

THE
CROSS
DIVIDER

Free in Christ



RICHARD THOMPSON

In Memory
Mii Hsiung Thompson
Loved

For my wife Mii

Through your life and death, God got hold of me.

Who should read this book?

Walking freely in Christ can seem impossible. This book is for those who are willing to give God and this author a chance to explain what we got wrong.

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Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations originate within the King James Version of 1611. Archaic words have been updated, as well as some minor rewording for clarification.

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Introduction

The Church: Mired in Sin

After coming to Christ, we may think our struggles with sin to be over. Decades later, our bondage continues. How and why do unhealthy desires so easily overwhelm us?

Living the Christian life is not just difficult—at times, it seems impossible. We entered into His life well enough by the Spirit, but due to misconceptions and erroneous ideas, we do not walk in His path. Not understanding God's way of life, we have defaulted to our doomed efforts, instead of depending on Christ. God is using our desperation to drive us into the arms of Jesus.

Dr. Gary Smalley, a counselor, author, and speaker on family relationships, acknowledged on a Focus on the Family broadcast that he struggled with lust until he was sixty five years old.¹ His disclosure lets us breathe a sigh of relief. If a long-time Christian professional could not overcome his sin for decades, we realize that our struggle is common.²

Officially, 51% of all pastors say internet pornography is a temptation³—75% of them have no accountability in their internet usage; 50% of all Christian men and 20% of all Christian women say they are addicted to pornography.⁴ In unofficial statistics, 70% of all Christians say they have a daily struggle with pornography, along with 76% of pastors surveyed.⁵ Yet another source states that 60% of all women admit "significant struggles with lust."⁶ A final reference says, "90% of 500 Christian men, surveyed at a retreat, admitted they were feeling disconnected from God because lust, porn, or fantasy had gained a foothold in their lives."⁷ After coming to Christ, I remained enslaved for thirty-five years. If we are honest, 100% of us will admit that we are or have been in bondage to some type of sin.

We have sought deliverance from addictive behaviors through accountability and counseling. One internet accountability software program, Covenant Eyes, erects barriers to insulate users from pornography. Like the three wise monkeys, we must hide from sight, hearing, or speech, lest we sin. Every stimuli must be shut out through law-based, external controls founded on fear. But, the ultimate answer is not bouncing our eyes from temptation, which is only a tactic. Christ's strategy is for us to rest in Him and share in His ability to overcome sin. Accountability tools or groups can be used as a first step to separate us from stimuli, but deliverance is found only in Christ.

The other approach to overcoming pornography and other addictions is through counseling. One Christian organization recommends a program of three to five years to realize freedom from sexual addiction.⁸ Does the Spirit handcuff Himself to man's programs in order to free us? Of course not! That is man's way, not God demonstrating His tremendous love and power through Christ!

Christ is the dynamite that destroys the works of the devil. Christ, the living Word, revealed through His written Word is the only One Who sets us free. Once we see Him for Who He really is, there is not a power in the universe that can prevent us from walking in His liberty.

Part 1 – Is Liberty in Christ Real?

Freedom? You Can't be Serious!

Can we be free? Why do we not see deliverance in ourselves or others? Why are weakness and frailty in our spiritual lives the norm? Frankly, we may not believe that anyone is free—and we can be extremely angry with the few who say that they are. It is okay to withhold belief in what others tell us, but let us depend on God's Word alone as the final arbiter as to whether freedom exists.

Jesus says, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." That would be false, if we are not free. The admonitions in Romans 6 of being dead to sin (v 2, 7, 11), free from sin (v 7, 18, 22), and no longer having to yield to sin (v 13, 16, 19) would be laughable without freedom. And, Galatians 5:1 would be foolishness if there was no liberty in Christ:

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage.
(Galatians 5:1)

If sin continually trips us, then how can scripture say the following?

Do not let fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness be named once among you, as is fitting for saints; (Ephesians 5:3)

Really? Sin not named once among us? Were Paul and his coworkers in Christ liars when they said this?

You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly, honestly, and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe: (1 Thessalonians 2:10)

And, we know that Christ tells us to abide in Him.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine; neither can you, unless you abide in Me. (John 15:4)

What is to be expected if we do abide?

He who says he abides in Him walks like He did. (1 John 2:6)

Whoever abides in Him does not sin: whoever sins has not seen Him, neither known Him. (1 John 3:6)

Does God really expect me to walk like Him? Aren't we all overcome by sin and are therefore lifetime sinners?

Overcoming Like Your Father

We can overcome the issues of life, death, the works of the devil, and everything in between.

Far from being common and inevitable, sinning should be rare and disappearing if you know Him. Just as physical pain alerts you that something is wrong in your body, sinning is God's signal that something is wrong in your understanding, for God has fully accomplished His work. If sin is not radically declining in your experience, then you are missing Him as your life!

His freedom is like breathing pristine mountain air, after a lifetime of inhaling smog. It is truly free indeed. Have you settled for guilt and condemnation? Do you think He is so greatly disappointed in you that He must turn away in disgust? Then, you do not know your Father.

Beloved, you are so dearly adored that in your lostness, nothing could stop Him from finding you and carrying you home on His shoulders⁹—not even knowing that He had to die to save you. Dear one, if there was anything else He could have done to deliver you, and equip you, He would have. But, He already did His work—He gave you Himself.

He wants you to enjoy your shared life with Him. You do that by overcoming, by proving that He is not just enough, but He is all. He wants you to see Him for Who He Is, your great Deliverer.

Freedom is not some outlandish label. It is something He demands for you, because you are precious to Him. Truly being free is the only life acceptable for His children. After all, you are a chip-off-the-old-block, a child of your Father, made in His image, intended not to be just like Him, but to be one with Him.

If you were not meant to rise above, then overcoming,¹⁰ triumphing,¹¹ reigning,¹² conquering,¹³ being free,¹⁴ and delivered¹⁵ would not fill His Word. Despite all this, you may not have believed Him and instead have yielded to sin. He is reaching to you, lifting your head and raising you up. You will stand with Him in the gap, alongside your brothers and sisters who know Him and His intense love for you all.

Sinners or Saints?

Are you a sinner or a saint? If you contemptuously cry out, "Sinner!", ask yourself why. Is it because you have carefully researched the New Testament and it squarely labels you one? Or, is that what you have always been told?

