



What Controls Your Life?

(Book 2)

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NOT FOR SALE

CHAPTER 5

God's Verdict: "Not Guilty"

We have seen that Christ cannot be the Lord of our lives unless we have said No to all sin and Yes to a full-time surrender to Him. But there are always those who try to "**straddle the fence**" right? Trying to say Yes without saying No and winding up walking a tight-rope between two kingdoms, feeling frustrated, unhappy and **guilty**.

There are few things that can make a person more miserable than the feeling of being guilty. To quote Plautus, "Noting is more wretched than the mind of a man conscious of guilt".

Tossing and turning in bed, playing over and over all of the "**if onlys**" or the "**might have beens**" and the "**too lates**"; getting up, looking out the window, checking the clock for the tenth time, lying back down to try it again only to stare at the shadows on the ceiling, sighing and wondering if the sun will ever come up, feeling like Job:

"When I lie down, I say, when shall I arise, and the night be gone: and I am full of tossing to and fro unto the dawning of the day." (Job 7:4)

What's happening: What's going on: Well, this feeling of guilt, this, "Why do I feel guilty all of the time" is a signal that there is a "**spiritual malfunction**" somewhere. This spiritual malfunction can be caused by:

1. Serving sin.
2. Serving self (fence-straddling Christian).
3. Not being able to accept the fact that God has forgiven and forgotten.
4. Not being able to forgive self.

But no matter what the cause of guilt, God has made a way for dealing with it. You remember what some call "the old, old story"? Well, it's the story of how God got Himself and man out of quite a predicament. Here's how it all came about:

The Great Trial

The first few chapters in the book of Romans are like a courtroom scene. In chapter I the case is stated:

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." (Rom. 1: 18a)

Then God, the prosecutor and judge, calls to the stand all the ungodly Gentiles. They are without excuse. They had deliberately departed from God and through the centuries had plunged deeper and deeper into sin, dishonoring their bodies, exchanging the truth of God for a lie and refusing to have God in their knowledge. Doing things that were shocking and sordid, they were as low as mankind could go. Hence, Paul's first point - you Gentiles desperately need the gospel.

In chapter two the Jews are called to take the stand. Unlike the Gentiles, they had not lowered themselves to the gutter; in fact they were very proud of their righteousness. Their attitude was something like, "God, you know you're really lucky to have us around". They were feeling very secure in their religion, but not for long.

The Prosecutor begins His case. First, the Jews had set themselves up as the judge of others, yet at the same time were guilty of practicing the things they were condemning. True, they had the law of God but they weren't keeping it, so they were no better off than the Gentiles, "for there is no respect of persons with God". Thus, Paul's second point-you Jews need the gospel of salvation just as desperately as the Gentiles. "*As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one*". (Romans 3:10)

The Verdict:

And so, with the entire human race standing before the Judge the verdict is read "YOU ARE ALL GUILTY!" "*For they all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*". (**Romans 3:23**). The sentence is eternal death. (See **Romans 6:23**)

God's Seeming Predicament

"**God's seeming predicament?** How do you get that? Man is the one who is guilty and will die. Looks to me like he's the one in a predicament!"

It does sound a bit **strange** doesn't it? However think about this. God is a righteous God. That means he must be a just being who cannot tolerate sin. Now what makes a good judge in a legal court? Well, for one thing he will punish all wrongdoing. If a person is proven guilty, the judge, because of his position, cannot fail to mete out justice even though he may love the guilty party and want to by-pass the judgment. Justice must be done.

The same is true with God. Divine justice cannot overlook the guilt of man. The wages of sin must be paid. But this Divine Judge is not only a just one, at the same time He is a God of love and mercy and these attributes always beg to forgive-not punish!

Now, do you see "**God's seeming predicament?**" How can He do both? Justice says man must be punished yet love and mercy beg for the sinner's pardon. How can you punish and pardon at the same time?

The Answer

Isn't it wonderful that God is not only a just and merciful God, but that He is also a God of wisdom! His answer to Justice and Mercy is found in these great words of John:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him should not perish, but have eternal life." (**John 3:16**)

Jesus took our (mankind's) place. When he died on the cross, God transferred man's guilt to his son and Jesus Christ paid the wages of sin for all.

"But we behold him who has been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every man." (**Heb. 2:9**)

"Who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes you were healed." (**1 Pet. 2:24**)

"So Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him to bring salvation." (**Heb. 9:28**)

God's justice was met by placing man's guilt upon someone else, a substitute with two qualifications: (1) He was without sin of His own (**Hebrews 4:15**) and (2) He was willing to take the place of the guilty.

Thus, Paul says, "*But now apart from the law a righteousness of God has been manifested... even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ...*" (**Romans 3:21, 22**). In other words we would say, something happened. God acted, He intervened and made it possible for man to be righteous because of what Christ has done.

How?

In essence God has said' My Son will take your place and actually die for your sins and you will not have to be punished by death if you will show me three things:

1. That you believe and are willing to confess that the One who hung on the cross and died for you was truly the Son of God.
2. That you have repented of your sins.

3. That you show me your willingness to die by obeying in a “**form**” the death, burial, and resurrection of my Son by being buried in a “watery grave” (**baptism**). (See **Romans 6: 17**, then **Romans 6:3-5**, also **1 Corinthians 15:1-4**)

And then what? And then justice has been met and you are free; free from sin, free from guilt, free from death, for “*If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed*”. (**John 8:36**). As far as your sins and guilt are concerned it’s like it never happened!

So, there we have God’s way for dealing with man’s basic guilt of sin, Jesus Christ. The wrath of justice was taken out upon Him that we could be spared. Is it any wonder that this has been called “**the Divine plan**”? No one but an infinite God could have planned and carried out this “**Mission Impossible**”.

