

## How Do You Stand Before God?

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There are a lot of people who feel guilty, depressed, fearful, anxious, doubtful, condemned, especially when going through a trial, and especially what happened within the Church with different brethren and tearing families apart.

### *How do you stand before God?*

Let's look at it from a different perspective: ***God loves you!*** Never forget that. {Note sermon: *When All Else Fails, Remember, God Loves You* (#1 Love series)} Everything else will fail! Even us, we fail; we come to the end and we will breathe no longer.

John is known as the apostle of love, but he also talks an awful lot about commandment-keeping. 1-John 3 is why God has called you; this is why we're here and this is the basic sum of everything that God is doing for us.

I know that when we are going through a trial or having an emotional difficulty or problem. Even as children we have problems in school and you've got all the pressures that come against you from your school mates and what they are saying and doing, and so forth. In the public schools, if you want to follow God you kind of stand out away from the rest of them and it creates difficulties. The thing that is pounded into the mind of children when they go to school is *the group!* What they think, having friends!

So, when we find ourselves scattered and alone—that's why when we can get together fellowship is very, very important—we have to keep this in mind.

Tie in the Proverb that says, 'Where there is no vision, the people perish.' Of course, Satan wants to take away that vision. Satan wants you to focus on anything other than what God is doing for you and how you stand before Him.

1-John 3:1: "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us..." You can add an awful lot to that:

- think about God's calling
- think about God intervening in your life
- think about what God has done for you

***It's His love!*** The reason He's called you, the reason that you have the Word of God, the reason that He's dealing in your life is because He loves you. That's what's important to remember:

"...that we should be called the children of God!...." (v 1). This is very interesting because there are two words for *children* in the Greek:

- 1) 'huios'—translated more as *son*, rather than *children*
- 2) 'teknon'—*your very own offspring*

You are very the offspring of God, begotten with His Spirit now. Christ and God the Father are dwelling *in you!* You need to realize that that puts you in right standing with God. We'll cover how God deals with us because we still have a sinful nature to over come and so forth.

"...For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God..." (vs 1-2)—not yet born again.

Today, those who believe in abortion and those who believe in the right to life are on a collision course. They have more and more laws coming on the books to convict people of murder for the killing of the unborn. How can you justify abortion and the law to kill the unborn? Where it will go, we don't know, but:

"...now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be..." (v 2). We can look at other Scriptures that give us some indications of it, but "...it has not yet been revealed what we shall be..."—which presents many interesting questions.

Since the Spirit of God has formed us, and He's given us the spirit of man so we can receive the Spirit of God to develop the character of God. Because we're going to be and still are distinct individuals. What makes us distinct individuals? *The genes and chromosomes that God has created!*

Is God also going to use the genes and chromosomes that He used to create us physically to be a pattern to give us a spiritual body and spiritual mind at the resurrection? (speculation) "...we are the children of God..." and we'll know when we're resurrected.

"...but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is" (v 2).

We have the vision, this is the goal and gives us hope. The hope is what we always need in everything in our lives.

Verse 3: "And everyone who has this hope in him... [it's within you] ...purifies himself... [meaning you have a part in developing the character and Christ purifying you and giving you His Spirit] ...even as He is pure."

God loves you! John 3 tells us a great deal

about it.

1-John 4:9: “In this way, the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God...” (vs 9-10)—implying *first*; not that we’re so good that we love God and now God has to respond to us. No, it’s the other way around. God loved us and we have to respond to Him.

“...rather, that **He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins**” (v 10). That becomes a key in how we maintain our relationship with God going on down through time, day-by-day, week-by-week, month-by-month, year-by-year.

Many of us are many years that we never expected to be and we can’t see the horizon of the end, yet. We can see some of the events, so as we go down through time we don’t know how much time there is, but this is the key thing. That “...His son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

- That’s the key in overcoming!
- That is key in loving God and having hope!
- That is key in understanding how we stand before God!