Consider this: *sinner* occurs forty-four times in the New Testament.¹⁶ Do you know that 80% of that time, it is referring to the lost? 9% of the time, the Pharisees called Jesus a sinner!¹⁷ Less than 7%—three occurrences—can be erroneously twisted into labeling

you a dirty, rotten, no-good, scoundrel in Christ.¹⁸ In contrast, the word *saint* occurs sixty-one times in the New Testament. How many of these times refer to Jesus-loving Christians? 100%. Do you think you should slander yourself when God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit do not? Stop berating yourself in Christ! He loves you, delights in you, and adores you. Christ took the *sinner* to the cross, and the great news is what went to the cross died! Your old *sinner* cannot climb down from the cross to pick up where it left off. Instead, a *saint* rose with Him. Jesus guaranteed that. Welcome home, Saint.

Part 2 – Objections. Yes, but

Thistles, Weeds, and Ruin

And, lo, the field and vineyard were all overgrown with thorns, and nettles had covered its face, and its stone wall was broken down. (Proverbs 24:31)

And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage shouting to cease. (Isaiah 16:10)

(8) That which bears thorns and briars is rejected, and is near to being cursed; whose end is to be burned.

(9) But, beloved, we are persuaded of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we speak this way. (Hebrews 6:8-9)

If there is freedom, then why have so many lives, that started out well,¹⁹ turned to despair? Is scripture schizophrenic? Are we both free and enslaved at the same time? Heavens no, but our minds are divided. "Okay, you gave me verses of deliverance, overcoming, triumphing, etc. Now, how about: 1 John 1:8, Romans 7, Galatians 5:17, and James 1:14? These verses trumpet that we are not free! If I am wrong, then show me!"

These objections spring up from the common assumption that you still have a sinful nature, even after you are saved in Christ. If you believe you have a sinful nature seed, certainly briars and thorns will grow.²⁰ *Your faith in a misconception, is unbelief in God's deliverance.*

Your own belief is the problem. Faith in a sinful nature is a self-fulfilling prophecy. You will stay enslaved to sin. Loved one—this seed has been uprooted from your field. *His Word, His Son, is now the seed planted in you!*²¹

Examining the Seed

Let's ask Paul for clarity.²²

Reader: Paul, please explain to me what happened at our salvation. What are our identities before and after we come to Christ?

Paul [handing me a sketch, Fig. 1]: Let me show you what happens at salvation.

<i>Before the Cross Without Salvation</i>	<i>After the Cross Salvation In Christ</i>
<i>power of darkness Col 1:13</i>	<i>shine as sun Matt13:43</i>
<i>Satan's kingdom Matt 12:26</i>	<i>kingdom of Christ Col 1:13</i>
<i>power of Satan Acts 26:18</i>	<i>power of God Acts 26:18</i>
<i>your father, the devil John 8:39-44</i>	<i>"Abba, Father!" Rom 8:15</i>
<i>darkness, shadow of death Luke 1:79</i>	<i>light and life John 1:4, 8:12</i>
<i>children of the night 1 Thess 5:5</i>	<i>children of the day 1 Thess 5:5</i>
<i>by nature children of wrath Eph 2:3</i>	<i>partakers of the divine nature 2 Pet 1:4</i>
<i>prince of power of the air, spirit working in the sons of disobedience Eph 2:2</i>	<i>joined to Lord one spirit 1 Cor 6:17</i>
<i>spirit of the world 1 Cor 2:12</i>	<i>we received the Spirit of God 1 Cor 2:12</i>
<i>spirit of bondage to fear Rom 8:15</i>	<i>Spirit of adoption Rom 8:15</i>

Figure 1: Salvation from the old to the new.

Reader: A cross-shaped diagram that distinguishes between what was true before we were saved, and what God has done in Christ!

Paul: Life, for many, has become an indistinct, jumbled puzzle. The design is unclear and its pieces don't seem to fit. Until these parts snap together cleanly, we don't know what life is supposed to look like. Christ's sacrifice on His cross has brought clarity to the puzzle. He divided the old life from the new. If we rightly divide His Word, the puzzle pieces satisfyingly pop into place, and we see as we should.²³ Look at the salvation cross—there are two separate, unmixed kingdoms, two fathers, two natures, and two spirits. When we are saved, we are moved from the old kingdom to the new. Do you understand the significance of nature and spirit that you see in the cross above?

Reader: I don't think so.

Paul: The Bible says that God, man, and the angelic realm are spirits.²⁴ Our human spirits, at birth, are patterned after the first Adam. In salvation, we are born again into the

last Adam, Who is Christ Jesus, and joined to Him in spirit.²⁵ These two spirits, Adam and Christ, are the foundations to understanding the two possible human natures. The sinful nature, also called the flesh, is inherited from Adam and naturally sins. And, in Adam, we are by nature children of wrath."²⁶ In contrast, by our spiritual rebirth, we are made sharers of the divine nature in Christ Jesus.²⁷

The sinful nature is evil. Jesus links the sinful nature to Satan, when He tells the Jews that they are of their father, the devil.²⁸ I wrote of this same connection:

In time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. (Ephesians 2:2)

Paul [continuing]: In people, the root of sin is manifested by the sinful nature.²⁹ Key questions about the sinful nature are, "Did God rid us of this root or does it continue into our lives in Christ? Did the Lord only forgive our sins, the symptoms of evil, or did He free us from the principle of sin itself, the sinful nature? Be assured that our Lord Christ Jesus dealt with sin's root."³⁰

Reader: Does this mean our natures are one or the other—either of Adam or of Christ—but not both?

Paul: Yes. Salvation is the removal of the dead-to-God, sinful nature spirit followed by a replacement with a new spirit, joined to God's Spirit—*old spirit out, new spirit in*.³¹

No Mixture of Spirits

Reader: But, doesn't Galatians 5:17 tell us we have both flesh and spirit warring in us?

Paul: Look more closely.

For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. These are contrary to one another, so that you cannot do the things that you want to do. (Galatians 5:17)

Reader: I see that flesh and spirit fight against each other and are contrary to one another.

Paul: The word translated *contrary* means *opposite*.³² The flesh and spirit represent two rival spirits, Adam or Christ, in the salvation cross—they cannot co-exist. Throughout Galatians 5, I used the same Greek word for *flesh*.³³ Here is the final flesh reference in the chapter.

