

Our Response to Grace

Five things the Bible says about the way God sees us now that we are born again. We'll review these briefly and then see what the Bible says about how we should respond.

1. He sees us as His own children, adopted into His family, and made one of His heirs with an inheritance that can never be taken from us.
2. He knows we still sin but He no longer counts our sins against us, attributing them instead to the sin that still lives within us.
3. Because we're in Christ, He sees us as a new creation. From His perspective, everything we used to be is gone and we've been made new, as righteous as He is.
4. Therefore, no one can condemn us before Him for any reason.
5. He knows when we stand before Him all our earthly imperfections will be gone and we will be perfect, as He is perfect, fit to dwell with Him forever.

As we begin, let's make sure we understand that none of these five things are conditional upon us maintaining any standard of behavior. The only requirement God has attached to them is that we admit we're sinners, and believe when Jesus went to the cross He went for us, to pay the penalty for our sins, so we could be forgiven for all of them ([John 6:28-29](#)). This is what it means to be born again. Our salvation and the inheritance that goes with it is a free gift of God's grace ([Ephes. 2:8-9](#)), and all that's required of us is that we receive and accept it.

Therefore, nothing that follows should be seen as the price we have to pay to receive or keep eternal life. We have already received it, and nothing in Heaven or on Earth can ever change that.

In two different places, Paul said that for the believer, "Everything is permissible" ([1 Cor. 6:12](#), [1 Cor. 10:23](#)). In both cases, the Greek word translated **permissible** means *lawful*. Then he completed the thought with, "but not everything is beneficial" meaning *just because it's permitted doesn't mean it's good*.

Before we go on, how could Paul say that everything is lawful for believers?

Didn't Jesus say He hadn't come to abolish the Law? Yes, He did, but when He went to the cross He abolished the penalty associated with breaking the Law for those who believe. "*He canceled the written code with its regulations that was against us and that stood opposed to us*" ([Colossians 2:14](#)).

The law and its penalties are still in force for those who don't believe, and they remain liable for every violation.

But for believers, the penalties have been canceled. They aren't simply overlooked because God can't do that. They are canceled because Jesus paid them in advance by nailing them to the cross. The power of the Law lies in its penalty, so where there is no penalty the Law is powerless. It's as if everything is lawful.

In [1 Cor. 6:12-20](#) Paul's main topic was sexual immorality. In verses 18-20 he summarized his thoughts this way. *"Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies."*

Sexual sins are sins against our own body and Paul reminded us that our bodies are not our own to do with as we please. We have been bought at a price, the precious blood of Jesus ([1 Peter 1:18-19](#)). God has put His own seal of ownership on us and made us collectively into His temple for this age. His Spirit dwells within us ([2 Cor. 1:21-22](#)).

If you've read part one of this study, you know that God will not revoke our salvation for this or any other sin. But Paul has reminded us that since our bodies belong to Him we should strive to do only those things that please Him out of gratitude for what He's done for us. Sexual immorality is not pleasing to God and grieves the Holy Spirit, who being sealed within us, is forced to participate.

(PART 2) The other place where Paul mentioned that everything is lawful for us ([1 Cor. 10:23](#)) concerned our example to other believers. Here the issue specifically concerned eating food sacrificed to idols. To those who are secure in their faith this is no big deal, but we shouldn't seek our own good, but the good of others. So no matter what we do we should do it all for the glory of God. We shouldn't cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks (Gentiles) or the Church of God.

Jews look down at us because of the casual nature of our faith. Gentiles think we're hypocrites because we don't live up to our own standards. Other Christians see us living our lives like unbelievers. None of this will encourage people to want to learn more, and may even cause them to reject what little they do know. Sure, everything is lawful for us but not everything is beneficial for those around us.

Paul took the Corinthians to task for their lack of propriety in worship ([1 Cor. 11:1-16](#)), the casual way they celebrated the Lord's Supper ([1 Cor. 11:17-34](#)), and the way they flaunted their Spiritual Gifts ([1 Cor. 12](#)). He could do the same in many churches today. These things don't bring glory to God, nor do they even show Him the respect He's due.

In [Ephesians 4:17-32](#) Paul turned to our personal behavior.

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed ([Ephes 4:17-19](#)).

Again, this kind of behavior is not unlawful for us and will not endanger our salvation. But it's not beneficial for us or those around us and does not bring glory to God. We're children of the

eternal King and should try to live up to what we've already attained ([Phil. 3:16](#)) not to mention we've been taught better.

That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness ([Ephes. 4:20-24](#)).

Even though in the eternal sense God already sees us as being as righteous as He is, we know as long as we're here on Earth we won't ever make it. But that's our destiny, and Paul was telling us to practice being that way. Not to earn or keep anything, but to express our gratitude for His promise that one day soon it will all come true.

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need ([Ephes. 4:25-28](#)).

Notice Paul's reason for working is not to enrich ourselves but to help those in need. In [2 Cor. 9:6](#) he said those who sow generously will also reap generously and in [2 Cor. 9:11](#) he said we would be made rich in every way so we can be generous on every occasion. Therefore, the attitude that facilitates true wealth is generosity. Start giving away everything you can in your current situation and the Lord will make sure you always have more to give.

This is why Jesus told us not to store up treasure on Earth. **Whatever we receive here is for sharing, because by doing so we're storing up treasure in Heaven ([Matt. 6:19-21](#)).** There are people all over the world who need our help. There are over 93 million Americans who can't find work. You want the more abundant life He promised ([John 10:10](#))? Find one and start helping. Start small and increase your giving as your faith grows. I know this is a radical thought, but Jesus is a radical teacher.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you ([Ephesians 4:29-32](#)).

Match your generous deeds with words of encouragement. This will become easier as your faith grows, and you will become a kinder, gentler, happier, person.

Above all remember, you are not required to do any of this to guard your salvation. It was a free gift. Doing this is how you respond to God's Grace.