Now let’s talk a little bit about the love of God.

Jeremiah 31:3: “The LORD has appeared to me from afar, saying, ‘Yea, I have loved you with an everlasting love...’”

1-John 4:11: “Beloved, if God so loved us, **we also are duty-bound to love one another.**” That’s where it is, love one another, fellowship with one another.

If we get our priorities right first with God, then we can love one another in the way that God wants us to. This is a key thing to help heal each one of us. Because of all the things that we have gone through, we have many different scars and we’ve been afraid to trust any man, which you ought to be, but that had also made us afraid to trust God. It’s made us in a way, because of that, so that we really don’t fellowship and love each other the way that we ought to.

So, let’s see if we can re-establish that among ourselves. That we do love each other as Christ has loved us. The reason that it becomes so difficult is because many times we have extended ourselves to people only to be crushed. Then what do you say? *I’ll never do that again!*

That builds a barrier. The solution is to extend yourself wholly to God and then if a difficulty comes along with some of the brethren or other people you’re involved with, it won’t crush

you, *because you’re relying on God*. It will give you the opportunity to really pray for the individual, because God will intervene, help and do what He needs to do. *And He will do that!*

Sometimes you have to pray a long time. Sometimes you have to see ahead, way beyond the weakness, sin and difficulties that people are going through and ask God to intervene and deal with that individual one way or another. *God will! God will hear and answer your prayers, no doubt about it!*

Verse 12: “No one has seen God at any time. Yet, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us.”

How do you stand before God? *You stand before God in such a position, that God, with His Spirit, is dwelling in you!* If you’re not yet baptized, or you’re young, God is still *with you*, and that’s a fantastic thing. So, you need to respond in that way to God; He dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us.

What we’re going to see is that every single thing that we go through—and we’ve all gone through it—is to perfect the love of God in us. Remember: ***Don’t get so overwhelmed in your own difficulty, trial, problem—whatever it may be—that you think that this is the worst thing that has ever been!*** Remember what Jesus went through, and remember what He said just before He died on the cross: ***Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.***

That wasn’t just for the immediate people there, that’s for everybody in the world, because the sacrifice of Christ will apply to everyone sooner or later, as we know through the Holy Days. *It’s perfected in us!* That’s what God is doing.

I think that in relationship to trials, I’ve gone from ‘God, why do You do this; it’s so miserable’ to moving up the scale a little bit more to where I understand trials and difficulties. But I haven’t quite come to the time, yet, that I rejoice in it. That’s how God’s love is perfected in us.

Verse 13: “By this *standard* we know that we are dwelling in Him, and He *is dwelling* in us: because of His own Spirit, *which* He has given to us.” That’s why it’s so important that you maintain—through prayer, through study, through living your life—*God’s way*.

Verse 16: “And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us....” Let’s go clear back to the time of the Apostle John when he was first called, and remember that he is writing this very late in his life, so he has experienced the whole spectrum of human life.

How did John and his brother start out? *The sons of thunder!* ‘Let’s call fire down from heaven,

Lord; they won't receive You.' Jesus had to say, 'You don't know what manner of spirit you're in.' Then mama had to try a little politicking! He got the two boys and went up to Jesus and said, 'Lord, may I ask You something?' He said, 'Say on.' *These two sons of mine*—standing right there with her—*why don't You have one on Your right hand and one on Your left?* He said, 'Can't do it; that's for the Father to do.'

Then what did He do? *He taught them that the one who was going to be greatest is not the one to exalt himself, but the one who serves. Always remember that! Keep that in mind!*

Here he is at the end of life, close to it, and he's writing this. When you understand that you can sense and feel all the experience that John experienced in his life to understand about the love of God, and that's why he's written so much about it.

Likewise with us now, as we come down through time in our Christian growth, we understand more and more about the love of God, and we understand more and more how we stand before God.

Verse 16: "And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love..." That's the main quality; everything else comes from the love of God:

- His commandments
- His laws
- His statutes

Everything else comes from the love of God.