And they who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. (Galatians 5:24)

Since the flesh, which is the sinful nature, is dead by crucifixion with Christ, a dead thing cannot be in your spirit warring against you.³⁴ The devil can only con you into believing the sinful nature is alive. Do not believe the devil—he is a defeated liar.

Reader: All our lives, we've been taught or have heard we have sinful natures and that flesh and spirit are mixed.

Paul: Scripture repeatedly reveals that no mixing of the Holy and unholy is possible. Jesus, when accused of casting out demons by the prince of demons, said, "A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand."³⁵ He distinguished two separate, unmixed kingdoms: Satan's and the Kingdom of God. He further declared that "the prince of this world ... has nothing in Me."³⁶ No mixing. Adding to this, righteousness has no fellowship with unrighteousness, light has nothing in common with darkness, Christ has nothing in common with Belial, a believer has nothing in common with an unbeliever, and the temple of God has nothing in common with idols—we are separate from evil.³⁷ No one can serve two masters.³⁸ We were once darkness, but now we are light.³⁹ There is no darkness in Jesus.⁴⁰ The evil one does not touch the one born of God.⁴¹ A fountain cannot send forth both sweet and bitter water, a vine cannot produce figs, and a good tree cannot put forth corrupt fruit.⁴² Greater is He who is in us than the devil that is where? The devil is in the world, not in us.⁴³ God's Spirit and Satan's spirit cannot be mixed. What is the Spirit of which we partake? Those who are joined to the Lord are one spirit with Him—He cannot be mixed with evil.⁴⁴ You are not in the flesh, but in the spirit.⁴⁵ You are the new person in Christ, not the old person of the flesh. Christ crucified us to the world and the world to us.⁴⁶ There is no more common ground between the world and us. We are dead to it, and it is dead to us.

Reader: This may not be how we have heard the distinction between the Holy and unholy explained, yet we can recognize the recited scriptural comparisons. They overwhelmingly reinforce the division of opposites between the two kinds of life—between sin and righteousness.

Then, why in chapter 7 of your letter to the Romans, does sin appear to triumph, as if you still have a sinful nature? You seem to struggle with sin, just like we do. And, if you, whom we consider the super apostle, cannot live the Christian life, then what does God expect from us?

Romans 7 Revealed

Paul: People seek to be justified before God by either the works of the law or by Christ, but justification is found only in Christ.⁴⁷ We live either by an inner Person, Christ, or we live by the outer things of the law. So, for context, do Romans chapters 6 and 8 focus on Christ or on the works of the law?⁴⁸

Reader: They're based on Christ. Reflecting on your salvation cross illustration, I see justification by the law would fit on the left side and justification by Christ would fit on the right.

Paul: Yes, you are seeing the contrast between humanity's two possible ways to live. Romans chapters 6 and 8 describe what our lives are to look like in Christ—they fit on the right-hand side of the cross. What about chapter 7?

Reader: The word *law* occurs twenty-three times, but there are only a couple references to Christ. Chapter 7 must be law-based, the opposite to Christ.

Paul: Correct. If you examine the number of legal words⁴⁹ in the chapter's twenty-five verses, you will find forty law words.⁵⁰

There is a second key that will show, once and for all, whether chapter 7 is speaking about our lives in Christ or about lives lived under the law.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:2)

Paul [continuing]: Which of the two laws applies to us as believers in Christ?

Reader: That would be the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus which overcomes the lower law of sin and death.

Paul: Knowing this, which law is the subject of chapter 7?

Reader: Failure is tantamount, so the subject must be the law of sin and death.

Paul: There are forty-five references to sin and death.⁵¹ Romans 7 is not talking about what is true in Christ. It's talking about our old state before we came to Him, the law of sin and death.

When a person lives by law, only sin and death can result.⁵² Chapter 7 does not contradict freedom in Christ, because I was not writing about life in Him! The chapter describes what happens when people live by law. I confirmed this in verses 23 and 25 where "I" is captive to and serves the *law of sin*, the lower law.

In Romans 7, I link sinful natures to the law, neither of which applies to us in Christ.⁵³

A Reef in 1 John 1:8?

Reader: Does anyone else corroborate that we no longer have sinful natures in Christ? John, may I ask you a question? You wrote a verse that has become one of the most common objections to our having freedom in Christ.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8)

Many of us have understood this to mean we still have sinful natures in Christ and will always sin. So, is this a correct interpretation, or is the verse saying the same thing as its close companion, verse 10?

If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:10)

John: The phrase *have no sin* in verse 8 can also be translated, *have not owned sin* or *have not possessed sin* or *have no ability to sin*.⁵⁴ It has the same meaning as 1 John 1:10—every person *has* sinned.

Reader: I need more proof that 1 John 1:8 is not saying we still have sinful natures in Christ.

John: Take note of these additional verses in the book of 1 John.

I write these things, so you do not sin.⁵⁵ (1 John 2:1a)

He, who says he abides in Him, walks like He did. (1 John 2:6)

Whoever abides in Him does not sin: whoever sins has not seen Him, nor known Him. (1 John 3:6)

Whoever is born of God does not commit sin, for His seed remains in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (1 John 3:9)⁵⁶

Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. (1 John 5:4)

We know that, whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who is begotten of God keeps himself, and that wicked one does not touch him. (1 John 5:18)

John [continuing]: Since all scriptural verses must support each other in the same Bible book,⁵⁷ do the above verses communicate a sinful nature in Christ?

Reader: No—just the opposite! These verses tell us if we abide in Him, we do not and cannot sin, because we have been born of God and His seed remains in us! We don't sin, because our identities have changed.

Verse 8 means the same as verse 10—simply that all of us, except Jesus, the God-man, have sinned.⁵⁸ 1 John 1:8 is not saying we have sinful natures at all. In fact, we have God's seed, His Spirit and nature, in us.

Evil Desire?

Sometimes, we believe we have a sinful nature through the translation of a scripture verse like James 1:14 in the New International Version: "... each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own *evil* desire and enticed." Let me ask James, the author.

Reader: James, did you write *evil* desire in chapter 1, verse 14?

James: A word for *evil* is not there—I wrote the following:

But everyone is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own desire, and enticed.
(James 1:14)

Reader: But, the desire is evil, right? Haven't you proven my point that our natures, even in Christ are inherently evil?

James: Here are two other verses which use the same Greek word for *desire*. Are these desires evil?

