

Introduction

No Contradiction

Freedom in *The Cross Divider: Free in Christ*, may not have convinced some who continue to say, "We have always believed we have sinful natures in Christ." By not seeing our victory over sin, Christian leaders have hurled gasoline on smoldering fires that destroy His people.

This book puts the final nails in the coffin of long-held erroneous ideas and assumptions that keep us enslaved to sin. To be sure, God always retains a remnant who proclaims His truth and deliverance, but freedom from sin in Christ is neither widely preached nor experienced.

This is a no-holds barred, take no prisoners battle for your freedom. Once and for all time, bury the troubling concepts that have long hounded you.

Part 1 –Compare and Contrast

Spotlighting the Four Topics

Many hold on to the idea of a sinful nature in Christ, as if they are defending a holy altar. However, such devotion offers the dubious reward of lives immersed in sin and death.¹ Instead, scripture is jammed with good news comparisons that cast down this false monument. One example is the old person versus the new person. There is also the carnal mind which is conformed to this world, versus the mind of Christ possessed by the believer. Another is flesh versus Spirit. Still another comparison is law versus grace (Fig. 1). Because all comparisons were given to the apostle Paul, let us return to him for understanding them. Thank you, Paul, for receiving this good news from Christ and passing it on to us.²

<i>Before the Cross</i>	<i>After the Cross</i>
<i>old person</i>	<i>new person</i>
<i>carnal mind</i>	<i>mind of Christ</i>
<i>flesh, the sinful nature</i>	<i>Spirit, divine nature</i>
<i>law</i>	<i>grace</i>

Figure 1: Paul's Four Comparisons

Old Person vs. New Person

Reader: Paul, what should I understand from these four comparisons?

Paul: Let me illustrate with the *old person* and the *new person* cross (Fig. 2). Before Christ, you only knew the old person's traits, but in Christ, that old person was crucified, and you became a new person in Him. Do you think the sinful nature lives on in the new person?

<i>Before the Cross Old Person</i>	<i>After the Cross New Person</i>
<p><i>old person serves sin Rom 6:6</i></p> <p><i>the old person is corrupt and has deceitful lusts Eph 4:22</i></p> <p><i>the old person lies, has his deeds Col 3:9</i></p>	<p><i>old person crucified with Christ. Rom 6:6</i></p> <p><i>If any person is in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Cor 5:17</i></p> <p><i>The new person after God is created in righteousness & true holiness. Eph 4:24 ; Col 1:22</i></p> <p><i>You have put on the new person who is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him Who created him. Col 3:10</i></p>

Figure 2: Old Person vs. New Person

Reader: Certainly, the sinful nature is in the old person, and we continually hear that sinful natures are still in us in Christ. Yet, the sinful nature is an old thing that doesn't fit the new person on the right-side of the cross!

Paul: The new person is created holy and righteous after God—it could not be holy, if the sinful nature continued in the new person. Can Satan overpower God and force a sinful nature into the new man?

Reader: Impossible. Yet, that's what we are declaring, when we embrace sinful natures in Christ! We have unknowingly associated an unclean thing with Him, by ascribing a sinful nature to what is created after God in His image!

Paul: God blessed us by crucifying our old persons with their sinful natures. Satan cannot resurrect what Christ has killed.

(6) Knowing this, that our old person was *crucified* with him, that the body of sin might be *destroyed* and done away with, that from now on we should not serve sin. (7) For the person who has *died* is freed from sin. (Romans 6:6-7)

Reader: Some translations of Romans 6:6 say the body of sin is annulled, abolished, or rendered powerless—in other words, it is not necessarily dead.

Paul: Though that is one of the possible definitions for the word translated *destroyed* in the above verses, the correct one must describe a crucified and dead old person's body of sin. Of the possible meanings, only *destroyed* conveys such meaning.³ Our old persons did not, nor could they, survive co-crucifixion with Christ.

Reader: I also hear people saying that we are to keep crucifying the flesh. Is this true?

Paul: That was Christ's job, which He accomplished. A crucified, dead old person doesn't need further crucifying. However, He does tell us to put to death the deeds of the flesh and the members of the body.

For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body, you shall live. (Romans 8:13)

Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: (Colossians 3:5)

Reader: I don't understand what *put to death* means.

Paul: Imagine Jesus telling you, "Follow Me." You arrive at an open grave. The Lord beckons you to look inside and asks, "Whom do you see?" You respond, "I see the old me, dead at the bottom." Jesus continues, "I crucified your old person with Me on the cross, so your old person could no longer trouble you—it is dead.⁴ Now get everything that belonged to your old self and bring them here." You find all the possessions that are filthy from your old person's sin. He says, "Throw them in with your old person and fill your grave with dirt." Your Lord then declares, "There is nothing left of the old person that continues with you." Jesus then has you chisel on a slab, *Here I lie, crucified with Christ and risen in Him in newness of life*.