A Christian’s Guilt

Often right about here the question comes up, “But what about this person out here who has obeyed the gospel plan of salvation and is supposedly a Christian, yet is still asking, ‘Why do I feel guilty all of the time?’ Is this possible?”

Yes, it is not only possible but it also happens to many Christians every day. Why? Well, as we’ve said before, feelings of guilt are a warning signal that there is a spiritual malfunction somewhere and in a Christian’s case the malfunction comes from one of these three areas:

1. They are serving self and not allowing Christ full control over their lives as Lord or --
2. They are unable to accept the fact that God has forgiven and forgotten or --
3. They are unable to forgive themselves.

“Yeah, well that’s pretty good for openers, but you said that no matter what the cause of guilt, God has made a way for dealing with it. Would you mind giving a few ‘here’s how’ or ‘for examples?’”

In other words, don’t just diagnose the case doctor-tell me the cure.

O.K. Will do. But remember when the Great Physician puts His finger on the spot, it could be a sore spot.

This concludes Chapter 5. Please answer the following questions before going on to Chapter 6
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. True or False: Christ can be ruler of our lives if we say YES to sin.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Trueb) False2. Is it possible for a full-time Christian to “straddle the fence”?<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Yesb) Noc) Both Yes and Nod) None of the Above3. Who said “Nothing is more wretched than the mind of a man conscious of guilt.”?<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Platob) Plautusc) Aristotled) Josephus | <ol style="list-style-type: none">4. What is feeling guilty all the time a sign of?<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) A “spiritual malfunction”b) Nothing at allc) A conscienced) None of the Above5. What are some causes for a “spiritual malfunction”?<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Serving Godb) Serving Sinc) Serving Selfd) Both B and C6. True or False: God has made a way for dealing with guilt.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Trueb) False |
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7. What passage talks about the wrath of God?
 - a) Romans 3:10
 - b) Romans 1:18
 - c) Romans 3:23
 - d) Romans 6:23
8. What were the Jews doing in Rom.?
 - a) Setting themselves as judges of others
 - b) Being right and just
 - c) Condemning others
 - d) Both a and c
9. What was Paul's first point in the book of Romans?
 - a) That God was lucky to have the Jews
 - b) That god was lucky to have the gentiles
 - c) The Jews desperately needed the gospel
 - d) The gentiles desperately needed the gospel
10. What was the attitude of the Jews in chapter 2 of Romans?
 - a) That God was lucky to have the Jews
 - b) That god was lucky to have the gentiles
 - c) The Jews desperately needed the gospel
 - d) The gentiles desperately needed the gospel
11. What was Paul's second point according to the author?
 - a) That God was lucky to have the Jews
 - b) That god was lucky to have the gentiles
 - c) The Jews desperately needed the gospel
 - d) The gentiles desperately needed the gospel
12. True or False: Rom. 3:10 says "there is only one righteous, just one"
 - a) True
 - b) False
13. What is the difference between a judge in a courtroom and Christ on the judgment day?
 - a) Nothing
 - b) Everything
 - c) Both of the above
 - d) None of the above
14. True or False: The wages of sin must be paid?
 - a) True
 - b) False
15. God is :
 - a) A God of love
 - b) A divine judge
 - c) Both of the above
 - d) None of the above
16. What does Justice say about the sinner?
 - a) Pardon the sinner
 - b) Punish the sinner
 - c) Both of the above
 - d) None of the above
17. What does Love and mercy say about the sinner?
 - a) Pardon the sinner
 - b) Punish the sinner
 - c) Both of the above
 - d) None of the above
18. What does John 3:16 discuss?
 - a) Eternal life
 - b) God giving his son
 - c) Jesus dying
 - d) All of the above
19. What did Jesus take when he died?
 - a) Man's place
 - b) Man's sin
 - c) Man's guilt
 - d) All of the above
20. What does Heb. 2:9 say Jesus "tasted" for man?
 - a) Life
 - b) Death
 - c) Love
 - d) None of the above
21. What three things must you do to receive the "replacement"?
 - a) Die, raise, ascend
 - b) Confess, repent, be immersed
 - c) Pray, accept Christ as your savior, repent
 - d) None of the above
22. What happens after you do the 3 things?
 - a) You are free from guilt
 - b) You are free from death
 - c) You are free from temptation
 - d) Both a and b
23. True or False: After you accomplish the three things the guilt will remain for the rest of your life?
 - a) True
 - b) False

24. Why do some “Christians” still have the feeling of guilt?
- a) They are self serving
 - b) They are having trouble accepting God’s forgiveness
 - c) They are unable to forgive themselves
 - d) Any of the above

25. What is God’s way of dealing with man’s guilt of sin?
- a) Jesus
 - b) Satan
 - c) Hell
 - d) Heaven

CHAPTER 6

“But Why Do I Feel So Guilty All Of The Time?”

“What Do I Do With It?”

Usually no one likes to go to the doctor, whether it’s fear of the unknown or whatever. Some even go so far as trying to deceive themselves into believing that nothing is really wrong with them, knowing all along there is. And this is one of the big hang-ups many have about their “**sore conscience**”. Rather than going to the Great Physician and using His way with guilt, they try to cover it up with all sorts of distractions, excuses, or writing it off as just a mistake.

However, the time comes when some find, like David as he tried to ignore his guilt of adultery and murder, that:

“When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.” (Psa. 32:3-4)

David was sweating it. His guilty feelings would not leave him alone. They kept on dogging him until finally, like a weary runner staggering to a halt, he stopped and looking up to heaven confessed:

*“Against you, you only, **have I sinned**, and done this evil in your sight.” (Psa. 51:4a)*

So the first thing to do with guilt is what David did. Quit running from it. Don’t rationalize it, excuse it or pretend it isn’t there; confess it. **In order for a person to change anything about his life, he must first be honest enough to admit how things really are with him.** Like Cromwell, who when having his portrait painted, told the artist, “Paint me just as I am wart and all.” (The trouble with most of our self-portraits is that they are usually touched up to hide the real blemishes we have on our faces.)