And He said to them, I have greatly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: (Luke 22:15)

For I am in a strait between the two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: (Philippians 1:23)

Reader: Do these verses portray evil desires? Of course not! Jesus said the first one, and He is holy; no evil in Him! And, Paul is speaking in the second one. His desire was to go home with Christ!

James: The context of the word *desire* can be good or bad. Sometimes, it is clarified by other words such as *desire of the flesh* in Galatians 5:16 and 1 John 2:16.⁵⁹ Strong desire, however, is the proper translation for James 1:14.

It is not a sin to be tempted. Jesus was tempted in all things, as we are, yet without sin.⁶⁰ If the desire was already evil, it would not need to be tempted.

Onward to Freedom

To still believe in a sinful nature in Christ means either God could not do anything about your sinful nature or that He did not care to. Nonsense. He came to deliver you from the works of the devil.⁶¹

The perceived roadblocks to our freedom based on 1 John 1:8, Romans 7, Galatians 5:17, and James 1:14 have been obliterated by a dominating God Who won the battle with sin. The bedrock to our freedom rests in our shared spiritual nature with God. Let us examine our relationship with Him.

Part 3 – One With God

Why Ask Paul?

Reader: Paul, what is the major theme of your letters?

Paul: Christ gave me the revelation⁶² of the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in His people.

Reader: Of course, you mean the Holy Spirit.

Paul: Yes.... [He handed me the following drawing, Fig. 2]

<i>Before the Cross In the World</i>	<i>After the Cross Holy Spirit in us</i>
<i>your father, the devil John 8:39-44</i>	<i>Holy Spirit given to those who ask Luke 11:13</i>
<i>prince of power of the air, spirit working in the sons of disobedience Eph 2:2</i>	<i>receive the Holy Spirit John 7:39 ; Acts 2:38</i>
<i>by nature children of wrath Eph 2:3</i>	<i>give you another Counselor John 14:16</i>
	<i>Holy Spirit will be in you John 14:17</i>
	<i>Holy Spirit given to those who obey Him Acts 5:32</i>
	<i>Holy Spirit was given to us Rom 5:5</i>
	<i>Holy Spirit is in you 1 Cor 6:19</i>
	<i>sealed with Holy Spirit ; down payment Eph 1:13, 14</i>
	<i>Holy Spirit dwells in us 2 Tim 1:14</i>

Figure 2: The indwelling Holy Spirit.⁶³

Paul [continuing]: ... and the Son, and the Father dwell in His people.

Reader: We have heard about the presence of the Holy Spirit in believers, but, isn't the Father on His throne and Jesus at His right hand?⁶⁴

Paul: Yes, but the revelation is that they are not only there. They're also in the ones They love. Being in only one place at a time described Jesus when He walked the earth. If He was in Jerusalem, then He was not simultaneously in Galilee. The same is not true after Christ ascended, nor is it true of our Father. We cannot limit God to a single picture that illustrates His transcendence on the throne at the expense of His eminence and intimacy with us. We especially cannot restrict Him to one place when His Word does not do the same.

To believe that Jesus is only in heaven, is to fragment the Persons of the Godhead. We commonly believe that the Holy Spirit is the lone Presence, holding down the fort inside us, which is getting beaten up by sin. We wonder why the Father and the Son are in heaven, far away from helping us. However, this splitting of the Godhead is impossible and unscriptural.

Reader: Jesus said He had to go away for the Holy Spirit to come. We might naturally assume, when He went away to our Father, that He stayed away until His second coming.⁶⁵ John recorded Jesus telling us:

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send *Him* to you. (John 16:7)

(16) And I will pray to the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that *He* may abide with you forever;

(17) Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees *Him* not, neither knows *Him*: but you know *Him*; for *He* dwells with you, and shall be in you. (John 14:16-17)

Paul: However, we must recall what Jesus also said in the verses immediately following verse 17.

(18) *I* will not leave you comfortless: *I* will come to you.

(19) Yet a little while, and the world sees *Me* no more; but you see *Me*: because *I* live, you shall live also.

(20) At that day you shall know that *I* am in *my* Father, and you in *Me*, and *I* in you.

(28) You have heard how *I* said to you, *I* go away, and *come again to you*. If you loved *Me*, you would rejoice, because *I* said, *I* go to the Father: for my Father is greater than *I*. (John 14:18-20, 28)

Paul [continuing]: Many may assume that the Holy Spirit (Comforter) and Christ are the same—that the Holy Spirit is actually Christ in us or that Christ is in the Holy Spirit. Some have equated the “He ... shall be in you” and “I will come to you” to be the same thing. Not so. In verses 16-

17, Christ refers to the Comforter in the third person *He, Him*, but Christ follows with speaking of Himself in the first person *I, Me, My*. Christ did not say He and the Holy Spirit were the same. Though They are one, They are distinct Persons with different roles. Christ, in the John 14 passage, says that He will be in us too.⁶⁶ This is echoed when I wrote to the Galatians:

(15) But when *it pleased God*, Who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace,

(16) *To reveal His Son in me*, that I might preach Him among the heathen; I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood: (Galatians 1:15-16)

Reader: "It pleased God ... to reveal His Son in me." Amazing! [Paul handed me a diagram showing scripture of the indwelling Christ, Fig. 3.⁶⁷] Wow, so many times!

Before the Cross In the World	After the Cross Christ in us
your father, the devil John 8:39-44	Christ in us- John 6:56, 14:20, 15:4-5, 17:23,26
prince of power of the air, spirit working in the sons of disobedience Eph 2:2	man [has] the Spirit of Christ Rom 8:9-10
by nature children of wrath Eph 2:3	joined to the Lord, one spirit 1 Cor 6:17
	Jesus' life in us 2 Cor 4:7, 10-11
	Jesus Christ in you 2 Cor 13:3, 5
	His Son in me Gal 1:16
	Christ lives in me Gal 2:20
	Spirit of Christ in your heart Gal 4:6
	Christ formed in you Gal 4:19
	Christ in your heart Eph 3:17, 19
	Christ magnified in my body Phil 1:20
	Christ in you, the hope of glory Col 1:27
	[Christ] working ... in me mightily Col 1:29
	You have received Christ / Godhead Col 2:6, 9
	Christ is in all Col 3:11
	His seed in you 1 John 3:8-9
	Christ comes into us Rev 3:20

Figure 3: The indwelling Christ.⁶⁸

Paul: Neither the Father, nor the Spirit, claim to be life in us. Only Jesus is our life⁶⁹—He must be in us, so that we have life.⁷⁰ John also told us the Holy Spirit does not speak of Himself. He teaches us all things, reminds us of what Christ said, guides us into truth, speaks what He hears, shows us things to come, glorifies Christ to us, and receives from Christ all things the Father has given the Son and shows us these things.⁷¹ And, these things are the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ!⁷²

Reader: Incredible. Can it get any better than this?