Let us move on and contrast your mind before and after the cross (hands Reader Fig. 3). Is Christ's mind compatible with the sinful nature?

Carnal Mind vs. the Mind of Christ

<i>Before the Cross Carnal Mind</i>	<i>After the Cross Mind of Christ</i>
<i>spirit of fear, weakness, unsound mind 2 Tim 1:7</i>	<i>Spirit of power, love, and a sound mind 2 Tim 1:7</i>
<i>mind and conscience defiled Tit 1:15</i>	<i>think pure things Php 4:8</i>
<i>evil conscience Heb 10:22</i>	<i>pure conscience 1Tim 3:9 ; 2 Tim 1:3</i>
<i>mind set on what the flesh desires Rom 8:5</i>	<i>hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience Heb 9:14, 10:22</i>
<i>mind earthly things Phil 3:18-19</i>	<i>mind set on what the Spirit desires Rom 8:5</i>
<i>alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works Col 1:21</i>	<i>reconciled to God Col 1:21</i>
<i>did not like to retain God in their knowledge - reprobate mind Rom 1:28</i>	<i>to be spiritually minded is life and peace Rom 8:6</i>
<i>conformed to this world in our mind Rom 12:2</i>	<i>transformed by the renewing of our mind Rom 12:2</i>
<i>carnal mind is enmity to God; is not/cannot be subject to the law of God Rom 8:7</i>	<i>we have mind of Christ. 1 Cor 2:16, Phil 2:5</i>

Figure 3: Mind

Reader: An evil, carnal mind with no peace is inconsistent with God's right-side attributes in Christ. We don't have the carnal mind anymore; we have Christ's mind and pure consciences, because we have Him in us.⁵

Paul: The right-hand sides of each cross are expressions of the Godhead in us believers. By holding fast to sinful natures in unbelief, we inevitably root ourselves deeper into sin, and associate God with evil. However, our minds are transformed by sharing His mind. Now, let us see Him expressed in Spirit (hands Fig. 4 to Reader).

Flesh (Sinful Nature) vs. Spirit

<i>Before the Cross Flesh (Sinful Nature)</i>	<i>After the Cross Spirit</i>
<i>by nature children of wrath Eph 2:3</i>	<i>sharers of the divine nature 2 Pet 1:4</i>
<i>You are in the flesh if the Spirit of God & Christ are not in you Rom 8:9</i>	<i>You are in the spirit if the Spirit of God and Spirit of Christ are in you. Rom 8:9</i>
<i>in debt to the flesh Rom 8:12</i>	<i>ransomed from debt 1 Tim 2:6</i>
<i>If you live after the flesh, you shall die. Rom 8:13</i>	<i>If you through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live. Rom 8:13</i>
<i>dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of flesh Col 2:13</i>	<i>quicken together with him, forgiven all trespasses Col 2:13</i>
<i>nothing good lives in me Rom 7:18</i>	<i>circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ Col 2:11</i>
<i>in the flesh the motions of sin work in us & bear fruit to death Rom 7:5</i>	<i>We were (past tense) in the flesh, but now we serve in the spirit. Rom 7:5-6, 8:9</i>
<i>do the things of the flesh Rom 8:5</i>	<i>do the things of the Spirit Rom 8:5</i>
<i>cannot please God Rom 8:8</i>	<i>We walk and please God. 1 Thess 4:1</i>
<i>works of the flesh are manifest; adultery, fornication, ... Gal 5:19</i>	<i>If you are Christ's, you have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Gal 5:24</i>
	<i>He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. 1 Cor 6:17</i>

Figure 4: Flesh (Sinful Nature) vs. Spirit

Reader: The Presence of the Spirits of God and Christ in us determines that we are in the Spirit, no longer in the flesh,⁶ which is the sinful nature.⁷ This refers to the new birth—Christ is formed in us and we are born again.⁸ The sinful nature does not belong to us in Christ!

Paul: Jesus told us that God is spirit.⁹ We are created in God's image and are also spirit.¹⁰ Spirit is the lowest common denominator of identity, and a nature describes what that spirit is like. So, the sinful nature is the nature of Adam's fallen spirit inherited from birth. Through His spiritual circumcision, Christ cut away and removed the body of the sins of the flesh, which is the crucified old spirit with its sinful nature. And just as with physical circumcision, the sinful nature is discarded, never again to be a part of the life in the Spirit.