"...and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him. By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected within us..." (vs 16-17). We'll see how it's perfected within us in just a bit. Let me say that's why you have:

- discouragement
- maybe depressed
- maybe fearful
- maybe anxious
- maybe feeling very alone

That's God's Spirit working in you to bring you to Him, to let His love be perfected in you. Notice what this does. Out of it all, here's what God wants you to have in mind:

"...so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world" (v 17). We want to be confident, and we will see how we can have that confidence.

That confidence lies in faith, hope and love. With that confidence, whenever any of these things come upon you and you wonder how you stand

before God, you can immediately understand more of the love of God and come to God.

Verse 18: "There is no fear in the love of God; rather, perfect love casts out fear..."—casts out depression, casts out anxiety. What do you do when you feel trapped in these things? You go to God and say:

- God, grant me of Your Spirit
- Help me to cast this out!
- Help me to think on things I need to!
- Grant me of Your Spirit so that I can change, grow and overcome!

God's Spirit has to be renewed and continually from God. That's one of the reasons that we have the Sabbath. The Sabbath is one of the most important days weekly, whereby we can recover ourselves from all of the fights during the week.

I know that many times we go through the week and here comes Friday night and it's almost like you're walking through a door and you catch your foot on the threshold and you fall right on your face. That's how you feel when you come to the Sabbath; 'Oh, I'm glad the Sabbath is here!' Use it!

"...because fear has torment..." (v 18). When you get into a situation where you're torn—you don't know what to do, you don't know how to do it—go to God and say, 'I don't know how to do it. Help me!' *He'll help you! He'll give you the answer!* Maybe not immediately, but He will.

- because God loves you
- God has given you His Spirit
- God wants you

That's why He's called you! He wants you not only now, but He wants you in the Kingdom of God as a spirit son or daughter of God to live forever, and to inherit the vastness of the universe with Christ. That's what God has given us. *It's fantastic!*

"...And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God. We love Him because He loved us first. If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar. For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?" (vs 18-20). Then we have the whole package!

Let's see how we stand before God and see the things that we go through. Let's also see that there's a progression in the perfecting of the love of God within you, the use of the Holy Spirit of God within you. It says we are to be *led of the Holy Spirit of God!* As we stay close to God and are loving God, God's Spirit will lead you and will prompt thoughts in your mind of what you need to do. Many of those will come while you're praying.

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been **justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” What does *justified* mean? *That you are in right standing with God!*

How many times have you gone along and you feel that you’re ‘out of sorts’ with God? Maybe you have a sin you need to repent of. He’ll re-establish you!

Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” God understand sin! God knows what sin will do! God also knows the solution to sin, which is through Christ being the propitiation, meaning that daily...

How are we to pray the outline prayer daily? *Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us!* We’re to have our sins forgiven *daily*. That means that when you do that you are justified *daily*. Some days you have a whole lot to repent of.

Verse 24: “*But* are being justified... [put in right standing with God] ...freely... [doesn’t cost you anything, because God is love] ...by His grace...” You stand before God justified, in right standing with Him through grace, and through the sacrifice of Christ.

“...through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus; Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate **His righteousness...**” (vs 24-25).

This is not the righteousness of commandment-keeping. ***This is the righteousness of putting you in right standing with Him!*** That’s a tremendous thing!

“...in respect to the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; *yes*, to publicly declare His righteousness in the present time... [that’s why He sent Christ publicly, at a time in history when it would be known] ...that He might be just, and the One Who justifies the one who *is* of the faith of Jesus” (vs 25-26).

***That’s how we stand before God!*** God is perfecting us day-by-day, forgiving our sins day-by-day. He’s keeping us in right standing and maintaining us in that standing through His grace.

Verse 27: “Therefore, where *is* boasting?... [all of this is an operation of God through law] ...It is excluded. Through what law?...”