Paul: It does. Where is our Father?

Reader: We've already said that He's in heaven on the throne.

Paul: Here [he hands me the Father's cross, Fig. 4].

<i>Before the Cross In the World</i>	<i>After the Cross Father God in us</i>
<i>your father, the devil John 8:39-44</i>	<i>Spirit of your Father speaks in you Matt 10:20</i>
<i>prince of power of the air, spirit working in the sons of disobedience Eph 2:2</i>	<i>Father and Son live in us John 14:23</i>
<i>by nature children of wrath Eph 2:3</i>	<i>Father is in you Eph 4:6</i>
	<i>we have both the Father and the Son 2 John 1:9</i>
	<i>Father is in His Son Who is in us John 14:9-13, 20 ; John 17:21-23 ; 2 Cor 5:19-20 ;</i>
	<i>Know the full mystery of God, the Father, Christ ... fullness of Godhead ... complete. Col 2:2, 9</i>

Figure 4: The indwelling Father.⁷³

Reader: What? The Father too!

Paul: God the Father is in us. This is significant because we will always need the attention, affirmation and affection of our Father. Our earthly fathers will pass away, but our divine Father will never leave us nor forsake us.⁷⁴

The word *Father* is not a meaningless title to Him. He loves us like no one else can. The ultimate Father will never separate Himself from us, His beloved children. If our Father is only on His throne, then we must think of Him as distant and detached. We know we have the Holy Spirit, but He is not the Father, nor does He claim to be Him. We need our Father.

The good news is He is intimately in us to be our Father. John 14:20 and 17:21-23 demonstrate how completely we and the triune God are together. The Holy Spirit in us, Christ in His Father, the Father in Christ, we in Christ, Christ in us, the Father in us. We are one with Them. They have purposed to show us how precious we are to Them by being uniquely and personally in us.⁷⁵

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit *must* be with the ones They love.⁷⁶

A View of Separation

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: (Psalm 66:18)

I used to have a problem with this Old Testament verse. I concluded, when a sinful thought came to my mind, the Lord would not hear me. But the old covenant lacked something: Christ had not yet come. Our Lord Jesus Christ told us about His Father when He spoke of the prodigal son.⁷⁷ Look how our Father responds to us in our iniquity, in contrast to *not hearing us* in the Psalm.

Did the prodigal son regard iniquity in his heart? Yes, he rejected father, brother, and his community. He demanded his inheritance, then wasted it. He threw his life away, before finally admitting to himself, "I have sinned." He returned home in utter failure, only to be greeted with compassion, kisses, the best robe and sandals, a ring on his hand, merriment, rejoicing, and a banquet meal—all given to him by his father.

Because of Christ, our Father does not turn away from us. That was not the case under the law, the legalistic response under the old covenant. We were dead through the law, but through Christ, we are alive again. We were lost, but now we are found.

Pictures of Oneness

Pretend you have finally found your loved one and are delirious with the blessing and the promise of a future life together. Then, your dear one says, "I love you so much that I am moving to the opposite side of the world." Does this make sense? How can your loved one move to a faraway location when you both want to be together? Yet this is how we have perceived our relationship with the Father and the Son.

Or imagine that your loved one is intensely near, as if you are ever cheek-to-cheek, close in mind and heart. Wherever you go, whatever you do—every moment—your loved one is there. You can see your darling out of the corner of your eye. You soon become accustomed to the

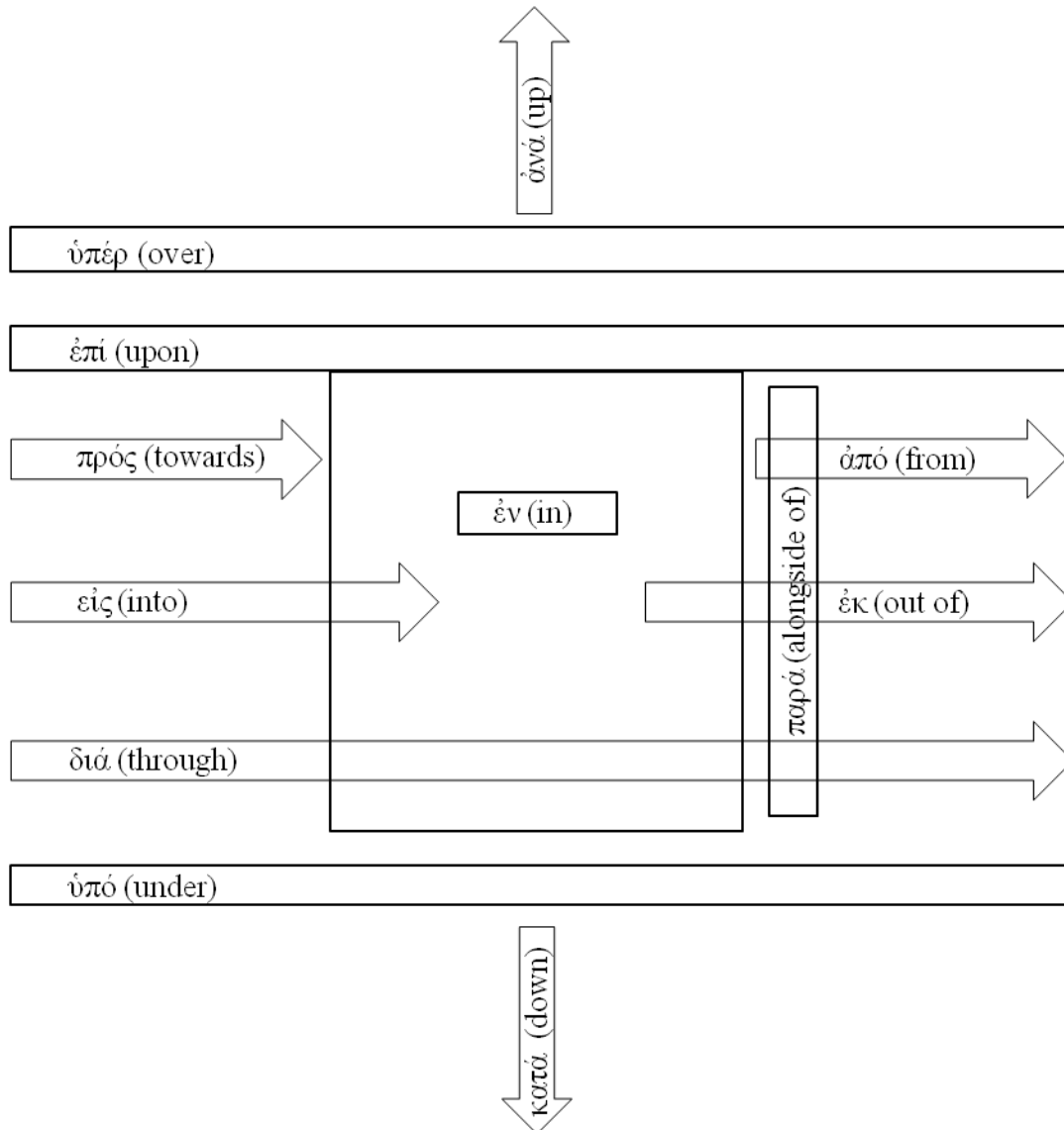
treasured presence and expect it. You both want intimacy and permanence. You want to love and be loved.