In whom you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: (Colossians 2:11)

Paul [continuing]: Additionally, by belonging to Christ, He has included us in what He has done. Our sinful natures with their passions and desires were crucified with Him!¹¹ The dead, sinful nature cannot and does not persist in us in Christ.¹² Its host spirit was slain, circumcised, and cast away.

Reader: So, the left-side of the cross contains the old person who had a carnal mind and a sinful nature, all of which were crucified and removed?

Paul: Yes. They cannot have a part with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with Whom you are joined in spirit.¹³ To believe that an evil sinful nature survives to be one spirit with the Lord is tantamount to calling God evil. He is holy and cannot be mixed with evil.¹⁴

Let's move on to the final topic—one that strikes at the core of man's sin problem.

Law vs. Grace

(9) Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and mothers, for manslayers, (10) For whoremongers, for them who defile themselves with mankind, for men stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; (1 Timothy 1:9-10)

Reader: The law was made for unrighteous, sinful nature sinners, so it was designed for the left-hand side of the cross—what *was* true before Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. We who share His righteousness in grace are on the right-hand side with what *is* true in Christ. Help me understand better. Simplify the essence of *law*.

Paul: Law means *we must do* what God requires. The responsibility to obey the law is entirely on our shoulders. This describes all of mankind's religions before Christ. In contrast, grace means that *God must do* what He requires, because we cannot. A person under law seeks to please God by outward acts, to be justified apart from faith, to get blessings from God, or to earn salvation by doing for God rather than by knowing Him. The distinction is between focusing on the outer things of the law, rather than knowing the indwelling Father, Son, and Spirit.

Things are what we know best. Most of our life experiences involve seeking things outside of us, and are therefore law-based. We are externally focused because of them. But, Jesus warned of this:

(39) You search the scriptures, thinking that in them you have eternal life. But, the scriptures testify of Me, (40) and you will not come to Me, that you might have life. (John 5:39-40)

Paul [continuing]: The Jews were searching the Scriptures for eternal life—a thing. Today, we are commonly admonished to search for principles and precepts—more things. Have we not learned that scripture does not exist for us to focus on things? To do so is to live by the law. The Scriptures magnify Jesus Christ Who has been made our Life.¹⁵ Grace in the Person of Christ is the summation of history.¹⁶ Though we are accustomed to hearing grace described as a thing, *the unmerited favor of God*, its ultimate Personification is only found in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Let's compare law and grace. [Paul hands Reader the Fig. 5 sketch].

<i>Under Law External Things</i>	<i>Under Grace Internal Person</i>
law is for the wicked 1 Tim 1:9	righteousness by Jesus Rom 5:21
holy, just, good law condemns me to death Rom 7:9-12 ; 2 Cor 3:6,9	not condemned in Christ Jesus Rom 8:1
law a tutor until Christ Gal 3:24	Christ is the end of the law. No longer under law. Rom 6:14-15, 10:4 ; Gal 3:19, 25; 5:18
power of sin is the law 1 Cor 15:56, law of sin and death Rom 8:2	law of Spirit of life in Christ overcomes law of sin and death Rom 8:2
the letter (law) kills 2 Cor 3:6	Spirit gives life 2 Cor 3:6
sin has dominion over me Rom 6:14	sin has no dominion Rom 6:9, 14
arouses sinful passions Rom 7:5	holiness Eph 4:24 ; Heb 12:14 ; Rom 6:19
law not based on faith Gal 3:12, 23	grace based faith, put on Christ Gal 3:24-27
You are under a curse. Gal 3:10, 13	You are under Abraham's blessing. Gal 3:14
cannot follow all laws perfectly Gal 3:12 ; Gal 5:3 ; James 2:10	all things lawful, but not all are profitable, or build up. I will not be mastered by any thing. 1 Cor 6:12 , 10:23
sin is alive Rom 7:8	apart from law, sin is dead Rom 7:8
shadow of things to come Col 2:16	body (substance) is of Christ Col 2:17

Figure 5: External Law vs. Internal Grace in Christ

Recognizing Law and Grace

Reader: What does it look like to live by law? Do we live that way a lot?

Paul: Consider this conversation: “Pastor, I am not doing well.” “How is your prayer life?” “Not very good.” “Reading your Bible?” “Not much.” “Witnessing?” “No.”

The prescription is plain—if we do these things, we will do well. Translation: doing things will please God, accomplish our desire to feel good, be more spiritual, and be a

good Christian. It is subtle. *Doing* is critical. The question is, "Are we walking by law which can only bear the fruit of sin?"