But just confessing our sin or guilt will not rid us of it anymore than a person’s confessing he is sick will make him well. It merely places us in the position for having something done about it. In other words we have got to have outside help. It’s somewhat like the problem of getting rid of the garbage. You can’t just leave it in the pail in the kitchen or try to hide it in a cabinet, so you make arrangements for it to be taken off your hands. The same thing is true with guilt. We can’t live with it or try to pretend it doesn’t exist. We have to get it taken off our hands by someone else. And this is the wonder of it, that Jesus was willing to be that someone-not just for once but continually. As John tells us:

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)

(In the Greek, this verse literally says that Jesus’ blood **continues** to cleanse us.)

Continues How?

Have you ever heard of God’s two laws of pardon: That’s right, two: one we’ve already discussed for the alien sinner. He must be born again. He’s like Mrs. Poyser said of Mr. Craig in Adam Bede: “It was a pity he couldn’t be hatched over again and hatched different”. God says the same of the alien sinner - he has to be “**hatched over again**”. (See **John 3:1-5**)

But back to our fence straddler. God has a way for him, too - another law of pardon. Such a person needs forgiveness to get rid of his guilt of holding out on the Lord, but he cannot be re-baptized for there’s only one baptism (**Ephesians 4: 5**) or birth into God’s family. What God says to this child of his is, “Repent and get off your

throne-let Christ have it.” (A Biblical example of this can be found in **Acts 8: 22**.) God has given His word that if a person will sincerely do this, the sin and guilt are gone - out of sight, out of mind! Listen to this promise:

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us (continually) from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

So there you have God’s second law of pardon for those of His who need forgiveness. Does it sound too much like LYSOL disinfectant cleaner? Repentance + confession + prayer = Mr. Clean? Admittedly, from all outward appearances that’s about

all it seems to be for some. But it isn’t a formula or religious ritual, it is a **response**. A man getting off a fence doesn’t go through some ritual or formula - he responds! The prodigal son said, “I will arise and go - I will say I have sinned”. These are the steps that took him back home but I doubt that he thought of them as steps. They were the responses of a child who wanted to be home with his father, free from sin and guilt.

It is the same with an erring child of God. True, it’s no easy snap but you can do it if you really want to. As we’ve said before if you supply the willingness, he will supply the way. God has always made it possible for His children to do anything that they ought, to do. Remember one can **choose**; this means the fence straggler is living with the gnawing feeling of guilt by choice. So the answer for him to the question of “Why do I feel guilty all of the time?” is “Because that is what you have chosen!”

A Reluctant God?

Next, we have those who have a feeling of guilt because they can’t understand how God could possibly forgive them. They act as though He is a God who is reluctant to forgive. For example, people will sometimes ask, “But how can he ever forgive me?” They are saying, “I’ve sinned more than God could ever forgive!”

A Retarded Understanding of God

There are several things wrong with that kind of thinking. For one thing, it brings God down to our level. It supposes that God is no better than us when it comes to forgiving. We have trouble forgiving, and because it’s so hard for us, we conclude it must be just as difficult for God. Look at Christ on the cross. Listen to him asking his father to forgive those who crucified him! Do you think Christ really believed God could possibly answer that prayer? Jesus knew the Father. He knew his father was infinite in all his attributes and that included forgiveness”. Yes, I know, but somehow I just don’t feel forgiven.” **Does a person have to feel married to be married?** But someone makes one last stab: “How can I be sure?”

Well, for starters here are two things:

1. **You have God’s Word for it:** “... him that comes to me I will in- no wise cast out.” (**John 6:37**). “Faithful is he that calls you, who will also do it.” (**1 Thessalonians 5:24**) “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” (**Romans 8:1**) “Or do you think that the scripture speaks in vain?” (**James 4:5a**)
2. **Others’ lives verify it for us:** “For I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day.” (**2 Timothy 1:12a**) (Those were the words of a one-time persecutor of the church who referred to himself as the chief of sinners!) For those who feel like God’s forgiveness is for “**everyone but me**”, read in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians the kind of people some of the early saints had been. (**1 Corinthians 6:9-11**).

Don’t Sell Yourself And God Short

That’s what Paul tells us: “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?” (**Romans 8: 32**) Someone said, “When a king picks up a trifle, it is a trifle no longer.” If Christ the king of all kings “**picked you up**”, that certainly makes you more than a trifle! Can you believe this? You see the real problem is just that simple-you need both sides of FAITH. The first side you’ve got - belief in God’s existence. But there’s another side:

“For he that comes to God must believe that he is, (you are O.K. here) and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.” (This is the other side.) (Heb. 11:6b)

A person must believe that God can be trusted to keep his word, and accept God as He really is - loving and forgiving. He must also learn to accept himself as he is - forgiven. When one can do this then he will know what it means to be “free indeed!”

“I Hate Myself!”

Finally, there’s the person who says, “I can’t forgive myself for what I’ve done. I just hate myself!”

Whew! What do you do with this one: To be truthful about it, I really don’t know. For one thing the motivations which prompt this response could be any number of things. For example, it could be as Karen Homey states: “We do not hate ourselves because we are worthless, but because we are driven to reach beyond ourselves...” In other words, you found out you’re not as good or as strong as you thought - it’s a blow to your ego - it hurts, and so **you turn on yourself**. So one thing this person should try to be sure of is **why** can’t you forgive yourself? Is it an ego trip? Are you upset because you find you are not as **righteous** as you thought, or as independent? Christ said, *“Without me you can do nothing”*.