Maybe you have never felt this kind of love. Yet, this is the love our Father, His Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit continually give you. At each moment in your spirit, They are looking to make spiritual eye contact, desiring with an intense longing, a craving, to have you belong to Them alone.⁷⁸ They are terribly pained by choices that turn you from Them. This intimate relationship is the only suitable outcome for Jesus' tremendous sacrifice. Call upon Them, not only in the day of trouble, but also with your smallest thoughts and concerns. Greet Them. Tell Them how thankful you are, and how much you love Them. They have given Their Lives to you. You are most deeply loved.

Appendices

The Cross Divider

Appendix A - Greek Prepositions⁷⁹



The Cross Divider

Appendix B - Legal Words in Romans 7, King James Version

<u>Count</u>	<u>Verse</u>	<u>Words/Phrase</u>
2	Rom 7:1	law (2x)
2	Rom 7:2	law (2x)
1	Rom 7:3	law
1	Rom 7:4	law
1	Rom 7:5	law
2	Rom 7:6	law, letter
4	Rom 7:7	law (3x), "You shall not covet (10th Commandment).
2	Rom 7:8	commandment, law
2	Rom 7:9	law, commandment
1	Rom 7:10	commandment
3	Rom 7:11	commandment, it
2	Rom 7:12	law, commandment
3	Rom 7:13	that which is good (2x), commandment
1	Rom 7:14	law
2	Rom 7:16	law, it
2	Rom 7:18	that which is good
1	Rom 7:19	the good
2	Rom 7:21	law, I would do good
1	Rom 7:22	law
3	Rom 7:23	law (3x)
<u>2</u>	Rom 7:25	law (2x)
40		

The Cross Divider

Appendix C - Sin and Death Words in Romans 7, King James Version

<u>Count</u>	<u>Verse</u>	<u>Words/Phrase</u>
2	Rom 7:3	adulteress (2x)
2	Rom 7:5	sins, death
1	Rom 7:6	dead
4	Rom 7:7	sin (2x), lust, covet
3	Rom 7:8	sin (2x), concupiscence ¹
2	Rom 7:9	sin, died
1	Rom 7:10	death
3	Rom 7:11	sin, deceived, slew
6	Rom 7:13	sin (3x), death (2x), sinful
2	Rom 7:14	carnal, sin
2	Rom 7:15	that which I do I allow not; what I hate, that I do
1	Rom 7:16	I do that which I would not
2	Rom 7:17	I that do it; sin
2	Rom 7:18	no good thing; how to perform that which is good I find not
2	Rom 7:19	the good that I would I do not; the evil which I would not, that I do
3	Rom 7:20	I do that I would not; I that do it; sin
1	Rom 7:21	evil
3	Rom 7:23	warring; captivity; sin
2	Rom 7:24	wretched; death
<u>1</u>	Rom 7:25	sin
45		

¹ ἐπιθυμία (epithumia): longing, desire, lust

The Cross Divider

Reviews

Free in Christ: The Cross Divider is an invitation for readers, those well-versed in the Word as well as those just getting their feet wet, to consider that as Christians we already have everything we need to experience life here on earth the way our Heavenly Father planned from the very beginning.

The author describes in clear, concise words and use of charts, a very real dilemma encountered by believers still attempting to live the Christian life under the Old Covenant instead of embracing the new way ushered in by the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The book sheds further light by stressing the distinction and importance of the dividing line of the cross (as the cover so aptly depicts) on the fact that we derive so many blessings and benefits of which Old Testament believers only dreamed and hoped about. Many may find themselves still beholding Christ on that cross and have yet to see Him as their Risen Savior. Others are not applying the truth that we too are seated with Christ alongside the Heavenly Father. When we realize that we are not walking in the light, or applying truth in our everyday lives, we find ourselves stumbling in the dark, repeating mistakes, constantly being tempted, held in bondage; needlessly, since on the cross everything has been provided so we could walk in the freedom that came with such a great price to our Lord.

As a result of embracing these truths found in the Word and highlighted in this book, I have come to realize a deeper, more intimate relationship with my Heavenly Father unlike I had ever experienced prior to reading this book. I considered my walk with my Lord up to this point as rich, intimate and fulfilling, and the Holy Spirit's guidance, wisdom and comfort as important, essential and vital in my life.....until both of these members of the Trinity pointed and focused my attention to the Eternal love of the Father. I now appreciate the fact that my Heavenly Father is not far away on a throne but that He has always been here for me though I was unaware of His Presence, especially during the trauma occasioned by my earthly father's tragic death in an auto accident when I was barely 7 years of age. I have derived much healing throughout my reading as well as an overflowing joy. I am deeply indebted and grateful.

Though you also may indeed be quite familiar with many of the scriptures and passages while reading this book, I would suggest that you, as I did, put on your "spiritual spectacles" and with bible in hand, intentionally allow yourself to linger over the verses and corresponding charts, permitting the words to turn over slowly in your mind, and the seep in. I put aside all other reading that I habitually do, and focused for several weeks in this manner. As a result, I reaped a harvest so bountiful, so rich that it truly enriched and deepened forever my relationship with my Heavenly Father ...Abba...Daddy-God!

