References

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- 1 I've long since lost the article describing Luther's understanding of salvation as a "wonderful" or "joyous exchange." However, there are plenty of books that note this concept in Luther's theology. For example, Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand, *The Genius of Luther's Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 46.
- 2 See Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian, 1520," in *Luther's Works: Career of the Reformer: I*, edited by Harold J. Grimm, general editor Helmut T. Lehmann; translated by W.A. Lambert, revised by Harold J. Grimm (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), volume 31, pages 351–352; Martin Luther, "Two Kinds of Righteousness, 1519" in *Luther's Works: Career of the Reformer: I*, edited by Harold J. Grimm, general editor Helmut T. Lehmann; translated by Lowell J. Satre (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), volume 31, page 297.
- 3 See Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 1997), 313.
- 4 Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 3.
- 5 James S. Stewart, *A Man in Christ: The Vital Elements of St. Paul's Religion* (Vancouver, British Columbia: Regent College, 2002), 147.
- 6 Brennan Manning, *Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2015), 108.
- 7 See Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *God the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 1997), 102–103.

- 8 Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Christian Life: A Doctrinal Introduction* (Edinburgh, Scotland: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1981), 97.
- 9 See John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 161.
- 10 See Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1996), 108.
- 11 Daniel Montgomery and Timothy Paul Jones, *PROOF: Finding Freedom through the Intoxicating Joy of Irresistible Grace* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 97.
- 12 Sinclair B. Ferguson, *By Grace Alone: How the Grace of God Amazes Me* (Sanford, Florida: Reformation Trust, 2010), 102.
- 13 See W.A. Criswell, *Expository Sermons on Revelation: Volume Two* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963), 183–184.
- 14 Brennan Manning, *Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2015), 148.
- 15 See J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1973), 182.
- 16 Bernard of Clairvaux, “Sermon 8, The Holy Spirit: The Kiss of the Mouth,” in *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux, Volume Two: Song of Songs I*, Cistercian Fathers Series: Number Four, edited by M. Basil Pennington; translated by Kilian Walsh (Trappist, Kentucky: A Cistercian Publications title published by Liturgical Press, 1971), 46.
- 17 See Robert Graves, *Greek Myths* (London: Penguin, 1981), 63–64.
- 18 See Robert Harvey, *Best-Loved Hymn Stories* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963), 158–160; Kenneth W. Osbeck, *101 Hymn Stories* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1982), 126–128.
- 19 Martin Luther, “Scholia: Chapter Four” in *Luther's Works: Lectures on Romans*, edited by Hilton C. Oswald; translated by Jacob A. O. Preus (Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), volume 25, page 260.
- 20 See John R. W. Stott, *Men Made New: An Exposition of Romans 5–8* (Leicester, U.K.: InterVarsity, 1966), 36.
- 21 It's worth noting a popular misunderstanding of Paul's key phrase of Romans 6, “died to sin.” Unfortunately, some see “died to sin” in the context of sanctification rather than justification. As John Stott explains, the misinterpretation goes something like this: A person who has “died to sin” is unresponsive to it. That is, they're as unresponsive to the



- temptation of sin as a corpse is to physical stimulus. But as Stott himself points out in detail, there are good reasons why this interpretation cannot be correct. For example, our own personal experience ought to be proof enough that our sinful nature is still alive and kicking. What's more, if we're unresponsive or insensitive to sin, if we have no desire or inclination to sin because we've died to it, then Paul's concluding exhortations that we not sin are completely unnecessary (Romans 6:12–14)—and so is every other passage of Scripture exhorting us not to sin. Contextually, the “unresponsive to sin” explanation makes no sense. See John R. W. Stott, *Men Made New: An Exposition of Romans 5–8* (Leicester, U.K.: InterVarsity, 1966), 37–41; John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans* (Leicester, U.K.: InterVarsity, 1994), 169–171.
- 22 See John R. W. Stott, *Men Made New: An Exposition of Romans 5–8* (Leicester, U.K.: InterVarsity, 1966), 30–52; John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans* (Leicester, U.K.: InterVarsity, 1994), 168–182.
- 23 See Martin Luther, “To Jerome Weller. July, 1530,” in *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, Library of Christian Classics edition, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Vancouver, British Columbia: Regent College, 1960), 86–87.
- 24 For insightful explanations of Romans 6:1–14 see John R. W. Stott, *Men Made New: An Exposition of Romans 5–8* (Leicester, U.K.: InterVarsity, 1966), 30–52 (the biography illustration I describe is from pages 49–50); John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans* (Leicester, U.K.: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 168–182; Sinclair B. Ferguson, *By Grace Alone: How the Grace of God Amazes Me* (Sanford, Florida: Reformation Trust, 2010), chapter 7.
- 25 See John R. W. Stott, *Men Made New: An Exposition of Romans 5–8* (Leicester, U.K.: InterVarsity, 1966), 50, 56.
- 26 See John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Library of Christian Classics edition, edited by John T. McNeill, translated by Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960), III.xvi.1; John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, edited by David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance, translated by John W. Fraser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 46.
- 27 Mark Twain, *Mark Twain Speaking*, edited by Paul Fatout (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1976), 284.

- 28 See John Piper, *Future Grace: The Purifying Power of the Promises of God* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2012), 3.
- 29 Quotations from J. Hudson Taylor in this chapter are from “The Exchanged Life,” a letter from Taylor in Chinkiang, China, dated 17 October 1869, to his sister Amelia Broomhall in England. This letter is reproduced in Taylor’s biography, written by his son Howard and daughter-in-law Geraldine. See Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor, *Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission: The Growth of a Work of God* (London: China Inland Mission, 1927), 173–177.
- 30 Lewis B. Smedes, *Union with Christ: A Biblical View of the New Life in Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 58.
- 31 John R. W. Stott, *Life in Christ: A Guide for Daily Living* (London: Monarch, 2003), 125.
- 32 John R. W. Stott, *Basic Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 123.
- 33 C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1980), 123.
- 34 See John Piper, *Future Grace: The Purifying Power of the Promises of God* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2012), 287.
- 35 John R. W. Stott, *Men Made New: An Exposition of Romans 5–8* (Leicester, U.K.: InterVarsity, 1966), 15.
- 36 See Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand, *The Genius of Luther’s Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 46.
- 37 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Library of Christian Classics edition, edited by John T. McNeill, translated by Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960), IV.xvii.2.

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