You’ve only found out what God knew all along. He knows your good points and your bad, your strengths and your weaknesses, but He has forgiven because He loves YOU. Now think about this because to hate yourself is to despise what God loves! Could this not be just as bad as hating another? So what do you do? Well, here’s what one man did, who before his conversion felt very proud of his righteousness:

“But one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before.” (Phil. 3:13b)

Was Paul just blowing pious smoke in our face or could he really forget the terrible things he had done before he was converted: We find him recalling these things and referring to himself as “the chief of sinners” on one occasion, so he must not have been able to wipe it clean out of his mind! No, I’m sure he couldn’t, he could probably remember every little detail. But he didn’t **think too much about it** and when he did think about the past, it always caused him to look to God and Christ and rejoice that he was forgiven, not because he deserved it but because of a great and loving God! The same was probably true of the prodigal son. The scars were still there, but whenever he remembered the past, he remembered his father and how he had received him when he wanted to come back home. This caused him to love his father more and re-determine to serve him faithfully.

In each case, looking at the scars of sin caused the forgiven to look away from self and look toward the Forgiver. So let the person who hates himself ask **“WHY?”** Is it because he thinks too much of himself? Why not think less about self and more about him and his forgiving love?

Feeling Guilty or Feeling Great?

Neither. Feeling right -right with God based upon your knowing that you have met God in obedience and taking him at his word that your sins are gone from his memory and forgiven. Obedience and faith took the guesswork out of it. No more 99% Christ and 1% self. No more picking spiritual daisies with “He loves me, He loves me not.” No more sawing sawdust by chewing over past sins, reminding God of things he has forgiven and forgotten. No more hating what Christ loved enough to die for. No more trying to handle what God has handled for you if you will put your trust in Christ as the Lord of your life and the Savior of your soul! *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1)*

“Why do I feel guilty all of the time?” The solution for each is the same: bringing our disordered lives under the complete control of Christ as Lord.

“Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest for your souls.” (Matt. 11:28, 29)

It’s **never** too late to start. . .

This concludes Chapter 6. Please answer the following questions before going on to Chapter 7

26. What passage talks about David’s Guilt?

- a) Psalms 32:3-4
- b) Psalms 32:34
- c) Psalms 51:4
- d) Both a and c

27. True or False: Psa. 51:4 says “against me, me alone, you have sinned, and done evil in my sight.”

- a) True
- b) False

28. What is the first thing to do with Guilt?
- Stop making excuses
 - Quit running from it
 - Confess it
 - All of the above
29. True or false: In order for a person to change anything about his life, he must first be honest enough to admit how things really are.
- True
 - False
30. True or False: Cromwell told the painter, "paint my portrait but leave out the warts."
- True
 - False
31. True or false: Just confessing our sins will rid us of them.
- True
 - False
32. Confessing our sins or guilt:
- Frees us
 - Puts us in a position to do something about them
 - Both a and b
 - None of the above
33. According to our lesson guilt is like _____.
- Love
 - Garbage
 - Sin
 - None of the above
34. Is it possible to pretend that guilt doesn't exist?
- Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 - All of the above
35. Which passage talks about Jesus continually cleansing us from our sins?
- 1 John 1:7
 - John 3:1-5
 - Eph. 4:5
 - Acts 8:22
36. What does a "fence straddler" need to get rid of Guilt and sin
- Forgiveness
 - Hate
 - Love
 - More sin
37. What does God say to a "fence straddler"? Repent and:
- Be baptized
 - Give Christ your life throne
 - Sit on your own life throne
 - Both b and c
38. What does 1 John 1:9 talk about?
- Confessing our sins
 - God's faithfulness
 - The cleansing of our sins
 - All of the above
39. True or False: Repentance is not a formula or religious ritual, it's a response.
- True
 - False
40. Is it easy for a straying child of God to "come back home"?
- Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 - None of the above
41. Does a Christian have free will choice?
- Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 - None of the above
42. What is wrong with having a "retarded understanding of God"?
- Nothing
 - It brings God down to our level
 - It exalts God
 - None of the above
43. Does a person have to feel forgiven to be forgiven?
- Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 - None of the above
44. How can we be sure we are forgiven?
- God says it
 - Others lives verify it
 - Both a and b
 - None of the above
45. What does Rom. 8:32 discuss?
- God giving Jesus
 - Jesus' death
 - Both a and b
 - None of the above
46. True or False: A person should doubt if God can be trusted to keep his word.
- True
 - False
47. According to our lesson, a person must learn to accept himself as;
- Lost
 - Forgiven
 - Loved
 - None of the above

48. According to the writer, why do people hate themselves?
- They are worthless
 - They are driven to reach beyond themselves
 - They are not rich
 - They are not beautiful
49. Which passage says “But one thing I do, forgetting what is behind, and stretching forward to things which are ahead.”
- Rom. 8:1
 - Rom. 8:32
 - Phil. 3:13
 - Matt. 11:28-29
50. What is the solution for getting rid of Guilt?
- Stop running from it
 - Admit there is a problem
 - Bring it to Christ
 - All of the above

CHAPTER 7

“Dead To Sin - Alive To God”

In Zambia, Africa, Dag Hammarskjold, former Secretary General of the United Nations, was killed in an airplane crash. The plane was destined for Ndola, Zambia. However, the investigators of the accident found in the wreckage an open map of a town near Leopoldville (Congo) called Ndolo. The pilot, being guided in his landing by the map showing Ndolo, must have assumed that he had a thousand feet more altitude than he really had. You see, Ndola is higher than Ndolo. So in an open field in the darkness of Africa, the plane crashed with the pilot thinking all along that he had a thousand more feet. But he didn't. He had the wrong section of map. Just the difference between an “o” and an “a” but it was the difference between life and death.

So it is that many times a small difference - a small misunderstanding - can mean the difference between a disaster and a destination. There will be many whose eternity will be disasters because they **assumed**, or were **careless**, or **misunderstood** the true will of God that leads to eternal life. This is why we should give careful attention to understanding this chapter. It could mean the difference between life and death.