Think about this: a good faithful Catholic goes to the priest and confesses his sins to the priest. He does a thousand ‘hail Marys’ and a thousand ‘our fathers’; he does whatever genuflecting that needs to be done and says, ‘I’m in right standing with God.’ ***NO!*** It’s not through a law of a man.

“...*The law* of works? By no means! Rather,

*it is through a law of faith*” (v 27)—*repent and God forgives and you are in right standing with Him through the sacrifice of Christ that is a continuous propitiation!*

Verse 28: “Consequently, we reckon that a man is justified... [put in right standing] ...by faith...”

- you believe God
- you believe Christ
- you believe what He says

“...separate from works of law.

Verse 29: “*Is He* the God of the Jews only? *Is He* not also *the God* of the Gentiles? YES! *He is* also God of *the* Gentiles since *it is* indeed one God Who will justify *the* circumcision by faith, and *the* uncircumcision through faith. Are we, then, abolishing *the Law* through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, we are establishing *the Law*” (vs 29-31).

What does this mean? *Through God’s Spirit, it’s written in your heart and mind!* You have the right understanding of the knowledge of the Law, the right expression of the Spirit of the Law. You keep the Law, not to put you in justification with God, but because God has forgiven your sins. As Jesus said, ‘Go and sin no more!’

“...we are establishing *the Law*.” You desire to keep the Laws of God. You desire the commandments of God in a spiritual way. Therefore, the Sabbath becomes a spiritual understanding. Loving your neighbor becomes an action and a spiritual understanding. Not only to do the things that your neighbor needs, or your brother needs, to help them out. As James said: If they come to you naked and needing clothes, you don’t say *to be filled and warm* and then slam the door in their face and think that you have done what God wants you to do.

It becomes an inner motivation inside by the Spirit of God to live by every word of God and to do the things that God wants, because:

- God loves you
- God has called you
- God has forgiven you
- you are in right standing with God
- you are beloved of God
- you are the children of God

- ***That’s how you stand before God!***
- ***That’s how we’re in right standing before God!***

*Even in spite of the fact that we still have carnal nature to deal with!*

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through

our Lord Jesus Christ.”

You’re not fearful that God is going to smash you like a little mosquito for some little thing that you do. You have peace with God. You don’t have a hostile carnal mind anymore toward God or His commandments. You have peace with God. **God loves you!** When you have peace, you have fellowship “...through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Verse 2: “Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which **we stand**...” Let’s look at *grace* this way: Grace is like a huge umbrella that covers us.

Note Eph. 6 about putting on the whole armor of God. It starts with the grace of God, which is like a huge umbrella, and from grace flows to us:

- the Spirit of God
- the love of God
- the forgiveness of our sins
- strength in time of need
- being led by the Spirit of God
- understanding His Word
- having grace and favor in the eyes of God
- having grace and favor in the eyes of people in the world

*grace also entails:*

- faith and hope
- the development of the character of God through love (1-Cor. 13)

*We’re standing in this grace!*

“...and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God” (v 2). Isn’t that where we started out in 1-John 3? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 3: “And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations...” I suppose Paul could; let’s hope we’re kind of edging up a little closer on that scale.

“...realizing that **tribulation brings forth endurance**” (v 3). This is really something. How many times have you gone through a trial and you were so bewildered when you went through it? You didn’t know what was happening, you didn’t know what was up or down, right or left. You wondered: Why did this happen? *We’ve all experienced that!*

What happens over a period of time when you stay faithful to God and you love God? You keep asking God to help you understand and help you in every way that He can! What happens when there’s a space of time between the trauma that you went through and where you are at any particular point?

You look back and then BING! God gives you understanding! You say, *‘That’s why!’* Sometimes it takes quite a while until you come to

that. I know that in my life it has. I can look back and see all the things that I’ve gone through, and some of them have even very traumatic and difficult on my wife and family, and me. But I can also see that God has brought every single one of them *according to His promise!* And will continue to do so in the future.