-Mari

Bravo! The book has a wonderful writing style. I love the interviews with Paul, John and James that clarify what they say in scripture about being free in Christ.

The book covers three areas:

- 1) There really is freedom in Christ (proven by scripture).
- 2) Then, what about scripture that we think says we are not free (bad ideas refuted and clarified by scripture).
- 3) Our relationship with God which is so much fuller than I realized. It's all right there in His Word. God loves us so much!

It is asserted, and I agree, that most Christians do not know WHO we are in Christ and are unaware of His POWER and PROTECTION against the enemy. It's not that we haven't heard about Christ before in church, radio and television, but the author clarifies the issues and connects so many dots for us! There are some doctrinal ideas that have been in the church-at-large a long time that the author handily challenges with verses we have overlooked in His word. What the author shows to be actually happening in Romans 7 is quite interesting -- hidden right there in plain sight!

I very much enjoyed this book and look forward to more from The Cross Divider!

- BlytheSpirit

What an interesting book filled with scriptures to back up the thoughts. It is meant to be a fast reader but this book really makes you think. I love the compare and contrast cross themes throughout the book

- Melody

The Cross Divider

End Notes

¹ "Guarding Your Married Heart," minutes 35:29-39:59. Dr. Gary Smalley, Dr. Greg Smalley. Accessed 9/30/2015. Purchase from Focus On The Family, http://family.christianbook.com/guarding-your-married-heart-i-ii/gary-smalley/pd/1000931?p=1173450&utm_source=FOTF&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=Broadcast.

² 1 Cor 10:13

³ "The Leadership survey on Pastors and Internet Pornography." Christianity Today, December 2001. Accessed January 6, 2015. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2001/winter/12.89.html?start=2>.

⁴ "Pornography Statistics: Annual Report 2014." Covenant Eyes. 2014. Accessed January 6, 2015. <http://www.covenanteyes.com/pornstats/>.

⁵ Jason Rovou. "Porn & Pancakes' fights X-rated addictions." CNN, April 6, 2007. Accessed January 6, 2015. <http://edition.cnn.com/2007/US/04/04/porn.addiction/index.html>.

⁶ "Pornography Facts & Background." Archdiocese of St. Louis. Accessed January 6, 2015. <http://archstl.org/page/pornography-facts-background>.

⁷ "Shocking Statistics." Mighty Man Ministries, 2014. Accessed January 6, 2015. <http://www.mightymanmanual.com/statistics.html>.

⁸ "7 Steps to Freedom from Pornography" (Freedom From Compulsive Pornography Use, Step 6). The Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas. Accessed January 6, 2015. <http://www.archkck.org/document.doc?id=2131>

⁹ Luke 15:3-6

¹⁰ Luke 11:22; John 16:33; Rom 3:4; Rom 12:21; 1 John 2:13-14; 1 John 4:4; 1 John 5:4-5; Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 26; Rev 3:5, 12, 21; Rev 11:7; Rev 13:7; Rev 17:14; Rev 21:7

¹¹ 2 Cor 2:14 Col 2:15

¹² Luke 1:33; Rom 5:17, 21; Rom 6:12; Rom 15:12; 1 Cor 4:8; 1 Cor 15:25; 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 5:10; Rev 11:15, 17; Rev 19:6; Rev 20:4, 6; Rev 22:5

¹³ Rom 8:37; Rev 6:2

¹⁴ Luke 4:18; John 8:36; Rom 6:7, 18, 22; Rom 8:2, 21; 1 Cor 8:9; 1 Cor 10:29; 2 Cor 3:17; Gal 2:4; Gal 5:1, 13; James 1:25; James 2:12; 1 Pet 2:16

¹⁵ Mat 6:13; Luke 1:74; Luke 4:18; Luke 11:4; Acts 7:34; Acts 12:11; Acts 26:17; Rom 4:25; Rom 7:6; Rom 8:21; Rom 11:26; 2 Cor 1:10; Gal 1:4; Col 1:13; 1 Th 1:10; 2 Th 3:2; 2 Tim 3:11; 2 Tim 4:17-18; Heb 2:15; Heb 11:35

¹⁶ New Testament only references are used since Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

¹⁷

¹⁸ *sinners in James 4:8 and 5:20*. James writes to the Jews (not the Gentiles), *the twelve tribes scattered abroad* (James 1:1 and Gal 2:9). His focus, in contrast to Paul's, is on *what we do*, not *Who* indwells us. Focusing on the *what* in Scripture equates to law, while focusing on the *Who* equates to Christ (grace). Concentrating on the outer *what* instead of the inner Christ can never yield holiness. In fact, it leads to sin, guilt, and condemnation. James' law focus (see also Acts 15:20, 28-29) directs his labeling believers as sinners.

sinners in Gal 2:17. Verse 16 notes that there are two ways people seek justification towards God: either by the *faith of Christ (grace)*, or by the works of the *law*. If we are not living by grace in Christ, the only alternative is to walk fleshly by the law (see the link between law and flesh in Gal 5:16, 18). Though our old identification with law was destroyed ([in Christ] Gal 2:18), in unbelief we can act out-of-character as sinners.

The remaining 4.5% of sinner verses is split between Jesus being separate from sinners (Heb 7:26) and Paul's sarcasm in Gal 2:15.