Remember the courtroom scene in Chapter 5? With the trial over and the entire human race standing before the Judge, the verdict was read: “You are all guilty!” *“For they all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.”* (**Romans 3:23**) The sentence was eternal death. (See **Romans 6:23**). So you see why I say give careful attention to this subject: **Dead to Sin -Alive unto God.**

God's Desire: Not a Single Soul Lost

I think it should be clear by now that God isn't some “Big Bully in the sky” who's out to get us. He loves each soul and wants each one to go to heaven. As Peter says, He is *“not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”*. (**2 Peter 3:9b**). God's desire is every soul's salvation! The only ones who need to fear God are those who practice ungodliness and unrighteousness, or as we sometimes say, the alien sinner and the unfaithful Christian. But no one will go to hell who does not send himself by finally saying NO to God's saving acts of grace. For God has declared that **anyone** can be justified and made righteous if he will become a Christian:

“... Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him.” (**Rom. 5:8-9**)

How Can It Be?

It is quite amazing when we think about it, and it causes us to wonder how God could say that He'll take anyone who wants to become His. As we well know, it certainly is not because we deserve it. Our **fair** reward is eternal death. But Paul gives us the answer in **Romans 3:24**, *“Being made right with God by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”* Notice those two words, **freely** and **grace**. *

Christ was not under obligation to take our place but He did it freely. What about the debt of sin? Christ paid the debt for us. *“Whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood.”* (**Romans 3:25**) Christ took our place and turned aside the wrath of God at the cross! Someone says “That's too good to be true.” But it is true and that's the **“good news”**.

Salvation is first and foremost God's doing - the action of His love and grace. But since Christ voluntarily died for us and paid our debt, does that mean we are automatically saved? NO, it means that God has proven He loves the souls of all of us and wants all to be saved-He's done his part now it's up to us to do our part. To understand "our part" in this, let's look a bit deeper than we have in the previous chapters.

* Note: See Glossary.

One Slave Dies - Another Is Born

Prior to one's obedience to the gospel he is a servant to sin. Sin is the master. *"But thanks be to God, that, whereas you were servants of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto you were delivered."* (**Romans 6:17**) Then in verse two of **Romans 6**, Paul says, "We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?" To be dead to something means that we are severed from it, separated. And this is what takes place when one is converted - he dies. *"Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin."* (**Romans 6:6**) Sin, the old master, still lives but the slave that served him has been crucified. And when someone dies they are buried, hence: *"We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death. . ."* (**Romans 6: 4a**) Thus, the slave to sin dies and becomes free through baptism. *

We learned earlier that repentance has a negative and a positive side, and now we see the same is true with baptism. The negative side is when we crucify the "old man"-destroy the sinful body and bury it. But there is a positive side too. "That like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." (**Romans 6:4b**). We died in baptism that we might be born again of the water and the spirit to a new life - a child of God - a servant no longer of sin but of Christ.

Two Important Points

The above section brings up two important points for us to imbed deeply into our hearts.

First, from the words of Paul in **Romans 6**, we can see that a Christian is not only free from the wrath of God, but because of Christ he is also **free from sin**.

"And being made free from sin, you became servants of righteousness." (**Rom. 6: 18**)

Paul is not saying that a Christian is sinless but that he is out from under the domination and control of the old master, sin. Notice verse 14 of the chapter: *"For sin shall not have dominion over you. . ."* And since the Christian is free from sin he can fight against it.

Only when we are freed from the chains of the old master can we do battle against him. Thus, we are twice freed: freed from the wrath of God and freed from the domination of sin. And this happens in baptism.

The next point is this. Paul says we die to sin so that we might **live for God**. (See **Romans 6:11**) We come alive unto God when we are born into his family, and again this happens in baptism. Is it any wonder that baptism is given so much emphasis in the New Testament, first by the Lord and later by His apostles? Look at what all takes place there!

So we die, not only to become free from our past sins, but also to become free from our old master, sin, and to be born again in newness of life as God's child. . .alive unto Him.

Still Wrapped In Grave Clothes

Some Christians seem to be dead to sin alright, but they also seem to be dead to everything else and alive to knotting! Like Lazarus-raised from the dead but still wrapped in their grave clothes! But listen to these words carefully:

"Even so reckon you also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. Neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (**Rom. 6: 11-13**)

In other words, the old master, sin, is still around (See **1 Peter 5:8**.) But the slave that once lived under sin's rule is dead and his body is no longer useful for the old master. Instead, a new slave has been born and the members of his body - his eyes, tongue, feet and hands - are now used "as instruments of righteousness unto God". But no one can truly grasp these words and know what it means to be alive unto God, unless he has unwrapped the grave clothes of self-rule and given himself totally and unreservedly unto Christ as his Lord.

* Note: See Glossary.

One Final Check

If only the pilot had checked to make sure... if only he hadn't assumed...**if only**. How many lives will end with "if only"?

Know this, that we are all on a flight to eternity and our destination will be one of two places: heaven or hell. God has provided a way for anyone who will to reach heaven. At the same time Satan will pay those who serve him and the final remuneration is death.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (**Rom. 6:23**)

If one serves sin, then he must be prepared for the "pay off." For if one will not allow Christ's blood to pay the debt of sin here, then he must pay for it forever hereafter.

So, I plead with you. Examine yourself whether you are in the way that leads finally to a heavenly destination. Don't assume ... it's your soul's destiny at stake! Have you obeyed fully the gospel plan of salvation? Don't let your eternity begin with the words -

If only...