Heb. 4 shows the operation of grace through prayer, because grace does not give you license to sin or permission to do evil and any of those things or to take advantage. **Grace is your entire relationship with God!** When you have difficulties:

Hebrews 4:14: “Having, therefore, a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession *of our faith*. For we do not have a High Priest Who cannot **empathize** with our weaknesses... [not just sympathize, but *empathize*; He went through the whole thing] ...**but One Who was tempted in all things according to the likeness of our own temptations; yet, He was without sin**” (vs 14-15).

That’s why it says to keep your mind on Christ, ‘the Beginner and Finisher of our faith’ (Heb. 12). So, when the sin ‘so easily beset you’ you go to Him.

Verse 16: “Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” God is always there! God will help us.

Let’s see how we grow in these things, *endurance* is an important part of Godly character. What did Christ have to endure? Not only in the flesh, but look at what He endured from the beginning of creation from Adam and Eve on down through the Flood and through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the children of Israel and all the nations of the world. Knowing that in His good time, in the end He’s going to save most of them. That helps us understand a little more.

Endurance is key and important thing, because Jesus said that the one who endures to the end, the same shall be saved. There are two ends:

1. your life
2. when Christ returns if you’re still alive

Romans 5:4: “And endurance *brings forth* character...” That’s what God wants us to have, the character of God:

- love
- faith
- hope
- compassion
- understanding
- forgiveness
- strength to stand for God

Part of the endurance... You go back and read what God had to do to Jeremiah. He said, 'I'm going to make you like an iron pillar and a brazen wall against the children of Israel.' That's the love of God! What did God say to Ezekiel? *I'm going to make your forehead like flint!* So they could endure.

***God will give you what you need to endure; that's the whole point in it!***

"...and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us" (vs 4-5).

***That's how you're standing before God!***  
That's pretty tremendous!

Not only has God called us and given us His Spirit; not only does God love us, but God is thinking and working for the best *for you*. Regardless of the circumstances, ***God is thinking of and working for the best for you! For me! For all of His people!***

After David talks about how he was made and fashioned and everything like that; Psalm 139:17: "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!..." God is thinking about His people. God is thinking on each one of us. This is what is so important to understand in our relationship with God, and we ask:

***How do I stand before God?***

Verse 17: "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!" You go back and think about how God was involved in your life; beginning when...

As William Tyndale wrote to the children, ***'There was a time when your mother and father came together in love, and you were created.'*** That's something, isn't it? From the very beginning of your life!

Verse 18: "If I should count them, they are more than the sand; when I awake, I am still with You."

Have you ever thought that God has *precious thoughts* to you? When you come to the end of your life, and we don't all just all of a sudden do like Jacob did. He blessed the sons of Joseph<sub>[transcriber's correction]</sub> and he said, 'I'm going to die and go the way of all flesh,' and he blessed them hopped into bed and quit breathing. I wish we could all go that way. Unfortunately, the rust catches up with us, and at the end in too many ways it's really a difficult proposition.

- Remember, Christ is in you!

- Remember, He will see you through it!
- Remember, He says, 'Precious in the sight of God is the death of His saints.'

*Because you have endured to the end!* That's their whole purpose in life! Some of us with gray hair never thought we would be this far down the road. Keep in mind that *God has precious thought toward you!* Just think about it:

- Christ is preparing a place for you
- Christ is making up the crown jewels for you
- Christ is going to give you a new name
- Christ is looking forward to the resurrection when you will become a full-fledged spirit being, son/daughter of God

Those are tremendous and precious thoughts. How do we respond to God in the light of that? Here's how we are to respond to God, and then we will see what He's doing with us, and how we can handle the difficulties and problems as they come along.