By focusing on the old person, the carnal mind, and the flesh, we put ourselves under the law, even when we have salvation in Christ. The inevitable falling into sin and death occurs when we live by law.¹⁷ Here's what it looks like when we walk by law (hands Reader Fig. 6). It looks fleshly.¹⁸ Romans 7:5 points out that when we sense the motions of sin in us, we are walking by law, which does not require faith and cannot please God.¹⁹

<i>Law</i>	
<i>thoughts against God, sin strongholds</i>	<i>2 Cor 10:4-5</i>
<i>adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lust, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, fighting, jealousy, anger, rivalry, division, heresy, envy, murder, drunkenness, reveling</i>	<i>Gal 5:19-21</i>
<i>foolish</i>	<i>1 Cor 3:18-19</i>
<i>filthiness, foolish talking, jesting</i>	<i>Eph 5:4</i>
<i>disobedient, deceived, wasting time and life</i>	<i>Titus 3:3</i>
<i>bitterness, wrath, anger, tumult, evil speech, malice</i>	<i>Eph 4:31</i>
<i>blasphemy, shameful speech, lying</i>	<i>Col 3:8-9</i>
<i>contentious, striving, unprofitable, vain</i>	<i>Titus 3:9</i>
<i>self-lovers, covetous, boasting, proud, unthankful, unholy, no affection, slander, implacable, without self-control, fierce, haters of good</i>	<i>2 Tim 3:2-3</i>
<i>worldly</i>	<i>Eph 2:2</i>
<i>unrestrained behavior, evil desires, orgies, carousing</i>	<i>1 Pet 4:3</i>

Figure 6: Fleshly Living by the Law

Reader: But I'm a Christian, therefore I am living by grace!

Paul: Though we are saved by grace, we may not be walking by it. Anytime we experience sin, we are actually walking by the law, not by grace through Christ Himself. He doesn't sin, and in Him, we don't either.²⁰

Reader: What are some of the ways we walk by law?

Paul: Walking by law has been our default—everything is external to us. We rank ourselves by what we do, such as our test grades, how fast we run, our appearances, our incomes, and whom we know.

Once we come to Christ, we unfortunately also find this externality in the church. "Do this, not that. Get plugged in here. Be a good witness, boss, father, mother, husband, and daughter. You've been given an *ability* to follow Him, now go and do it."

In spiritual disciplines, there are two tools commonly used in the church where we can walk by law: the accountability group and the quiet time.

If accountability groups focus on techniques rather than on God within, they will walk by law and fall into sin. However, if members know that their old selves were crucified with Christ, that they are new creations in Him, and that He is their life, then Christ can be known and grace can be lived through Him. The difference is between outer law and the indwelling Christ.

With the second tool, the quiet time, we make a distinction between a special time with the Lord and the rest of the time apart from Him. In reality, we are one with Him all the time, not just trying to get close to Him during a quiet time. If we separate our spiritual lives from what we might call our *real* lives, we insult Him Who is our Life.²¹ Apart from Him, we cannot exist, let alone make it through the day.²² If our quiet times are only booster shots of spirituality—more things—that we hope will last until tomorrow, then we have no sense of Christ in us. And, without that sense, we walk and fall by law. We must recognize His continual, intimate inner Presence.

Let's consider what He looks like in us in grace.

<i>Grace</i>	
<i>yielded , led</i>	<i>Rom 6:13,16 ; 8:14 ; Gal 5:18</i>
<i>obedient</i>	<i>2 Cor 2:9</i>
<i>disciplined, intentional, temperate</i>	<i>1 Cor 9:25-27</i>
<i>Christ lives in us, changed into His likeness</i>	<i>Gal 2:20 ; 2 Cor 3:18</i>
<i>love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control</i>	<i>Gal 5:22 ; John 15:4-5</i>
<i>righteous and holy</i>	<i>Eph 4:24</i>
<i>mercy, humble, meek, forbear, forgive, love</i>	<i>Col 3:12-14</i>
<i>wise, use time well, speak with grace</i>	<i>Col 4:5-6</i>
<i>our Father seeks the fruit of righteousness in us</i>	<i>Heb 12:11</i>

Figure 7: Grace looks like Christ²³

Reader: We can compare our experiences to these two crosses to know whether we are living by law or grace in Christ. I'm beginning to recognize—I have been living by law and not even knowing it!