This concludes Chapter 7. Please answer the following questions before going on to Chapter 8
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- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>51. How did Dag Hammarskjold die?
a) He was murdered
b) He committed suicide
c) He died in a car crash
d) He died in a plane crash</p> <p>52. According to the lesson which of the following contributed to his death?
a) Carelessness
b) Assumption
c) Misunderstanding
d) All of the above</p> <p>53. In chapter 5 what was the verdict given by the judge?
a) "they are all free"
b) "they are all guilty"
c) "they are all sinners"
d) None of the above</p> <p>54. True or False: "for we all sinned and fall short of the glory of God"
a) True
b) False</p> <p>55. True or False: God is just a "Big Bully".
a) True
b) False</p> | <p>56. 2 Peter 3:9 talks about God wanting what?
a) None to perish
b) All to repent
c) All to perish
d) Both a and b</p> <p>57. True or False: God's desire is every soul's salvation
a) True
b) False</p> <p>58. Who needs to FEAR God?
a) Sinners
b) Ungodly people
c) True Christians
d) Both a and b</p> <p>59. What does Rom. 5:8-9 discuss?
a) Escaping the wrath of God
b) Jesus' life
c) Paul's persecution
d) All of the above</p> <p>60. True or False: the reason why God takes us sinners to be his children is because that's what we deserve.
a) True
b) False</p> |
|--|--|

61. What does Rom. 3:24 talk about?
- God's Grace
 - Redemption
 - Being made right
 - All of the above
62. True or False: Christ did not HAVE to take our place.
- True
 - False
63. What passage says "Whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood."
- Rom. 6:11
 - Rom. 6:24
 - Rom 3:25
 - Rom 3:24
64. What is salvation?
- An act of God's love
 - An act of God's grace
 - All God's doing
 - All of the above
65. True or False: Because Christ died for our sins we are automatically saved.
- True
 - False
66. Before a person becomes a Christian he is a slave of:
- God
 - Sin
 - Jesus
 - Holy Spirit
67. When we are dead to something we are:
- Still with it
 - Severed from it
 - Both a and b
 - None of the above
68. What passage says, "we were buried therefore with him through immersion into death."?
- Rom. 6:11
 - Rom. 6:6
 - Rom. 6:4
 - Rom. 6:17
69. How is a "slave to sin" set free?
- Through prayer
 - Through immersion
 - Through repentance alone
 - None of the above
70. After a person becomes immersed he becomes a slave to
- Self
 - Christ
 - Sin
 - None of the above
71. In Rom. 6 we learn that a Christian is:
- Free from the wrath of God
 - Free from sin
 - Free from saying no to sin
 - Both a and b
72. Rom. 6:18 says we become servants of :
- Love
 - Sin
 - Righteousness
 - Self
73. What verse of Rom. 6 says "For sin shall not have dominion over you...?"
- 5
 - 23
 - 14
 - 15
74. What does immersion free us from?
- The wrath of God
 - The domination of sin
 - The guilt of sin
 - All of the above
75. True or False: We die to God so that we might live for sin.
- True
 - False

CHAPTER 8

Examples Are Powerful!

What Kind Of Chapter Title Is That?

We can learn by being told or by being shown and the latter is always the more powerful of the two. It's hard for the mind to conceive of or grasp something new or unfamiliar which it cannot picture. For instance, someone tells you they've bought a new car. What do you ask? "What kind?" Right? And then you probably continue to quiz them about the model, color, accessories, etc., trying to get a "**picture**" of it in your mind. One reason the Lord's teaching was so powerful was his use of parables or **word pictures**. A person would almost need help to misunderstand the principle of loving his neighbor as himself after hearing the story of the Good Samaritan.

This may sound a bit strange at first, but among a great many Christians this idea about the Lordship of Christ is not a familiar concept. For many it is something new even though it's as old to man as **Genesis 3:15**. And for this reason we want to look back at some New Testament examples so that we might see even more clearly, how the truth of the Lordship of Christ affects people's lives and their attitudes toward God's Word and his church. Some of it may seem a little on the heavy side, but stay with it because it is all essential in getting the **total picture** of the **Christ-controlled** life.

The Alpha of Christianity

The birth announcement stated it:

*"And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, **who is Christ the Lord.**" (Luke 2:10-11)*

The voice in the wilderness shouted it:

"And in those days comes John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight." (Mat. 3:1-3)

The Old Testament prophet's words were coming true:

*"And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, **Know the Lord:** For all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them." (Heb. 8:11)*

This thought expressed by the prophet Jeremiah, and repeated by the Hebrews writer, is a contrast between the Old and the New Covenants. He was saying that under the New Testament there were going to be some changes things were going to be different. Here's what he meant: In the Old Testament times, to be in a Covenant* relationship with God a person had to be a child of Abraham by natural descent. (See **John 8:33-42**) This is why the Jews were so long on "*Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac was the father of Jacob, and Jacob was the father of Judas,*" etc. (See **Matthew 1:1-17**.) A person was born into God's chosen family by a natural birth, then as he grew and matured he was taught to "**know the Lord**". But not so under the New Covenant. Things are different now, in fact right the reverse of how it was. Now one must **first** be taught to "**know the Lord**" before he can be in God's family. Unlike the "children of God through Abraham" a child of God today is "*born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*" (**John 1:13**) As Jesus informed Nicodemus, "*You must be born again.*" (**John 3:7**)

Thus the Alpha of Christianity expressed in the New Testament was that a person had to have a prior knowledge of the Lord by "the word of truth." (See **James 1:18** and **Romans 10:8-17**) He first had to know the Lord - his authority, his goodness, and his severity. Hence, self-surrender to Christ as the Lord of lords is the earliest Christian attitude and practice we find. We can see this clearly in several conversions found in the book of Acts.

* Note: See Glossary.

“Jesus, The Man You Crucified”

The day of Pentecost in Jerusalem was when it all came together and things started moving. Peter, at the end of his sermon laid something on all of his fellow-Jews that really shook them. He said, *“Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”* (**Acts 2:36**) The next verse says, *“Now when they heard this, they were convicted in their heart, and they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?”* Can’t you imagine what must have raced through their minds? That was no mere man, that was the Lord!