Now, talking about the days in which we are living, when *the mystery of lawlessness* is manifesting itself—which it is—here's what we need to look at and do; this tells us many things:

2-Thessalonians 2:13: "Now, we are duty-bound to give thanks to God always concerning you, brethren, **who are beloved by the Lord**... [the Father loves you; Jesus loves you] ...because God from *the beginning* has called you unto salvation through sanctification of *the Spirit* and belief of *the Truth*"—as compared to the coming sweeping things that are going to take place in the world.

Verse 14: "Unto which He called you by our Gospel to **the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ**."

What we're going to be in the resurrection is going to be a perfected product, not what we are now.

Verse 15: "So then, brethren, stand firm, and hold fast the ordinances that you were taught... [the teachings of the New Testament] ...whether by word or by our epistle. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God—even our Father, Who loved us and **gave us eternal encouragement**... [which comes from the Spirit of God and God is eternal] ...and good hope through grace.... [in your whole relationship with God] ...Encourage your hearts and establish you in every good word and work" (vs 15-17).

That's really something! That's who we need to view all that God is doing! Let's notice the whole operation of God, and look at when God first began to deal with us today.

Ephesians 2:1: "Now, you were dead in

trespasses and sins.” That’s the way we all are when God calls us; we’re out there living our life and “...dead in sins and trespasses.”

Verse 2: “In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience.” We can see that manifest more and more in the world in which we are living.

Verse 3: “Among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the world*. But God, Who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us” (vs 3-4).

**How do I stand before God?**

- God loves you
- God has called you
- God has given you His Spirit
- God will help you with everything you face in life

Verse 5: “Even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ. (*For* you have been saved by grace.)” Grace and salvation work together; salvation comes in three stages:

1. you **have been saved** from your sins and Satan
2. **if** you remain faithful in the Gospel **you are being saved** (1-Cor. 15:2) showing that it’s a process
3. you **shall be saved** at the resurrection (Rom. 5)

*That’s what it’s talking about here!*

Verse 6: “And He has raised *us* up together and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.” Not quite yet, but we’ve been blessed:

- with the Holy Spirit, which comes from heaven
- with the love of God, which comes directly from Him in heaven

So, in that sense that is true! But the fulfillment of this is going to be after the resurrection:

Verse 7: So that **in the ages that are coming** He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” He’s going to show the whole world. We are being trained right now:

- saved by the grace of God
- molded by the grace of God
- standing in the grace of God

So that when we are resurrected and ruling and reigning with Jesus Christ what are we going to dispense? The love and grace of God!

Verse 8: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially is not of your own selves...*” What is one of the greatest sins of mankind?

“...*it is* the gift of God, not of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship...” (vs 8-10).

Through everything that Paul talked about in Rom. 5—all the trials, difficulties, building of character, endurance—what is happening? *We are the workmanship of God! God is doing in you:*

- the perfecting of His love
- the perfecting of His hope
- the perfecting of your character
- the endurance that you have

***All of that comes from God!***

It’s the workmanship “...being created in Christ Jesus... [*a spiritual creation within*] ...unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (v 10).

Here’s where we need to come to, Eph. 4, and the reason we are so scattered is because even though *it appeared* we were like this, we were not! So, God is letting us know that He wants that to be fulfilled.

What did Paul say at the end? *Everybody in Asia has left me!* So, if you think you’ve had problems trying to figure out what happened to the Church, think of what Paul had to try and figure out.

Ephesians 4:1: Therefore, I, the prisoner of *the Lord...* Here Paul was in prison. They had the criminalization of Christianity back then, and it’s coming now.

“...am exhorting you to walk worthily of the calling to which you were called with all humility and meekness, with longsuffering, **forbearing** one another in love...” (vs 1-2).

That’s the first step in understanding each other. All of us are going to have our carnality show one time or another and we need forbearance from each other, because **God gives** us forbearance. God works with us to lead us to repentance.

Verse 3: “Being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.... [we have peace with God the Father and Jesus Christ] ...*There is one body and one Spirit...*” (vs 3-4). As God views the Church, He looks at as *one body*.