¹⁹ Gal 3:3

²⁰ Proverbs 4:23

²¹ Luke 8:11; Rom 1:3; Gal 3:16, 19, 29; 2 Tim 2:8

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- ²² Imaginary interviews, between the Reader and New Testament Bible authors, are used to link scripture, so we better understand how we are free.
- ²³ 2 Tim 2:15. Study to show yourself approved to God, a workman who is not ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
- ²⁴ John 4:24; Heb 12:9; 1 Cor 2:11; 1 Th 5:23; Eph 2:2
- ²⁵ 1 Cor 15:45-49, 1 Cor 6:17
- ²⁶ Eph 2:3
- ²⁷ 2 Pet 1:4
- ²⁸ John 8:44
- ²⁹ The 1973 and 1984 New International Version (NIV) and the NIV Readers Version editions translated *flesh* as *sinful nature* to clarify which flesh definition to use. Overwhelmingly, new translations use *flesh* and depend on readers to infer the meaning. Original sin is associated with the flesh.
- ³⁰ The Lord deals with roots: Matt 3:10, 15:13; Mark 11:12-14, 20-21; Luke 17:6
- ³¹ Those who are joined to the Lord are one spirit (1 Cor 6:17). Christ [in spirit] is formed in you [your spirit] (Gal 4:19). A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. (Eze 36:26)
- ³² ἀντίκειμαι *antikeimai* 1) to be set over against, opposite to 2) to oppose, be adverse to, withstand, Thayer's Lexicon.
- ³³ Greek σάρξ (*sarx*)
- ³⁴ See also Rom 6:6-7.
- ³⁵ Matt 12:22-33; Luke 11:14-26
- ³⁶ John 14:30
- ³⁷ 2 Cor 6:14-18
- ³⁸ Matt 6:24
- ³⁹ Eph 5:8
- ⁴⁰ 1 John 1:5
- ⁴¹ 1 John 5:18
- ⁴² James 3:11-12; Luke 6:43
- ⁴³ 1 John 4:4
- ⁴⁴ 1 Cor 6:17
- ⁴⁵ Rom 8:9
- ⁴⁶ Gal 6:14
- ⁴⁷ Gal 2:16, 3:11a
- ⁴⁸ Gal 2:16; Phil 3:9
- ⁴⁹ Legal words or phrases in Romans 7: law, commandment, letter, ordinance; phrases like "the good that I would do" and "it" pronouns that refer to the law
- ⁵⁰ See Appendix B.
- ⁵¹ See Appendix C.
- ⁵² A formula makes it clear: man + law = sin and death.
- ⁵³ We are no longer under law. Gal 3:19, 23-25
- ⁵⁴ ἔχω *echō* 1) to have, i.e. to hold, 1a) to have (hold) in the hand, in the sense of wearing, to have (hold) possession of the mind (refers to alarm, agitating emotions, etc.), to hold fast keep, to have or comprise or involve, to regard or consider or hold as, 2) to have, i.e. own, possess, 2a) external things such as pertain to property or riches or furniture or utensils or goods or food etc., 2b) used of those joined to any one by the bonds of natural blood or marriage or friendship or duty or law etc, of attendance or companionship, 3) to hold one's self or find one's self so and so, to be in such or such a condition, 4) to hold one's self to a thing, to lay hold of a thing, to adhere or cling to, 4a) to be closely joined to a person or a thing, Thayer's Lexicon.
- ⁵⁵ 1 John 2:1 refutes a continuing sinful nature in Christ. To be able to "not sin" is impossible for a sinful nature.
- ⁵⁶ Practicing sin is not the proper translation in 1 John 3:8-9.
- <http://www.scripture4all.org/OnlineInterlinear/NTpdf/ljo3.pdf>
- ⁵⁷ Logical consistency is a characteristic of His Word.

⁵⁸ Some translations (Berean, Darby, ESV, ISV, NASB, NLT) say that we do not *practice* sin, i.e. in 1 John 3:9. However, a sense of practicing sin is not indicated in the Greek.

⁵⁹ Greek: ἐπιθυμιαν σαρκος (desire of the flesh) would clearly be an evil desire, i.e. Gal 5:16 and 1 John 2:16. However, James 1:14 has no accompanying descriptors with *desire*.

⁶⁰ Heb 4:15

⁶¹ 1 John 3:8

⁶² Gal 1:11-12

⁶³ The Holy Spirit is in the believer. The Greek preposition ἐν (in) is found in John 14:17 and 1 Cor 6:19.

See Appendix A for a spatial representation of the Greek preposition.

⁶⁴ Twenty-one verses describe Jesus at the right-hand of the Father: Matt 22:44, 26:64 ; Mark 12:36, 14:62, 16:19 ; Luke 20:42, 22:69 ; Acts 2:25, 33-34, 5:31, 7:55-56 ; Rom 8:34 ; Eph 1:20 ; Col 3:1 ; Heb 1:3, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2 ; 1 Pet 3:22

⁶⁵ John 16:5

⁶⁶ John 14:28. "... I am going away and coming again to you."

⁶⁷ Though the *Christ in you* message was given to Paul, Figure 3 also contains some references from the Apostle John that became clearer through Christ's revelation to Paul.

⁶⁸ Christ also is in the believer. Some believe that only the Holy Spirit is positionally in us and that Christ is not. Such division is impossible. The Greek preposition ἐν (in) is found in 2 Cor 4:7, 10-11; 2 Cor 13:3,5 ; Gal 1:16, 2:20, 4:6,19 ; Eph 3:17 ; Phil 1:20 ; Col 1:27 ; Col 3:11, 1 John 3:9. Revelation 3:20 uses the prefix εἰς to show that Christ comes "into" the believer. See Appendix A for a spatial representation of the Greek prepositions. Note ἐν within the square and the εἰς prefix meaning "into."

⁶⁹ John 6:32-35; John 14:6; Col 3:3-4; Phil 1:21-24; 2 Tim 1:1

⁷⁰ John 5:26, 6:53; 1 John 5:12

⁷¹ John 14:26, 16:13-15

⁷² Col 2:3

⁷³ The Father is also in the believer. Some believe that only the Holy Spirit is positionally in us and that the Father and Christ are not. Such division is impossible. The Greek preposition ἐν (in) is found in Matt 10:20 and Eph 4:6. Additional references for "God in you" appear in 1 Cor 14:25; 2 Cor 6:16; Phil 2:13; 1 John 3:9; and 1 John 4:12, 15-16. See Appendix A for a spatial representation of the Greek prepositions.

⁷⁴ Heb 13:5 Our earthly fathers are or will be separated from us by distance (emotional/physical) and death.

⁷⁵ As Christians we knew we were important to Them, but may have felt ourselves only part of the crowd. Not so.

⁷⁶ Verses that say that God or Father loves us: John 3:16, 14:21, 23, 16:27 ; 17:23; Rom 5:5, 8; Rom 8:39; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 2:4, 6:23; 2 Th 2:16; Tit 3:4; 1 John 3:1, 16, 4:9-12, 16

⁷⁷ Luke 15:11-32

⁷⁸ James 4:5 Strong's Concordance: ἐπιποθέω (epipothēō) From G1909 and ποθέω pothēō (to yearn); to *dote upon*, that is, *intensely crave* possession.

⁷⁹ Adapted from H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 113.