That was some way to “**know the Lord**” wasn’t it - finding out you had consented to His death? So when Peter told them what to do about it, they were all very eager to listen. *“And Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* (**Acts 2:38**) Then in verse 41, *“The ones who received the word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.”*

“Who Are You Lord?”

No doubt you are familiar with this next conversion recorded three times in the book of Acts in Chapters 9, 22 and 26. Paul was out to exterminate Christians. The only good Christian in his eyes was, like Stephen, a dead one. Little did he realize that his own plans and life’s ambitions were soon to be exterminated.

He was leading the way to Damascus to hunt down the Christians there but as you know this once proud leader ended up being led by the hand, blind, into the city. The text reads:

“And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

Paul then asked, “Who are you, Lord?” At this point he didn’t know who this “**Lord**” was, but he knew he was in the presence of someone great and powerful. Then the answer came, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.” What a shock that must have been! I don’t know what rushed through Paul’s mind but we do know what he said next. In total submission he asked a question that he would continue to ask for the rest of his life, “What shall I do, Lord?” Turning to **Acts 22**, Paul relates: *“And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told you of all things which are appointed for you to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me I came into Damascus”*. Then after three days, a Christian named Ananias was sent by the Lord to Paul and said, *“And now why do you wait? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name.”* Without hesitation Paul did as he was told and from that day on he was the Lord’s slave.

“He Is Lord of All”

Peter, who had opened the door of the Kingdom to the Jews on Pentecost, also ushered the first Gentiles into the church. But he never would have thought of doing it on his own. God had to get him on a housetop in Joppa and show him that Christ was to be the Lord of the Gentiles as well as the Jews. (See **Acts 10**) Then he sent Peter to Caesarea to preach to Cornelius, a Roman centurion. He told the soldier that Christ “is Lord of all” (verse 36) and went on to explain that God had raised Jesus from the dead and would make him the Judge of the living and the dead. In verses 47 and 48, we read that the soldier, along with other members of his family, submitted his will to the Lord and was baptized - making the Lord his captain of salvation.

First Christian Attitude and Practice

There are several other examples in the New Testament which further illustrate this point (see **Acts 16, 18, 19**), but these are sufficient to let us see that self-surrender to Christ as Lord is one of the earliest Christian attitudes and practices. And this **Christ-controlled** attitude not only affected people’s lives insofar as their initial response to the gospel was concerned, but we can also see that it was the guiding principle in dealing with their fellowman, the Word of God, and their relationship to the church.

For example, take time to read Paul’s words in **Ephesians 5:22-25 and 6:1-9, and Colossians 3:17-25; 4:1**. In these passages, notice that the relationships of husband, wife, child, servant and master are all based upon the Lordship of Christ.

Christ-controlled is also seen to be characteristic of the Christian's relationship to God's Word and the church. Christ let it be known early in his ministry that there can be no respect for him as Lord if there is disrespect for his Word. "And why call me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (**Luke 6:46**) Then in passages such as the following: **Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:23-25; Colossians 2:18** and **Matthew 16:18**, we can see that the church exists because it has a Lord. This is where some people turn you off - when you say anything about the church - claiming they want Christ but not the church. I want Christ and I don't want just **any** church, but I do want to be in his church. And he does have one (**Matthew 16:18**) and **only one**. **Ephesians 4:4** says there is "one body" and **Colossians 1:18** says that **this one body is the church**. Christ bought this one body (or church) with his blood. (**Ephesians 5:25 and Acts 20:28**).

Now when you stack all of that together, ask the question, is the church of Christ important? Is something which cost Christ his own life insignificant? Is the Lord's body, of which he is the head, unimportant? "Christ loved the church". (**Ephesians 5:25**) Can you love Christ and not love what he loves? Is that which is made up of the saved of no value? (See **Ephesians 5:23 and Acts 2:47**.) The simple revealed fact is that you cannot have the head (Christ) without his body (the church). For these early Christians, the church was not an elective which they could accept or reject. **They** were the church! And so it is today. (**Ephesians 3:21**)

"But, How Can You Know?"

Someone may ask, "Well, if there's only **one** church, which one is it? There are over 38,000 religious bodies out there all claiming to belong to his head!"

That's a very good question and believe it or not, there is a very simple God-given answer for it.

In **Luke 8**, Christ said, that planting His church was just like a farmer sowing seed. When he later explained this parable to his apostles he said, "Now, the parable is this: *The seed is the word of God.*" This states an age-old truth, seed always produces after its kind. If you plant a grain of corn you don't expect it to produce cotton. So, think about this. Even though nineteen centuries have passed since Christ first planted his church, we still have the same seed and when we plant it in honest hearts (**Luke 8:15**) it will produce the same thing it did then. Nothing more and nothing less! The one true church is in the seed that produces it-the Word of God. It is that body of baptized believers who have heard, believed and obeyed the gospel just as it is found in the New Testament. God's Word begot them and it is their only guide for living a Christian life. So look for a church that listens to and obeys only the words of Christ and you'll find the body that belongs to the Head. Look for the one that wears only his name and is in complete submission to Him and you will find his true bride.

This may seem as if we have strayed from the point a bit but when we consider the total picture of the Lordship of Christ, we are forced to see that this Lord has a kingdom (the church) (see **Matthew 16: 18, 19**) and only one kingdom, and He rules it by his law (the Word of God) and, "Whosoever goes onward and lives not in the teaching of Christ has not God; he that lives in the teaching, the same has both the Father and the Son." (**2 John 9**) (See also **1 Tim. 1:12; 3:16-17; Revelation 22:18-20**)

One Good Thing Can Lead To Another

This chapter is not by any means all inclusive. Other examples could be given and more said about those already discussed. But surely it is enough to let us see that the heart convicted of the Lordship of Christ results in a complete transformation of life. It changes one's relationships with God and man. It changes one's way of thinking. It changes one's life-style.