All Things Are Lawful in Grace

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. (1 Corinthians 6:12)

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful: all things are lawful for me, but all things do not edify. (1 Corinthians 10:23)

Reader: How can lawless actions such as adultery and murder be lawful? Surely, these verses do not really mean what they appear to say!

Paul: Everything is lawful in Christ, because His nature is holy and righteous. He will never commit adultery or murder, because these have their source in the evil one.

Although Christ did not need to follow the Law to gain righteousness, He fulfilled it and died to it, so we could be united with Him.²⁴ Our identities are now hidden in Christ.²⁵

All things are also lawful because Christ is the end of the law. The law was a tutor to lead us to Him—now we are no longer under the law.²⁶ We are new creations, no longer our own.²⁷ Our old selves, and the old spiritual affinity we had with the evil one, are dead through crucifixion with Him. We are one with Him such that it is no longer we who live, but Christ Who lives in us.²⁸ In Him, all things are lawful to us, because we share His holiness.

The crosses illustrating the old person/new person, carnal mind/mind of Christ, flesh/spirit, and law/grace demonstrate that the Scriptures do not promote a doctrine of a continuing sin nature after the cross. The sinful nature with its carnal mind was within the old person who lived by law. That old person was crucified on the cross and is dead in Christ. In contrast, the new person is holy and righteous, is recreated in God's image, has the mind of Christ, has the fullness of the Godhead, and lives by the grace found only in Christ Who lives within.

The Cross Divider – Elephant in the Room

¹ Rom 6:21. What fruit did you have then in those things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

² Gal 1:11-12. (11) But I want you to understand, brothers, that the gospel that I preach does not come from man's thought. (12) For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it. I received the gospel by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

³ **Thayer Definition** καταργέω (katargeō) (#2a best describes the crucified (dead), old person)

- 1) to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative
 - 1a) to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency
 - 1b) to deprive of force, influence, power
- 2) to cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish
 - 2a) to cease, to pass away, be done away
 - 2b) to be severed from, separated from, discharged from, loosed from any one
 - 2c) to terminate all intercourse with one

⁴ Rom 6:6-7

⁵ Col 2:9. Also, in *The Cross Divider: Free in Christ* Part 3, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are in Their children.

⁶ Rom 7:5 – you were (past tense) in the flesh. Rom 8:9 – you are no longer in the flesh.

⁷ σάρξ (sax) Definitions include the body and the sinful nature. Two examples: 1) flesh (the soft substance of the living body, which covers the bones and is permeated with blood) of both man and beasts, or 2c) the sensuous nature of man, "the animal nature," including 2c2) the animal nature with cravings which incite to sin. Thayer's Lexicon.

⁸ Gal 4:19, My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ is formed in you [in spirit] ; John 3:3, Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Except a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

⁹ John 4:24, God is a Spirit: and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

¹⁰ 1 Cor 2:11, 1 Th 5:23

¹¹ Crucifixion always results in death. See the final reference to the flesh in this Galatians 5 passage-verse 24 says that the flesh (sinful nature) was crucified and is dead.

¹² The flesh in Rom 13:14 and Gal 5:16 are referring to the body, another definition of the Greek sarx (σάρξ). To say it refers to the sinful nature is to deny the verses saying that it is dead and gone: Gal 5:24; Rom 7:5, 8:9; Col 2:11. It cannot be both at the same time. Our bodies serve us until our physical deaths.

¹³ 1 Cor 6:17 and Part 3 of *The Cross Divider – Free in Christ*

¹⁴ Review *The Cross Divider: Free in Christ, Part 2, No Mixture of Spirits*.

¹⁵ John 14:6, Rom 5:17, Rom 8:2, Col 3:4, Phil 1:21, 2Tim 1:1

¹⁶ Luke 24:27, 44; Eph 1:10

¹⁷ This is the lesson of Romans 7.

¹⁸ Galatians 5:16 and 18 associate the lust of the flesh with living by law.

¹⁹ Rom 14:23; Gal 3:12; Heb 11:6

²⁰ 1 John 2:6. He, who says he remains in Him, walks like He did.

²¹ Col 3:4. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then you shall also appear with him in glory.

²² Acts 17:28: "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." Col 1:17: "... by Him all things consist."

Summary: No Him, no us.

²³ Rom 8:9-10. (9) But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. (10) And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

²⁴ Rom 7:4. Therefore, my brothers, you died to the law by the body of Christ; that you could be married to Him Who was raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit to God.

²⁵ Col 3:3. For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

²⁶ Rom 6:14-15; Gal 3:19, 24-25

²⁷ 1 Cor 6:20. For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

²⁸ Gal 2:20. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; no, it is not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the Son of God's faith, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.