He leads you in different perspectives,

because we're here on earth looking at the things that are here, whereas, God and Christ are looking at it from heaven. There are people that God is dealing with that we don't have a clue about; in different parts of the world, in different ways and different societies. That's how there's going to be the great innumerable multitude that is going to receive their salvation right after the 144,000 of the children of Israel are saved. There's a great innumerable multitude! God has to be working with them one way or the other.

Stop and think: When did God first start dealing with you? How did He deal with you? *He probably dealt with you a long time before you realized that it was God Who was dealing with you!* Same way with them, and He will bring them in.

"...even as you were also called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, Who *is* over all, and through all, and in you all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (vs 4-7).

***God has given you spiritual blessings and gifts, and He wants us to use them, every single one of us!***

Let's see how this is going to be accomplished in us, and the way that God is going to do it. Let's see how God works with us.

Colossians 1:3: "We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying for you continually since hearing of your faith in Christ Jesus, and the love that *you have* toward all the saints... [we need to] ...because of the hope that *is* laid up for you in heaven, which you heard before in the Word of the Truth of the Gospel; which has come to you, even as it *has* in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit..." (vs 3-6).

Now God wants us to bring forth the fruit. We've all been trimmed and pruned through all the experiences that we've gone through.

Now to bring forth fruit; "...just as *it is* among you, from the day that you heard and knew the grace of God in Truth" (v 6).

- let's see *how* we go forward in all of these things
- let's see *how* we view these things.
- let's see *how* we remain faithful
- let's see *how* we can put together the faith, love and hope of everything that God has for us

Philippians 3:7: "Yet, the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted *as* loss for the sake of Christ." Whatever Paul had in the world, and he had a lot going for him.

Verse 8: "But then truly, I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord..." Notice how Paul gives himself—through the Spirit of God—the understanding and perspective of how to live in the world.

"...for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count *them* as dung; that I may gain Christ... [he had a lot to give up] ...and may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is derived* from law, but that *righteousness*, which *is by the* faith of Christ, the righteousness of God *that is based on faith*" (vs 8-9).

Notice how it ties together faith, hope and love, the vision, v 10: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings..." Paul was able to endure that; I don't know if we can. God have mercy on us and give us strength.

"...being conformed to His death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (vs 10-11). That's the whole goal! That's what is out there! Everything else is subordinate to that.

Verse 12: "Not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected... [we're *being* perfected] ...but I am striving, so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained, but *this* one thing *I do*—**forgetting the things that are behind...**" (vs 12-13). Learn the lessons from them, but forget the things that are behind.

This is something always to remember: ***What has already gone in the past is gone in the past. What healing and correction that needs to be done in the present, only God can do that!*** So, don't dwell on the things of the past. That's why you forget the things that are behind.

"...and reaching forth to the things that are ahead... [this keeps us in right standing with God] ...I press toward *the* goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (vs 13-14). That's what we are to look to.

Verse 15: "So then, let as many as *be* perfect be of this mind... [that's how you're perfected] ...And **if in anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you.**" Isn't that something?

God will reveal your sins, your weaknesses and things. That's why they come to mind, because God is bringing them to your mind so you can repent. That's tremendous; that's part of the grace of God! Claim that promise; God will give that!

Verse 16: "Nevertheless, *in regard* to that

which we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. Brethren, be imitators together of me and bear in mind those who walk in this way, as you have us *for an example*" (vs 16-17).

Then it talks about those who are left and so forth, and the difficulties that they will face.

Verse 20: "But for us, the commonwealth of *God* exists in *the* heavens, from where also we are waiting for *the* Savior, *the* Lord Jesus Christ, Who will transform our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the inner working of His own power, *whereby He is able* to subdue all things to Himself" (vs 20-21).

So, ***you stand before God through Jesus Christ!*** This is the mindset that we need to have today. We don't know how difficult times are going to be in the future, but if what we see in the world and all the things going on, *we are in for it as a people! That's why we need to have this perspective and know how we stand before God!*

Romans 8:14: "For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God." Let God ***lead you, guide you, direct you*** with His Spirit.