What Has All Of This Got To Do With Me?

Maybe nothing at all. Then again, maybe a great deal. If living as a Christian just hasn't been what you thought it would be, if it has merely been another religion, a duty, a trying to mimic certain actions of the early Christians; it might have something to do with you. Only you can decide and only you can find out. Here's how.

No one likes to be told to go back over ground already covered. However, if there were things back there that could mean the difference between what you are now and what you'd like to be, you would be willing to go over it again wouldn't you? Sure, so before you continue on to the next chapter, **re-read this one**, and as you do remember those early Christians acted a certain way because they **thought** a certain way.

"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's For to this end Christ died and lived again that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living." (**Rom. 14: 8, 9**)

This concludes Chapter 8. Please answer the following questions before sending in your book.

76. Which one is more powerful?
- Being shown
 - Being told
 - Both
 - Neither
77. What is the first question you ask when someone tells you they bought a new car?
- "Can I have it?"
 - "Where is it?"
 - "What kind?"
 - None of the above
78. What are parables according to the author?
- Stories
 - Word pictures
 - Sermons
 - Magic
79. What parable does the idea of loving your neighbor come from?
- The Lost Sheep
 - The Talents
 - The Good Samaritan
 - The Sower
80. In order to get a Christ-controlled life we need to get:
- A new Lord
 - The whole picture
 - Half the truth
 - None of the above
81. What does Luke 2:10-11?
- Christ's Birth
 - Christ's Death
 - Both a and b
 - None of the above
82. What does Matt. 3:1-3 talk about?
- John the Baptist
 - The kingdom of heaven
 - The way of the Lord
 - All of the above
83. Which passage talks about "Knowing the Lord"?
- Heb. 8:11
 - Matt. 1:1-17
 - John 1:13
 - John 3:7
84. Where else is "knowing the Lord" discussed?
- Jude
 - Ezekiel
 - Jeremiah
 - Esther
85. In the Old Testament how does one become a child of God? You must:
- Be a descendant of Ishmael
 - Be a descendant of Abraham
 - Be immersed
 - Say a prayer to accept Jesus as your personal lord and savior
86. What is contained in Matt. 1:1-17?
- A parable
 - An account of a great war
 - A genealogy
 - All of the above
87. How does one become a child of God in the New Testament? You must:
- Be immersed
 - Know the Lord
 - Be a descendant of Abraham
 - Say a prayer to accept Jesus as your personal lord and savior
88. According to John 1:13, a child of God is born of:
- Blood
 - Flesh
 - God
 - The will of man
89. Who was Jesus talking to in John 3:7?
- Paul
 - Nicodemus
 - Peter
 - Ananias
90. What does Acts 2:36 discuss?
- The Jews part in Christ's death
 - God making Jesus Lord and Christ
 - Christ hating the Jews
 - Both a and b
91. What verse does Peter talk about repentance and immersion?
- Verse 36
 - Verse 37
 - Verse 38
 - Verse 41
92. True or False: In Act 2 1,000 people were immersed.
- True
 - False
93. What was Paul's original name?
- Peter
 - Paul
 - Saul
 - Ananias

94. What was the name of the person who converted Paul?
 a) Saul
 b) Peter
 c) Nicodemus
 d) Ananias
95. True or False: Cornelius was a Roman centurion.
 a) True
 b) False
96. In what passage did Peter say "Christ is Lord of all"?
 a) Acts 10:36
 b) Acts 2:38
 c) Acts 10:47-48
 d) Acts 2:2
97. In Ephesians 5 & 6 as well as Colossians 3 & 4, what relationships should be based on the Lordship of Christ according to Paul?
 a) Husbands, wives, and children
 b) Servants and masters
 c) God and the church
 d) All of the above
98. With what did Christ purchase the church?
 a) His love
 b) His blood
 c) His money
 d) His hate
99. True or False: There are about 3,000 religious groups today.
 a) True
 b) False
100. In the parable mentioned in Luke 8 what does the Seed represent?
 a) The Lord
 b) Hate
 c) Love
 d) The word of God

GLOSSARY

Lord - Greek word is KURIOS - variously translated in the New Testament, Lord, Master, ruler, etc., and signifies having power or authority over. . . Note also the word servant from the Greek word DOULOS signifies a slave or bondservant. The Christian and Christ have a slave/Lord relationship.

Thayer - One of the best known and respected authorities in the Koine Greek language, which was the language used by the New Testament writers.

Covenant relationship - An arrangement or contract between two or more parties with a law to back it up, i.e., between God and Israel (the Law of Moses) or between God and the Christians (the New Testament).

Grace - From the Greek CHARIS - has reference to the special favor of God's redemptive mercy. On the part of the receiver, a sense of undeserved or unmerited favor done for man by God - specifically it is the death of Jesus to take away man's sins. To be found "in favor with God", is to find grace.

Baptism - Greek - BAPTIZO is the verb form. It means to dip, plunge, immerse. The baptism of the Great Commission (Mark 16:16) was an immersion in water (Acts 8:36) and was for the remission of sins, (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21).

Morality - Action based on a standard of right and wrong. Christian morality is based on the authority of God's Word.

Lasciviousness - Greek ASELGEIA - denotes an absence of restraint in the area of lewd, lustful thoughts. Lasciviousness has to do with anything that tends to produce lustful sexual emotions that cannot be fulfilled outside of the marriage relationship. It is classed among the works of the flesh since it leads to fornication and adultery.

Transformed - Greek METAMORPHOO - Indicates a change from one form or appearance to another. A term used in Biology to describe the life cycles of certain plants and animals, characterized by growth and change "in stages".