Verse 15: "Now, you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received *the* Spirit of sonship, whereby we call out, 'Abba, Father.'" A close relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Verse 16: "The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the* children of God." So, we've come full circle from where we've started.

Verse 17: "Now, if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs—truly, **heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ**—{note Heb. 1:1-3}. We are joint heirs.

The Bride of Christ is going to legally inherit these things, just like in the law of the land today. When man and woman marry, they become joint tenants in ownership of property. They share. That's what Christ is going to do.

"...if indeed we suffer together with Him, so that we may also be glorified together with Him" (v 17). Keep this vision! Be encouraged!

Verse 18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Not worthy at all.

There's no way to have that kind of perspective unless you know that God loves you, unless you know that God has called you, unless you know that you have the Spirit of God, and all the things that we have covered and you stand by grace.

Verse 28: "And we know..." And when we go through what we go through, we understand by hindsight. We also need to apply that to foresight.

"...we know that **all things work together for good to those who love God**, to those who are called according to *His* purpose... [then Paul explains how you stand before God]: **...because those whom He did foreknow He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His own Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren**" (vs 28-29).

It shows that by the grace of God Christ tasted death for everyone (Heb. 2).

Verse 30: "Now, whom He predestinated, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

Not yet quite finished. But if you have the Spirit of God in you, the glory of God rests upon you, because the Spirit of God comes from God. In that sense we have been glorified that much, much more so when the resurrection takes place.

Verse 31: "What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?" Think of that!

- God is for you
- God loves you
- God has forgiven you
- God will continuously forgive you
- God wants to give you eternal life
- God wants you in His kingdom
- His thoughts are precious toward you

*More than you can number!*

***That's how you stand before God!***

Verse 32: "He Who did not spare even His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how shall He not also grant us all things together with Him? Who shall bring an accusation against *the* elect of God?... [there will be plenty coming down the pipe in the future] ...God *is the One* Who justifies. Who *is* the one that condemns? *It is* Christ Who died, but rather, Who is raised again, Who is even *now* at *the* right hand of God, *and* Who is also making intercession for us. What shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?" (vs 32-35). All of those things are coming!

The armies are already here and they will erupt one day in all the cities of America, and we will be faced with all of these things.

***That's why we have to know how we stand before God!***

Verse 36: “Accordingly, it is written, ‘For Your sake we are killed all the day long; we are reckoned as sheep for *the* slaughter.’ But in all these things we are more than conquerors... [overcomers] ...through Him Who loved us” (vs 36-37).

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Notice the mindset that God wants us to come to; that Paul, through everything he suffered and went through, came to this mindset:

Verse 38: “**For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing**, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which *is* in Christ Jesus our Lord” (vs 38-39).

*That’s how you stand before God!* It’s a great, tremendous and wonderful thing. What a calling that God has given us! What a great and marvelous thing His grace is.

Remember that *God loves you! When all else fails, and everything around you falls, God loves you!*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 John 3:1-3
- 2) 1 John 4:9-10
- 3) Jeremiah 31:3
- 4) 1 John 4:11-13, 16-20
- 5) Romans 5:1
- 6) Romans 3:23-31
- 7) Romans 5:1-3
- 8) Hebrews 4:14-16
- 9) Romans 5:4-5
- 10) Psalm 139:17-18
- 11) 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17
- 12) Ephesians 2:1-10
- 13) Ephesians 4:1-7
- 14) Colossians 1:3-6
- 15) Philippians 3:7-17, 20-21
- 16) Romans 8:14-18, 28-39

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Ephesians 6
- 1 Corinthians 13
- Hebrews 12
- 1 Corinthians 15:2
- Hebrews 1:1-3; 2

Also referenced: Sermon:

*When All Else Fails, Remember, God Loves You* (#1 Love series)